



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2019

BATTLE OF BRITAIN LUNCH:

On a glorious late Spring day, Friday 13 September, some 84 RAFOC members and guests, plus a number of other Wanderers members and staff, gathered on the lawns outside the Vista Room to watch a spectacular fly-past and “Missing Man” formation by the Flying Lions in a tribute to “The Few” which marked the start of the 79th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Lunch. The Company then moved back into the Vista Room for the lunch itself. The Grace was offered by Hon Chaplain Trevor Slade SAAFA and the gathering sat down to a splendid meal of Kudu Carpaccio Starter, followed by Chicken Supreme and rounded off with Chocolate “Mississippi Mud” Pudding, all prepared and immaculately served by SilvaSale, and accompanied by Goudini wines.

The Vice-Chairman announced the award to Capt. Scully Levin of the designation of “Master Air Pilot” by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots (HCAP) on the recommendation of RAFOC. (See following) Scully will be our speaker at our November Lunch. Our Vice President Basil Hersov is a Liveryman of the Honourable Company.

Lunch over; the Chairman gave a short background on the Battle of Britain, introducing a video compilation by Capt. Karl Jensen of Winston Churchill's historic speech to the House of Commons in 1940, followed by clips outlining the progress and personalities of the Battle. The culmination of the Battle was on 15 September 1940, thenceforth celebrated as “Battle of Britain Day”

MASTER AIR PILOT (NAVIGATOR or REARCREW)

The award of these certificates, signed by the Grand Master, is to honour an aviator, not necessarily a member of the Company, who has in the opinion of the Court displayed over a number of years those qualities of pilotage, air navigation, airmanship and character which have brought honour and respect to the profession. The award should not be seen as an end of career award, but an award in recognition of long service and consistently high standards in one or more branches of professional flying, whether civil or military, including air transport, flying instruction, test or operational flying. In the case of the Master Rearcrew award, to someone who has a direct airborne involvement in ensuring safe and effective aircraft operations. Although no minimum flying hours are required, the expected level of experience required to justify this award would involve typically 15-20 years in the profession, including considerable time as an Aircraft Commander/Navigator in Charge. As the title suggests, the recipient will be a proven Master of their craft. The Certificates are typically presented at the Trophies and Awards Dinner each October. The first recorded Award (Certificate No 36) in 1937 was to a South African recipient, Captain “Casper” Caspareuthus (SAAF and SAA) who was subsequently re-awarded Certificate 162, March 1953.

“A SEASON OF COMMEMORATIONS”:

This has been a season of commemorations. After last year's all-embracing RAF100, this year has seen the 75th anniversary of the D Day landings. Months of planning by many people around the world saw a veritable

armada of C47/DC3s cross from Duxford to Normandy. Sadly, I missed the event as I was airborne enroute to Spain and crossing the French coast at the other end of Normandy. The very international flavour of the day was brought home to me by the sound of a trio of US C130s on the radio. I remember well taking my father-in-law (who crossed at D+4) to the 50th celebrations but doubt I will be present or sentient for the centenary! Centenaries have continued this year with that of Alcock and Brown's epoch-making transatlantic voyage. I describe a less well remembered transatlantic centenary in the news section. And, as I write, we are recalling the first landing on the moon, fifty years ago. That makes one feel rather ancient. What aviation events will our descendants be recalling in 100 years' time? Possibly none of the magnitude of the above. But some aviators quietly, some less quietly, continue to impress with their courage, vision and stamina. I was less than impressed with a recent transpolar circumnavigation by an 8 man crew in a G650ER – if that wasn't underlining and abetting the shrinking of the polar icecaps, I don't know what would. But more meritorious to my mind has been a flight from the UK to New Zealand in a 500 kg aircraft by an RAF pilot to commemorate RAF 100. The circumnavigation in an autogyro that is still in progress. And a perhaps naively optimistic attempt to emulate Amy Johnson's journey to Australia (in a Tiger Moth) by Amanda Harrison. We should celebrate that the UK gene pool still holds many brave, if sometimes batty, pilots! Like many others, I look forward to celebrating the achievements of some of our (probably less batty) aviators at the Trophies and Awards in October. *(Paul Smiddy, Editor, HCAP Journal "Air Pilot" August Editorial)*

