



RCS Panels - Statement

Many untrue and libellous accusations have been made against me directly, and the RCS Panels team by implication, on the web over recent weeks. To attempt to put the record straight I am issuing this statement.

It is not intended to be a full repudiation of the so-called 'evidence'.

We are not posting any photographic evidence and/or detailed 'point by point' responses to MAAM's accusations on the internet. This does not mean that we cannot defend ourselves. We have plenty of photographic/textual 'proof'. We have been asked to submit a detailed 'defence' directly to a number of independent parties to be examined. This we have now done.

However, the crux of the accusations against me is that MAAM believe they have some sort of agreement with me that any reference material gathered by me at MAAM would not/could not be used in the production of RCS Panels Packages. I can assure you that no such agreement was made. I did receive a number of emails from MAAM demanding such an agreement; however, I ignored them. I am in no way at fault if they assumed that no argument constituted agreement, which is not the case. I own the copyright of my own photographs whether taken at MAAM or elsewhere and as such they can be used for reference. What I did agree to (and have abided by) was that our new B25-J would not replicate MAAM's 'Briefing Time'. It does not!

Another accusation is that we have pirated Bill Rambow's graphics. Again, we have not. After Rambow left the RCS Panels team, all his graphics were removed from the RCS database. Our new graphics expert, Steve Wayne did not use Rambow's graphics and chose the laborious, time-consuming but ultimately rewarding method of hand-painting graphics, based on images provided by the team from various reference sources. Details of his techniques and reference sources have been supplied to the independent examiners. Before the hounds begin to howl, it is entirely possible that the same reference material was used by both MAAM and RCS for certain elements of the product, but I can assure you we did not use any of Rambow's bitmaps; we are quite capable of making our own.

Perhaps we could pursue the issue of metadata stamping on the MAAM graphics at some point in the future - what have they pirated from us I wonder?! Certainly many of the things in MAAM's current B-25 package are my ideas from the initial Beta work!

Long before they could possibly have seen any of our new images, it was widely leaked that Rambow / MAAM would make all efforts to get the RCS Panels package, and myself in particular, disgraced or banned for copyright infringement. Russ Strine, President of MAAM, expressed concern that our success would impact on their sales. His concern is understandable but can in no way justify his attempt to 'sink' the opposition by submitting an open letter full of false accusations to AVSIM, and oddly, not to me!

Yet another accusation is that we have set out to deprive MAAM of income. On the contrary, the whole RCS Panels team had the interests of MAAM at heart, even after the break away by Rambow. I believe the following information will confirm this.

1. Version 4 of the R4D (where I started from scratch) was the first package that was intended to be released on CD. The team were all keen to raise some money for MAAM. They thought up the idea and called it 'Donationware'.

2. It is well documented, that I was disgusted that only one in three hundred users who downloaded the programme from the net, ever bothered to register and send any money to support the Museum. To overcome this problem, a friend of mine and I, wrote the "Time Locking" software that forced users to pay and register to use any future versions. I had to insist this software was used for the release of Version 4.75 for FS2002 because at the time Rambow was totally against its use. Jan Visser was so against it that he would have nothing more to do with the team and quit, initially withdrawing his own aircraft model. I stood alone on the principle of Time Locking but forced the issue and we pressed ahead to the release. Two weeks after the release, when Pete at MAAM announced that what I had done was fantastic and had massively increased contributions to MAAM, Rambow, curiously, changed his mind and publicly took ownership of the Time Locking concept.

3. As a direct result of the "Time Locking" software, donations to MAAM suddenly went from a few thousand dollars over a long period of time, to more than \$95,000 USD relatively quickly.

4. After the "Bust Up", RCS Panels offered the completed RCS B-25J package to MAAM, in their colours if they wished, to raise funds. They refused.

5. I had previously put a package of ideas forward to enable them to raise even more money from the FS community members and the public in general. These stemmed from my previous commercial background, and none were taken up.

