



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2018

MARCH LUNCH and AGM:

On a glorious early Autumn day, 38 members gathered for lunch in the Gala Room. Proceedings opened with Grace said by Club President, David MacKinnon-Little. Silvasale provided a delectable meal for the occasion of a Calamari starter followed by Sirloin Steak and Vegetable Medley, accompanied by Frisky Zebra Sauvignon Blanc and Goudini Red Blend.

When the lunch was over, the Chairman welcomed all present to the 2017 AGM, noting that Notice of the AGM had been duly given, and that the 18 Ordinary members present constituted a quorum, declared the AGM open. Apologies were recorded from some 38 members and greetings and good wishes from many of those abroad or unable to be present.

The Minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved. The Chairman then delivered his Report, noting that 2018 is the Centenary of the Royal Air Force and the 55th Anniversary of the Club, and the Treasurer his Report and presentation of the Annual Financial Statements, both of which were duly proposed and seconded. These reports reflected that the year under review, 2017, has been yet another good year for the Club. Membership numbers have been sustained, attendance at monthly lunches has continued at high levels, with 780 members and guests attending through the year. We have again enjoyed some excellent speakers, presentations and audiovisuals on aviation and other topics, while continuing to celebrate and enjoy the traditions, spirit and ethos of our parent organization, the Royal Air Force. The Club continues, happily, in good financial health. Our accumulated funds have grown modestly, and kept pace with inflation, being invested in money market instruments.

The outgoing Chairman and Vice-Chairman retired by rotation and made themselves available for re-election. Colin Francis and Jeff Earle made themselves available, and there being no other nominations, were duly re-elected Hon. Secretary and Hon Treasurer respectively. All other existing Committee Members were re-elected unanimously "en bloc", and Bruce Harrison and Jon Adams re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively by the new Committee

RAF CENTENARY:

Members will recollect that RAFOC arranged a Sunset Ceremony at the "Big House" the Smuts House Museum, in Irene, Pretoria, on Saturday 11th November to celebrate the contribution that General Smuts made in the formation of the Royal Air Force in 1918. A stunning Celebration Flypast was provided by Arnie Meneghelli and Scully Levin in a pair of Harvards in an immaculate display of precision formation flying, overhead the Big House. On the 23 November 2017 Robert Courts, the Member of Parliament for Witney, led a debate in Parliament around the Air Force (Constitution) Act 1917. He took time to commemorate the decision to form the Royal Air Force, and the important role it has since played in serving, protecting and defending this country. Members of Parliament joined Mr Courts in the debate, echoing the important role the RAF continues to play. On the 29 November, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Armed Forces invited serving members of the RAF and the wider RAF family to Parliament to celebrate the signing of the act,

which included a viewing of the original document signed by King George V. The APPG for the Armed Forces were keen to mark this occasion because the Royal Air Force has the distinction of being the only branch of the British Armed Forces to have been formed by an Act of Parliament.

These ceremonies marked the beginning of a series of special events, activities and other initiatives at local, regional and national levels running from April to the end of November 2018. The centerpiece of RAF100 will take place on 10 July, with a centenary service in Westminster Abbey, followed by a parade in The Mall and spectacular flypast over Buckingham Palace. Follow these at <https://www.raf.mod.uk/raf100/whats-on/>

GENERAL ALBERT RICHARD GÖTZE SAAF: “LAST OF THE MOHICANS”

Last month South Africa’s last surviving D-Day fighter pilot fell down a flight of stairs and nearly missed out on a Cape Town award ceremony in his honour on Tuesday 13 February. But General Götze, born in Prieska in the Northern Cape, is not easily defeated: sporting a bandaged arm and forehead, and eyes overflowing with 95 years, he received the Chevalier de l’Ordre de la Légion d’Honneur (Knight in the Legion of Honour) with a firm handshake from the French ambassador to South Africa, Christophe Farnaud.

Götze did cover-flying during the D-Day landing in Normandy, when allied forces invaded Nazi-occupied mainland Europe. He also flew patrols and bomber escorts; flew around-the-clock supply flights during the Berlin Airlift in 1949; completed a combat tour to Korea; rose to the rank of brigadier-general in the South African Air Force; and served as Private Secretary to State President Nico Diederichs in the 1970s. “It was quite eventful,” Götze said of his life so far, relaxing after the ceremony with his son and assorted dignitaries. “I’m now the only [D-Day] fighter pilot still alive in South Africa. It’s like Last of the Mohicans.”