SILVER SPITFIRE:

Two pilots are well into a challenge to fly a newly restored Spitfire around the world. The pilots took off from Goodwood aerodrome in West Sussex - the home of the first school for Spitfire pilots - on Monday 5 August. They are now in their 5th week, in Canada. They will stop off at 100 locations in 30 countries during the five-month, 27,000-mile journey. The route goes via Scotland, then westbound to the US, Canada, Japan, Russia and India and back to Britain. The project, named Silver Spitfire - The Longest Flight, is the first such trip of its kind. Matt Jones, 45, from Exeter, Devon and Steve Brooks, 58, from Burford, Oxfordshire, are flying a single-seater Mk IX Spitfire, which was originally built in 1943 in Castle Bromwich, West Midlands. They hope the trip will "showcase" an aircraft which changed the course of history and "reunite the Spitfire with the many countries that owe their freedom, at least in part, to this iconic aircraft". When not at the controls the other pilot will be in a chase plane following the Spitfire. The two aviation enthusiasts travel to Scotland, then Iceland, Greenland, Canada, the United States, Russia and Asia. Mr Jones said; "I'm a bit nervous but excited to get going. The weather is going to be the biggest part of it but also getting fuel to the right places, Avgas is very common here and in the US, but in other countries we are having it supplied for us." A chase plane will have a full-time captain, an engineer, as well as a camera crew to film the journey for a documentary. Mr Brooks said: "It has taken us two-and-a-half years and the time has come to stop making excuses and to get going. "The longest flight will be Hong Kong to Vietnam which is 500 miles. The Spitfire was built as an interceptor which had a range of 300 miles, so the question now is can we nurse it around."

Full coverage on Silver Spitfire: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/silver-spitfire/>

CAPTAIN ERIC "WINKLE" BROWN:

A very interesting interview with Capt. Eric 'Winkle' Brown and the first Mosquito carrier deck landing. Winkle told us that his main assignment in WW2 was to evaluate captured enemy aircraft, e.g. ME109s, Stukas, etc. for intelligence and strategy purposes. Many years ago, when still on the RAeS [Royal Aeronautical Society] SA Council, I invited him to come down to SA to deliver our RAeS biennial Sir Pierre van Ryneveld lecture. This was held in the old Atlas Aircraft Recreation Club. The manager of the club was the delightful Group Captain Frank Bradley who of course had retired, but amusingly because Winkle had been a Captain in the RAF and Frank a Group Captain, Winkle always addressed Frank as "Sir". Frank and I on a few occasions got a roasting from his wife Joan for me bringing him so late after night out at the pub with the boys. Heck, it was usually only about 11 pm! Joan was already in her dressing gown, nightie, hair in rollers and night face makeup, most unlike her usual gorgeous self. Enough of this – watch the video and enjoy. <https://youtu.be/d9Hjne0QA4w> (Sent in by Bruce Prescott, Howick)

OBITUARIES

DOROTHY OLSEN, who has died aged 103 on 23 July 2019, was one of the last surviving Woman Air Force Service Pilots — or "Wasps" who flew aircraft for the US Army Air Forces on the home front during the Second World War. Rather like the British female pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary who delivered planes all over Britain during the war, the Wasps flew bombers and fighters from the factories to airbases, performed test, flights and towed targets for gunnery practice. She buzzed airfields, farmers on their tractors and people waiting for trains at railroad stations as she flew across the American countryside. "I just love to fly," she

recalled in an interview with her local paper, the Chinook Observer, in Long Beach, Washington. "From the time I was a little girl until the time I was flying night missions as a Woman Air Force Service Pilot over moonlit Texas during World War Two, I just loved to fly." Olsen flew more than 20 types of aircraft in 1943 and 1944, ranging from single-seat fighters such as the P-51 Mustang to the four-engined B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bomber.

