



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2018

OCTOBER LUNCH:

The October lunch, attended by 35 members and guests, was preceded by a moment of silent reflection for one of our members who passed on to Higher Service that week. **Captain Peter Cook** was remembered by Jeff Earle who gave us all a very meaningful introduction to Peter and what he had achieved in his time in the SAAF, with SAA and Comair. He was a highly respected man with wonderful people skills. We will remember him.

Once again, the Wanderers Club and especially SilvaSale gave us a superb function. The food was very good, and the wines were just a nice as they normally are. Our speaker, **Prof John Ledger** gave us an enthralling view of what could be in store for us all if we do not oppose the **Integrated Resources Plan** that has been issued for public comment. In brief we are lucky that the Nuclear power plan is off the table, but “watch this space” as there are still some that want it to happen, and we know who they are. Coal still needs to be exploited and we export most to places like China and India where they generate power from it. The Renewable sector, especially the Wind Turbine market was singled out by John in such a way that we all had to think out of the box. John last talked to us in October 2017 so maybe next year we will have a catch up and see how his predictions have materialised....

SAILOR MALAN MEMORIAL PLAQUE, KIMBERLEY:



The South African fighter ace and Officer Commanding 74 Squadron RAF during the Battle of Britain was ‘Sailor’ Malan, with 38 confirmed kills. He passed away in September 1953 at the age of 53 and Lies buried in the West End Cemetery in Kimberley, which is, sadly, vandalised and derelict. Cookie Cookson during his tenure in SA proposed some memorial to the memory of this hero. RAFOC had a magnificent sandstone memorial plaque made by Roel Jansen at his Sandstone Contracts company. Roel is a major player in EAA’s dealings with the Brits Flying Club. The stone was consecrated at St Margaret’s Church in Bedfordview on 16 September. The service was attended by Wing Commanders Cookie Cookson and Mike Napier (Retired) Royal Air Force, who travelled to SA for the event. There was also a fly past in honour of the occasion by the iconic Harvard 7111 ‘Nelson’ of the SAAF Museum. This plaque is now mounted at main entrance to the Kimberley Club, now itself a National Historic Building at the Battle of Britain Memorial Service.

SAILOR MALAN, ROGER BUSHELL and THE TORCH COMMANDO:

Malan was one of the most successful RAF war pilots of all time. He ended the war with a DFC and Bar and a DSO and Bar. In 1939 he was Officer Commanding 74 Sqn (Spitfires) and was involved in a controversial case of 'friendly fire' in which his squadron was alleged to have shot down some other RAF fighters. ("The Battle of Barking Creek") He was defended in the disciplinary hearing by **Roger Bushell** who had links with Hermanus and would go on to organise the "Great Escape". Malan was cleared of any wrongdoing. Returning to South Africa in 1946 Malan became very concerned at the rise of a narrow Afrikaner nationalism and the first indications of apartheid thinking. He became head of a resistance movement known as the Torch Commando. At its height the organisation had over 250 000 members and attendance at meetings was often over 50 000 [see image below]. However, the victory of the Nationalist Party in 1948 meant a setback from which the organisation did not recover. In the 1950s Malan retired to a sheep farm he had acquired and lived there until his death in 1963. His career illustrates the dilemmas of an Afrikaner supporter of Britain in a time of hardening nationalism. *(Sent in by Rob Tannahill)*

HOLD FAST THE HERITAGE!

Alex Reith was a Glider Pilot during WW2 and made a successful landing in Normandy on 6 June 1944 as part of the Allied Invasion of Europe. He also made a similar landing at Arnhem in the September of 1944. As the only known surviving Glider Pilot in SA, he visited Normandy in 2014 for the 70th Anniversary Commemoration of the Invasion in 1944. He donated a Glider Squadron Badge to the **SAAF Museum, Port Elizabeth**, before his death in December 2017 and recorded in his accompanying memoir: "Visiting England in 1992 I made a point of visiting Salisbury Cathedral to see the two twenty foot Memorial Windows dedicated to those named in The Roll of Honour who made the supreme sacrifice serving in the Royal Air Force, The Army Air Corps and The Glider Pilot Regiment. Beneath the window these words are inscribed:-

See that ye hold fast the heritage that we leave you. Yea and teach your children that never in the coming centuries may their hearts fail or their hands grow weak.