LIFE & DEATH IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN:

A previously unpublished diary by a Royal Air Force chaplain to Battle of Britain pilots barely out of their teens casts new light on the lives of the young men who fought in the conflict. The journal, to be published later this year to coincide with the RAF’s Centenary, records Reverend Guy Mayfield’s posting at RAF Duxford in Cambridgeshire as dogfights raged over southern England and losses mounted among his flock. His account includes depictions of airfield life, ranging from high jinks in the mess to relentless scrambles to intercept enemy aircraft, as well as his interviews with young fighter pilots.

The book “provides us with access to the most heartfelt, deep and meaningful conversations that took place in 1940 as ‘the few’ faced the most monumental challenge of their young lives”. Mayfield had been a curate in central London and an assistant newspaper editor before the war and was posted to Duxford from early 1940 to late 1941. While there he became friends with Douglas Bader, the RAF ace who had lost both legs in a flying accident before the war.

In one passage, Mayfield wrote: “You wake up in the morning; for an instant the horrors have been forgotten, and then slowly they crowd in as consciousness returns. War, mud, blood and tears. One isn’t afraid of dying. The heartache is to see these young men waiting to have their lives cut short. While they wait there’s nothing much for them to do. They talk to me.” By New Year’s Eve of 1940 he wrote that he “hadn’t the heart to sing *Auld Lang Syne* in the bloody world as it now is. There is no time for ‘old acquaintance’. Who’ll be left to remember? If it is remembered next year, how much of it without bitterness and sadness, how much of it will be remembrance of times lost, of things left unsaid and unshared?” Mayfield survived the war and died in 1976. Extracts of his diary have been displayed in exhibitions before, but it has never been published.

Carl Warner, a historian at the Imperial War Museums, which is publishing the journal for the first time as *Life & Death in the Battle of Britain*, said it was “one of the finest accounts of a fighter station at war. It gives rare insight into the thoughts and feelings of young men who, underneath the famous ‘Brylcreem Boys’ exterior, were real people who overcame their own fears day after day.”

LIGHTNING SOLO!

A pair of fighter pilots have become the first in their services to fly the F-35 Lightning straight from training. Flight Lieutenant Liam and Lieutenant Chris became the first Royal Air Force and Royal Navy pilots respectively to proceed straight from flying training in a Hawk to fly the multi-role combat aircraft. Speaking after his flight, Flt Lt Liam said: “It was a sensational experience and, as the culmination of many years training, was certainly the highlight of my time in the RAF so far. I was astonished at the jet’s performance and at how well the simulator had prepared me for taking the Lightning flying. Fellow pilot Lt Chris added: “To fly a Lightning for the first time is almost indescribable. After over seven years of training in the Royal Navy, to finally get into the real aircraft and take it airborne was one of the proudest and most exciting experiences of my life so far.” To date, the cadre of UK Lightning pilots have all transitioned from other aircraft and both new Lightning pilots were accompanied on their first flights by an instructor in a second aircraft. The F-35 Lightning is an advanced, next-generation aircraft procured to operate alongside the

RAF's Typhoon. It will be jointly manned by the RAF and RN, and will form an integral part of Carrier Strike operating from the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

SAXA VORD OPERATIONAL AGAIN...

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, visited the site of the new £10m Remote Radar Head facility, at Saxa Vord, Unst, Shetland, to inspect its progress. The radar will improve RAF and NATO understanding of the airspace north of Britain and further out across the Norwegian Sea, improving the UK's sovereign capability at a time of heightened Russian military activity. It will see the island return to the role it performed during the 1960s and 70s, when the site was used as an early warning radar on NATO's northern flank. The Saxa Vord Radar head will provide key information on aircraft movements to the north of the UK and feed the nationwide Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) operation which is responsible for policing international and UK airspace from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray and RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, as well as supporting civil air traffic control. During the last five years, the RAF has carried out 69 QRA launches. On 15 Jan 2018, two Typhoon aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth were scrambled to intercept two approaching Russian military aircraft which did not respond to the air traffic control authorities.