6. With my agreement and no strings attached, MAAM are still selling our original CD of the R4D version 7 to raise money. I feel justified in claiming that most of the innovations in the R4D project were mine. The night lighting system, Overlay systems, Dual Panel on the fly system are examples. So it would have been easy for me to have stopped these sales 9 months ago - but I didn't, and again I believe these actions demonstrate that I held no malice towards MAAM and am strongly in favour of keeping vintage aeroplanes where they belong, in the air. My ongoing

support for the MAAM cause has raised them a considerable sum of money. Other than a life-time membership of MAAM which I am now unlikely to benefit from, they have an unusual way of showing their appreciation.

7. You will be interested to note that RCS Panels still offers full Technical Support to ALL users of the R4D product even though we are no longer connected with MAAM. This is a time consuming activity but I am committed to providing a worthwhile package of support to the FS community.

I offer the above as clear proof that I/we have no wish or intent to blight MAAM and the raising of funds for them. I consider that I/we have acted with honesty and honour throughout this unfortunate period.

All of this information can, if necessary, be backed up with documentary evidence should anyone see fit to mount a legal challenge. The numerous communications between Rambow, MAAM and ourselves also serve to back up everything I say, and MAAM are welcome to make them all public if they wish.

I have tried to describe the true situation unemotionally and I contend that MAAM have no right or reason to continue to block access to the RCS B-25 package.

In response to MAAM's 'background' to this sorry story, I would ask only; 'Why did Rambow leave the group?'

I can see this only from my personal subjective perspective. Jan Visser had responsibility for the external model and I acknowledge his excellence in this area. However, I found him difficult to work with - and I suspect he had similar difficulties with me! We can't always like everybody, I'm sorry, but that's life. Once he had left the group over the "Time Locking" issue, I did not want to have to work with him again.

I was concerned that the Gmax version of the R4D being sold at the WWII Weekend in June 2002 was full of bugs and would lower our reputation. When Visser (who, although no longer part of the group was still working on the Gmax version) trashed our sound engineer's work and files, I'm afraid that was the final straw and I withdrew my gauges and effectively cancelled the project.

Rambow strongly disagreed with my decision and genuinely hoped, I believe, that if he got Visser to apologise, I would have a change of heart. He did not understand that that just could not happen. In part it then became an issue whether Rambow wanted to continue to work with the RCS team or with Visser. You know the outcome.

In spite of all of the above, the RCS team were still prepared to give Mr Strine and MAAM the benefit of the doubt, believing that they did not really know what had

been going on. A major problem with my/our relationship with MAAM had been poor communication. When we were team mates I trusted Rambow, why would I not? He was the 'man on the ground' and able to visit MAAM frequently. Only after Rambow had left the team did I discover that Mr Strine's understanding of the situation did not reflect reality. In simple terms Rambow had been treating me as a friend, gaining my trust, taking the major credit and kudos for the project but feeding MAAM with a very one-sided assessment of the previous RCS involvement.

So I wrote to Mr Strine at length explaining the situation as I saw it in detail. I made an offer of the finished B-25 painted as "Briefing Time" and continuing sales of the current CD and I also made a commitment to strive to raise significant funds for MAAM even during our work with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. The only proviso was that he had to make a choice between Rambow's new team or ours. I suspected that this might be seen as an ultimatum but I felt that he could not sit on the fence. Mr Strine made it clear where he 'nailed his colours' and why, and whilst I think he made the wrong decision, I fully understand and respect his motivation.

For now, I am only concerned that those of you who know me are not left in any doubt that my integrity remains intact and that the RCS B-25 is now offered openly to those flight-simmers who would wish to download it for their personal enjoyment.

I have so often attacked others for not respecting my copyrights, and for so long leapt to the defence of others whose work has been pirated, that you surely cannot believe that I would have 'changed my spots'.

I assure you I have not.

Roy Chaffin

RCS Panels

17th May 2003