OBITUARIES:

COLONEL PETER BARRY COOKE SAAF (RTD):

"It is with such sadness that I send this message to inform friends and colleagues of the passing of my dear husband, Capt. Peter Cooke (retired). He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer 17months ago and bore the illness with such bravery and positivity. He will leave a huge void in the lives of Lorna, daughter Tracy, sons Craig and Grant, grandchildren and family. Donations to Sungardens Hospice would be gratefully received., ABSA bank Cheque account no 3490 147 828 Branch code 632005"

While with "Singapura Lugdiens", Peter got a great deal of experience flying with other nationalities (43 in all at the time he was there) and he, like so many other South Africans, got on well with them all. This held him in good stead as DFO (Director Flight Operations) of SAA when others of different backgrounds were joining those in the front end of aircraft. In his time with Singapore Airlines he was highly regarded as someone, who while not being a SIA Instructor, was able to easily impart his vast knowledge of aviation on to his First and Second Officers and, of course, his high standard of flying ability and his professional approach to his career were the envy of many. As the top pilot in SAA for many years during a difficult period he stood up for his staff dealing with difficult Top Management people in stressful times. He was highly regarded by grassroots Operations Department staff as well as his aircrew brothers (and sisters). He was a real gentleman and a brave man who was ably supported by his wife of 49 years, Lorna. *(Contributed by Capt 'Lin Barratt, friend and colleague)* Peter's Memorial Service was held in the Glen Methodist Church, Garstfontein, Pretoria. Over 400 family friends and colleagues attended, and many condolences were received from around the world. We will publish the full Eulogy delivered by Colonel Jeff Earle as a supplement to this newsletter.

CAPT KENNETH DAVID LENEY, who has died aged 83, was born in Bolton in 1934, the son of Kenneth, a dentist, and Margaret, a dancer. He chose flying as a career while still at University College School, London, in 1952. After completing National Service in the RAF, he passed all the requisite tests for selection, including leadership exercises. However, his parents had other ideas. They prevailed upon him to apply to the University of Cambridge to read French, German and economics. He complied and was offered a place there, but then, much to their consternation, turned it down in favour of a place at a flying school. During his training

Leney, who was 5ft 5in, took to the air in numerous aircraft, including a Tiger Moth, Chipmunk and twin-engined Meteor, which had been the RAF's first jet. "I was too short to fly Meteors," he recalled, "so was transferred to Vampires," which had more compact cockpits. In 1954 Leney applied to BOAC for a job after obtaining his commercial pilot's licence and began flying a series of large airliner - the elegant triple-finned Constellation, Argonaut and, in 1958, his first turbojet airliner, the Britannia. His first pure jet, the VC10, took Leney to Africa and the Far East during the 1960s. After that he took the command course to earn his Captaincy.

The other love of Leney's life was Concorde. "She flew in 1969 and I looked at that beautiful aircraft with wonder. Was I good enough to fly such an advanced and superb machine? Then I realised that she was an airliner and I was an airline pilot." Leney wrote in his diary: "I remember my first take-off vividly. It was from Brize Norton, and I had never experienced such power and acceleration, which made Concorde such a delight to fly. Her operating height was nearly twenty thousand feet above a subsonic aircraft's, and she cruised at twice the speed of sound, Mach 2." Leney flew Concorde for 15 years, including appearances at the Farnborough airshow, and a display flight over the QE2 with the Red Arrows.

DURBAN POISON – HIGHER GRADE! TOPS THIS ONE:

Many people are beginning to compare the hype around cannabis in 2018 to that of cryptocurrencies in 2017. Numerous companies around the world – including Coca-Cola – are looking to introduce cannabis into their products amid softening regulations around the drug, and South Africa is no different with a local Durban-based brewer looking to the business opportunities that cannabis presents after the Constitutional Court ruled that the personal use of the green stuff is all cool. (Daily Insider) **Poison City Brewing** investors include RCL Foods Ltd. Chief Executive Officer Miles Dally and Spar Group Ltd. CEO Graham O'Connor, the Johannesburg based newspaper reported. The Durban-based brewer started selling the lager containing hemp – a variety of the cannabis sativa plant largely devoid of mind-altering ingredients – in liquor chains in September, the newspaper reported, citing PCB co-owner Andre Schubert. The launch comes shortly after the country's Constitutional Court legalised the private use of cannabis in South Africa, and as global brewing giants increasingly link up with marijuana producers. **Durban Poison** is a well known strain of cannabis.

YOU CAN'T GROW PEACHES ON A CHERRY TREE...