AIR COMMODORE PETER TAYLOR AFC RAF, who has died aged 82 of pancreatic cancer, was a Cold War fighter pilot who saw action in Aden and served in Germany before commanding a Harrier squadron. A colleague recorded: "My second Flt Cdr on No 8 Sqn in Aden, 1965. Prior to that, among other things, a member of the 92 Sqn Blue Diamonds Hunter aerobatic team. Thereafter Harriers in several appointments, and a notable ejection. Air Cdre as Director of RAF Public Relations. A lovely man: always full of incisive humour, and old school loyalty". Another said: "Impressive leader - great pilot - and an inspiring Boss. Lovely sense of humour". On May 4th 1972 Taylor was flying a low-level training sortie over northern Germany when he sighted a formation of three large birds. He endeavoured to avoid them but one was ingested into the Harrier's single engine, which immediately lost power. Despite his efforts to regain control of the engine, the aircraft lost height and at 100 feet he was forced to eject. He recorded "To my astonishment, I saw the aircraft continuing to fly beautifully in a slight climb away from me to the north. I cannot tell you the feelings I had as I watched what now seemed to be a perfectly serviceable aircraft leaving the scene of my ejection. Indeed, the aircraft eventually flew into cloud at about 7,000 feet and disappeared from sight." The aircraft flew on for 40 minutes before eventually crashing at Hütten, Schleswig-Holstein, West Germany.

LAST MAN TO WALK OUT OF DELVILLE WOOD:

Before the end of the "Great War" of 1914-1918, Dundee High School had lost twenty of its old scholars and three of its staff members to the vicissitudes of battle. One scholar, Capt. Garnet George Green, who had passed the Annual Collective Examination in 1903 at Dundee, was awarded the Military Cross for having, "held the whole wood [Delville Wood] with 118 men (of his B Company of the Second Regiment), the whole day against three German Divisions." He had been born in Dundee in 1889 and after school he joined the Natal Carbineers as a trooper. He saw action during the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 and also in German South West Africa in 1914 - 1915. From January to March 1916 he served (like his schoolmate Russel Tatham) with the 2nd South African Regiment against the Senussi in Egypt. In the Battle of Delville Wood (15 July–3 September 1916), with the South African Infantry, he was wounded and on 20 July he was "the last [man] to leave the trench when relief arrived. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in January 1918; but on 23 March 1918, he was killed in action at Arras". Brigadier-General Tanner recommended Lt. Green for the DSO (Distinguished Service Order), but instead he was awarded a bar to his MC and the Prime Minister of South Africa, General Louis Botha, praised him in the South African Parliament. This brave man has no known grave but his name is recorded on the wall of the Pozières Memorial and, of course, on the Cenotaph in his hometown, Dundee. - *Kevin Burge*

GRAND STATION HOTEL: NORMAN'S GRILL:

The Grand Station Hotel went up in flames on Friday evening, 2 August 2019 (main image courtesy of Eugene Ulman). This news reached the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation members at their AGM on the Saturday afternoon. Heritage people gasped with shock, dismay and distress. The hotel was an icon of Johannesburg; it achieved the status of being Johannesburg's oldest surviving hotel, although by the late 1980s it was no longer run as a hotel. It was and still is located in Jeppestown at 302-04 Main Street. The hotel was planned in 1896 and completed in 1897 strategically sited close to the Jeppe Station. Its name said it all, the Grand Station Hotel. It was a hotel that considered itself "grand" and it was close to a station. It was a substantial hotel - the 1896 plan showed 27 bedrooms and a ladies sitting room. In later years Norman's Grill was renowned for its prawns.

SELOUS SUCCUMBS TO GOTHs AND VANDALS:

It is one of the greatest wilderness areas in the world, and the biggest single game sanctuary in Africa. But now its ecological integrity is to be irrevocably changed, and its very existence is under threat. The sanctuary is Tanzania's vast Selous Game Reserve, a 54,600km² wilderness that President John "The Bulldozer" Magufuli has just announced is to be split into two, with one section declared as the Nyerere National Park, and the rest reserved as a hunting bloc.

