



## The Miles M.52: Gateway to Supersonic Flight

By Captain Eric Brown CBE DSC AFC QCUSA RN, Dennis Bancroft C.Eng MRAeS

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**From an aviation legend comes the only personal account of the development of the M.52 and the mystery behind its cancelation**

In December 1943, a top-secret contract (E.24/43) was awarded to Miles Aircraft. The contract was to build the world's first supersonic jet capable of 1,000 mph. The only reliable source of data on supersonic objects came from the Armament Research Department and their wind tunnel tests on ammunition. From this, Miles developed an exceptionally thin-winged, bullet-shaped aircraft. The research was inexplicably passed to the Americans in 1944 and by December 1945, one prototype was virtually complete. The second, destined for an attempt at the sound barrier was 80% complete. In February 1946, Captain Eric Brown was confirmed as the test pilot and October 1946 was set for the supersonic trials. However, on February 12, 1946, Miles were ordered to stop production. No plausible explanation was given for the cancelation when Britain was within six months of breaking the sound barrier. Eric Brown and others directly involved including Dennis Bancroft, the Chief Aerodynamicist on the M.52, have now come together to try and finally solve the mystery behind the cancelation.

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- Sales Rank: #2111479 in Books
- Brand: Brand: The History Press
- Published on: 2012-10-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.90" h x 1.00" w x 6.70" l, 1.50 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 224 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### **About the Author**

**Captain Eric Brown, CBE, DSC, AFC, QCUSA, RN**, is a former Royal Navy officer and test pilot who is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as holding the record for flying the greatest number of different aircraft. His other books include *Wings on My Sleeve*, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, and *Wings of the Weird & Wonderful*. **Dennis Bancroft C.Eng MRAeS**, was the Miles chief aerodynamicist. They are among the last surviving members of the M.52 development team.

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