Peach and cherry orchards, fields of maize, chicken farms, a large dairy . . . Sound way out in the country? It wasn't. This nature lover's paradise existed in Linden in the 1920s, and you can read all about it in Tim Truluck's Historical Map of Linden. The suburb was named after Johannes Jacobus Rabie van der Linde, a farmer from Philippolis in the Free State. He co-owned the south western corner of the farm Klipfontein with Louw Geldenhuys, who farmed fruit and vegetables on the neighbouring farm of Braamfontein. The soil turned out to be very fertile - the acidic clay was perfect for growing peaches - and soon flourished with orchards. Once farmhouses were built, roads to Linden were laid out, and in 1932, £3,600 was put aside to tar Rustenburg Road, the thoroughfare on the eastern border to the "fruit producing area in the vicinity of Linden".
<http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/peach-and-cherry-orchards-linden>

HOW FLOSSIE GOT HER NAME...

As promised to Tony Jones, here is the story of where the name "FLOSSIE" came from. Not many years after the arrival of the C130B's onto the SAAF register, South Africa became embroiled in a Border War along the South West African/Angolan border. There has been much good and bad written about that conflict and I am not going to add further to that issue, other than to point out that the C130's were used on a daily basis to convey Troops and Material to and from the border, in later years SAFAIR, operating L100's were contracted to assist in the air transport effort. To the casual observer the C130 and L100 look so much alike that one could be forgiven for thinking they were the same. Having said the above I can now get on with story. At 28 Squadron, the operators of the SAAF C130's, was a Flight Engineer named Phil or "**Flippie**". He was a most dedicated man who ate, slept and dreamed the C130. In his private life he was a most disciplined man (real old school, airman), who never did a half job of anything. You all know the type, "if it's worth doing, do it properly or don't do it at all." Phil was married to a lady with the real oldie English name of Florence. In her family she was called Flo, and among her siblings she was called Flossie. (by now you can see where this is going). Being the consummate professional Phil would ALWAYS walk out, long before the rest of the crew, to the aircraft he was scheduled to fly in and do a proper pre-flight inspection. A few of his fellow flight engineers would pull his leg and tell him the aircraft was only due for a major technical inspection at a future date.

His standard reply was "Chaps, if you treat and look after your Aircraft like you look after your wife, she will never let you down." This comment always gave all of his Squadron mates a smile. Over the months, whenever his crew were due to walk out to the Aircraft they would ask "where is Flippie, is he at Flossie? Or, "Come guys we shouldn't keep Flossie waiting" or comments along those lines. In time the reference to Flossie was made more often at the Movements Control section at Air Force Base Waterkloof and more and more people became attuned to this reference and this then morphed into all troop transports, becoming known as "**FLOSSIE.**" You may ask how I know this bit of history. The simple answer is that Phil was my Father and "FLOSSIE: was my Mother. (Terence Weyer, via Facebook)

NEXT FUNCTION: NOTE CHANGE OF DATE!! (SECOND FRIDAY)

The Next Ordinary Lunch will be on **Friday 9 November 2018, 12h30 for 13h00** at Wanderers.

We will again lay wreaths at the **Wall of Remembrance** before Lunch, and also commemorate the **Centenary of the end of The Great War.**

Our Speaker will be member **Andrew Muttitt (HCAP)** on "**Laddie, John, Scottie and a dash of Johnnie: 249 Squadron, Malta and those terrible Typhoons**"

REMEMBER: Lunch Fees still **R200 pp.** If you pay by EFT please use your name as "reference" **NEDBANK Melrose Arch, Branch 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063**

We are holding the price at R200 for as long as we can for Members Lunches - a 2 Course meal - and our Treasurer is still balancing the books with some of our retained earnings

All bookings, please, to bookings@rafoc.org , or if you do not have access to e-mail:

Colin Ackroyd - Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 806 6779 colin@ackroyd.co.za

Jon Adams - Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 45 00 616 vice-chairman@rafoc.org

POPPY APPEAL:

Proceeds from the Raffle will be the Clubs contribution to the SA Legion, buy more tickets so we can donate more to this very worthwhile cause. We will report in the Newsletter how much was collected. The SA Legion administers the payment of RAF Benevolent Fund grants to beneficiaries in SA.