Now under imminent threat of being deproclaimed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Selous in the mid-1970s was Africa's greatest sanctuary for elephants, with more than 110,000 within its borders. Then came the ivory wars of the late-1970s and early 1980s, and again, the wave of poaching of the past decade. More than 90% of the elephants were slaughtered, and today just over 15,000 elephants remain in the greater Selous-Mikumi-Niassa ecosystem. The ecological integrity of the Selous is already under threat after the government gave the go-ahead for an open-cast uranium mine in the south and granted scores of oil and natural gas exploration concessions in the reserve. In June 2017, Magufuli's government gave the go-ahead for the damming of the iconic Stiegler's Gorge on the Rufiji River, effectively tearing the northern heart out of the reserve. This was immediately followed by the handing out of logging permits to 17 companies to remove 1,500km² of forest – estimated at 2.6 million trees – to make way for the dam. Magufuli disingenuously states that "only 3%" of the Selous is being alienated. Well, that 3% is the heart of the Selous, now being opened up to roads, a massive dam, power station, pylons, residential infrastructure, airfields – and to mineral, timber and wildlife exploitation. The new national park is being named after modern Tanzania's founding father, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. In 1961, Nyerere stated that, "The survival of our wildlife is a matter of grave concern to all of us in Africa... we will do everything in our power to make sure that our children's grandchildren will be able to enjoy this rich and precious inheritance... the success or failure of which not only affects the continent of Africa but the rest of the world as well." He must be turning in his grave.

LOCKED AND LOADED....

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A weekend drone attack on Saudi Arabia that cut into global energy supplies and halved the kingdom's oil production threatened Sunday to fuel a regional crisis, as the U.S. released new evidence to back up its allegation that Iran was responsible for the assault amid heightened tensions over Tehran's collapsing nuclear deal. President Donald Trump said the U.S. had reason to believe it knew who was behind the attack — his Secretary of State had blamed Iran the previous day — and assured his Twitter followers that "we are ... locked and loaded" depending on verification and were waiting to hear from the Saudis as to who they believe was behind the attack and "under what terms we would proceed!" Actions on any side could break into the open a twilight war that's been raging just below the surface of the wider Persian Gulf in recent months. Already, there have been mysterious attacks on oil tankers that America blames on Tehran, at least one suspected Israeli strike on Shiite forces in Iraq, and Iran shooting down a U.S. military surveillance drone.

BLOODHOUND:

The Bloodhound Land Speed Record team announced today that the Bloodhound LSR car will run for the first time on its dry lake bed race track at Hakskeen Pan, Northern Cape, South Africa, in October 2019. Following the successful 200mph (320km/h) UK runway trials at Cornwall Airport Newquay in October 2017, the team will be targeting 500mph (800km/h) – a key milestone on the journey to setting a new world land speed record. The record runs are currently scheduled for late 2020. Wing Commander Andy Green writes: "As Bloodhound is now in its final weeks of preparation for our High Speed Test session in South Africa, we are reviewing all of our test plans and safety procedures, to make sure we haven't missed anything. We still don't know what happened to Jessi's car or why it crashed and, in any case, Bloodhound is a very different car from the North American Eagle (a competitor project), with a different team and a different approach, so we can't compare the two. However, Jessi's accident is a stark reminder that we are working in an unforgiving environment. In part, that is the point of our High Speed Test session. We need to learn, step-by-step, how to operate in this high speed arena, before we turn the dial up to supersonic levels for a World Record attempt"

NEXT FUNCTION:

Our next Ordinary Lunch will be on Friday 4 October 2019, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. Our Speaker will be our own Fundi, Dr John Ledger, on "Eskom: the Unending Saga":

REMEMBER: Lunch Fees R250 pp. Please pay by EFT – please use your name as "reference"
NEDBANK Melrose Arch, Branch 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

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

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Look forward to seeing you there!
Cheers, Bruce.