RAF CENTENARY AT EAA OSHKOSH:

PRESS RELEASE – EAA AVIATION CENTER, OSHKOSH, Wisconsin — (March 5, 2018) — The centennial year of the Royal Air Force will be commemorated with historic aircraft, flyovers, and special programming during EAA Air Venture Oshkosh at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The 66th annual Experimental Aircraft Association fly-in convention, known as “The World’s Greatest Aviation Celebration,” is July 23-29. The RAF’s 100th anniversary will be celebrated throughout the week, with a primary focus on the centennial on Tuesday, July 24.

“‘Legendary’ is perhaps the best way to describe the gathering of people and airplanes that will be part of the Royal Air Force centennial at Oshkosh this year,” said Rick Larsen, EAA’s vice president of communities and member programs, who coordinates Air Venture features and attractions. “From the World War I era, to the Battle of Britain and early jets, to today’s modern military aircraft, the RAF has been an integral part of aviation history. We will fully celebrate that during the week at EAA Air Venture Oshkosh.”

LAST WW1 AIRFIELD HONOURS ITS HEROES:

Traces of the Great War are everywhere at Stow Maries, near Chelmsford in Essex, the only intact First World War airfields left in Britain. On April 1, 1918, its pilots, ground crews, workshops, hangars and aircraft were handed over to the newly created Royal Air force. The airfield is technically an aerodrome although it had no runways, just a flat grass field to allow the flimsy Sopwith Camels to take off and land into the wind. It has been rescued from dereliction by more than 160 volunteers who are restoring its unique collection of buildings, 22 altogether. There are workshops, accommodation blocks, separate messes for officers and airmen, a listed water tower, fuel store and motor sheds. All were built for B Flight of 37 Squadron (Home Defence) which had the job of protecting London and the southeast against raids by Zeppelins and the German Gotha bombers. The charitable trust which rescued Stow Maries is seeking £4.2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to continue its work and the aerodrome is now open to the public. Three of the pilots of 37 Squadron are buried in the churchyard at Stow Maries.

RAF CENTENARY: BAYS’ HILL, AFB SWARTKOP:

Closer to home, all RAFOC members are invited to celebrate the Centenary of the Royal Air Force, together with the **Annual Royal Air Forces Association Memorial Service** for the **Royal Air Force Joint Air Training Scheme** will be held at Bays’ Hill at 10h45 for 11h00 on **Sunday 8th April 2018**. RAFA Chairman Peter McLean will be pleased to welcome you and your wife or partner or your representative there and afterwards at the Gymnasium at AFB Swartkop for refreshments. **Please be seated by 10h45 as the flypast will be at 11h00 promptly**. Wreaths will be laid during the ceremony. RSVP with the names of those attending and indicate if you will be laying a wreath to **Shirley Stones** at the details below as soon as possible to facilitate catering: Mobile: 082 874 2280 Email: chscons@netactive.co.za

SAAF MUSEUM SPITFIRE REPLICA:

Members will be aware that RAFOC has contributed to the construction of a full-scale Spitfire Mk 9 replica by members of the SAAF Museum, Port Elizabeth. The finishing touch was a genuine Mk9 canopy sourced from Duxford in the UK. The replica bears the markings “AGM” of Sailor Malan, as on his personal aircraft whilst

Station Commander at Biggin Hill. The replica will be “unveiled” at a ceremony in the evening of Saturday 7 April 2018 at the Museum. The replica will serve as a memorial to this great son of South Africa, sadly almost forgotten and unrecognised in his generation due to the politics of the day. Sailor died in 1963 and is buried in Kimberley. A number of members plan to be present at the ceremony.

NEXT FUNCTION: RAF CENTENARY DINNER: LADIES DINING-IN NIGHT:

This will be on the first **Friday 6 April 2015, 19h30 for 20h00**

This will be a Ladies Dining-In Night, as last year, again at Wanderers Club. Please plan to be there – and book - to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the RAF, and RAFOC’s 55th Anniversary.

Cost: **R250 pp**. If paying by EFT please use your **“Name + Annual Dinner”** 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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Cheers,
Bruce.

YOUR COMMITTEE for 2018:



STANDING: Geoff Fish, Russell Swanborough, Jean-Michel Girard, Rob Tannahill, Karl Jensen

SEATED: Jeff Earle, Jon Adams, Basil Hersov, David Mackinnon-Little, Bruce Harrison, Colin Francis