We will have the normal raffle prizes of wine and whiskey but additionally a coin has been donated to the Club which will be the main prize. To commemorate the Centenary of the RAF a brand-new **Official RAF Centenary Silver Proof Five Pound Coin** has just been issued - **the ideal way to pay tribute to our Air Force** and the brave men and women, past and present, who have served over the last 100 years to help defend our skies.



We look forward to seeing you there and maybe you can go home with the £5 coin that is now fully sold out and worth £90. If there are any members that cannot attend the lunch and wish to buy raffle tickets we will take internet commitments and an EFT must be made into the RAFOC account with the Proof of Payment sent to bookings@rafoc.org. Tickets are R100 for 7 tickets. Your name will be written on the tickets and if you win we can arrange some method of getting it to you. Remember all the proceeds go to the Poppy Appeal.

Cheers,

Bruce.

EULOGY: Colonel Peter Barry Cooke

8th Oct 2018 – Jeff Earle.

Dear friends,

I am honoured at being able to Celebrate Pete's life and share some 4 Squadron, and other memories of our dear friend. I choose to take a lighter view to show you the human being and gentleman that we knew.

Peter was born on 30th May 1948. He was 70 at his passing, so he had attained the proverbial "**three score years and ten**".

1. **Intro.**

Etched in my memory over the past 42 years is this good, strong and respected leader, exceptional pilot, honourable, ethical, positive man, but always the friend. I believe we all have precious memories of our friend Pete. You see, to each of us he was someone special, after all, he was a husband, father, grandfather, family relative, pilot, crew member, manager, leader, aircraft builder, golfer and friend, lifelong friend, but to ALL of us he was a respected friend, a quality, well liked FRIEND!

2. **Reputation.**

I first met Pete in August 1976 when he became a Citizen Force pilot at 4 Squadron. This was of course long after his reputation as a pilot had already reached us. His reputation even in those days was formidable. Aubrey Bell described him as the best fighter pilot the SAAF has ever had. I of course eagerly jumped on that band wagon and one day repeated this in front of a Korean War veteran. He was quite for a while and then in a very controlled manner said, "I wonder what old "SV" Theron would think about that". Oops too late, I realised my error, I had been reprimanded for my untested statement. While the facts may not have been correct the strong admiration for Pete as an exceptional fighter pilot had been entrenched.

3. **Citizen Force**

The Citizen Force in those days consisted of SAAF qualified pilots who had left and were now employed in civilian life, many being airline pilots. That means they worked five days a week, and then on the Saturday they would devote the day to training and flying Impala jet trainers in the Airforce. This had a twofold objective they could be kept in reserve and used militarily should they be needed, and also an excuse to pay back the cost of their flying training.

4. **Pete's approach**

Pete's approach was always to listen and understand what we were doing before coming forward in his measured, reserved manner to give some input. Whatever his input was it always added great value. It was in this way that Pete's most profound teaching hit home, and has stayed with me to this day. You see he was extremely positive. In our aerial combat training he impressed on us that you must set up correctly, fly correctly to get your sight where you want it, **the first time**. Because, he further emphasised, you may only ever have one chance in your life when that MIG floats past your sight, and it had better be right. There will be no second chance. This changed our attitude and got us thinking. He then went further to say that he predicted the first MIG that was going to be shot down was going to be shot down by an Impala. Now history has proven to us that this was not so. But nevertheless this approach, this philosophy, this determination, this positiveness had an unbelievably good effect on our moral and attitude. We now took our tasks seriously - "dagger in the teeth" as it were - believing that we could do it. But no, our Pete did not leave it there. We went on to develop tactics of fighting against faster jets. He arranged sorties against our Mirages to practice our doctrine. Get them out of their comfort zone into our comfort zone and then get them play by our rules. It worked: we had gained enough confidence to acquit ourselves well against faster jets if needed. I proudly today keep my gun camera film of 18 frames on the cockpit of a Mirage as proof. He gave us the motivation and confidence.

5. **SAAF Qualifications**

Pete was a B Cat instructor and a pilot attack instructor. For his last 7 years of service he flew the Mirage F1 as a part time Citizen Force pilot. The only Citizen Force pilot to **ever** achieve this. He finished with over 3, 300 military Jet hours, retiring with the rank of Major. His distinguished career in the service earned him a Southern Cross and 20 year good service medal.

6. Qualifications and achievements

In 1991 Pete and I were studying B. Coms together. We were always comparing notes and one day he called me to say "Jeff have you read the notice from the university and what do you make of it". They had changed the rules. "I think you have enough subjects and credits for your B. Com". I still have to do mine, which he did, only to go further and complete an MBA. There was no stopping Peter when he was on a roll. An achiever of note. I was a member of the Air Force Reserve Council and became aware of the vacancy for Honorary Colonel at 2 Squadron. I had to deviously extract a comprehensive CV out of Pete without him knowing what it was for in order to motivate his appointment. While I could not tell him what it was for, I had to swear to him that it was for nothing bad, only good. The highly suspicious Pete went along with it, and yes he was most deservedly appointed Honorary Colonel of 2 Squadron. I even had the good fortune to accompany him for a few days on one of his visits to 2 Squadron at Mikado. In the same manner he one day announced that he was going to learn to play golf, and he sure did. Also what makes me absolutely green with envy is that in 2006 he actually took on a project and built, and flew his own RV8 kit aircraft. It was with enormous pride that in 2013 I was able to support his membership application to the Royal Airforce Officers Club. A few months ago I chaired a panel of 4 Squadron members, including Pete, which gave a presentation on our perspective of our Border War actions. Pete again excelled and won over the hearts of all in the audience.

7. 4 Squadron Pub after flying

Saturday flying was rewarding, and in turn we applied ourselves enthusiastically and professionally. After flying and the paper work had been done the centre of the universe became the 4 Squadron pub. The pressure of the day's sorties' flown would now be released and enjoyed over a few beers. Formations and attacks were re-flown using our hands and stories and jokes gathered from around the world were shared. As a result of this interaction we became most informed and familiar with the personalities and procedures in SAA. One night Punchy de Bruyn invited us to his communal home in Bryanston. Now there was a pool, a big dog and we had beer. Can you see the problem coming? At my instigation I suggested the dog needed to go for a swim. So by the legs Pete and I swung this big dog into the pool. Then realisation set in. What did we do that for! Pete then said something. "Jeff he **needed** to swim". Thereafter if ever we needed to do something the expression was "**it needs to swim**".

8. Air Race

One year I invited Pete to fly a Piper Archer in the State Presidents Air Race He would fly and I would navigate. I was over confident as anything in view of the fact that I had previously won the race and been in the top five three times. We were lying 2nd or 3rd when I identified Bothaville as Wolmaransstad or something. This navigational error dropped us to 11th. Conclusion, Pete is a much better pilot than I am a navigator.

9. Visit to Clansthal

Lorna and Pete have a home on the North coast of Natal and we have one on the South coast. Last December they visited us for a day. The four of us spent an enjoyable day braaing and discussing life. After leaving Pete was driving so Lorna texted her thanks and in so doing made a classical typo error. She was mortified. I then got an uncontrollably laughing Pete on the line, laughing at what Lorna had done and how embarrassed she was. This again has been **our** joke since. If anybody's curiosity gets the better of them I will reveal to you afterwards, out of sight of Lorna, what she did...

10. Lorna and Family

Lorna, you have been exceptionally supportive of Pete throughout your marriage. You have been the stalwart and supportive wife that Pete deserved, standing by him to the admiration of all. Lorna, you have certainly more than fulfilled your role in these sad times, this is the end of an era. The pressure has been on you and your family and we his Air Force and flying friends thank you and your family for your sustained support. To Lorna, Craig, Grant, Tracy and grandchildren, our deepest condolences at your loss of this good man, husband, father and grandfather.

11. In Conclusion

Pete, you have filed your final flight plan and had your wings clipped:

- **YOU WILL SOAR FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS!**
- **Friends transmitting to Pete this is over and out!**

I thank you

Peter Cooke was a fellow member of the South African Air Force Association for many years and it is fitting that his comrades now pay tribute to his memory.

The words of this tribute are adapted from two poems well known to Air Force members:

McGee's "High Flight" and Laurence Binyon's Isaiah.

Would members of the South African Air Force Association and **any** of his flying friends who wish to join, please rise for the reading of the tribute?

Colonel Peter Cooke was a highly respected and talented fighter pilot, attack instructor and officer who served the South African Air Force with distinction in the Regular Force, the Citizen Force and the Reserve Force over a period of 51 years. He was an exceptional pilot, a strong and respected leader and a man of integrity and humility who inspired all of us who had the privilege to know him.

*He has slipped the surly bonds of Earth,
He shall mount up with wings as an eagle,
Put out a hand and touch the face of God.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember him.*

The SAAFA members present will then repeat:

We will remember him.

Amen