



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

[info@rafoc.org](mailto:info@rafoc.org)

[www.rafoc.org](http://www.rafoc.org)

President:	David MacKinnon-Little	
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Colin Francis, Geoff Quick, David Lake	
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison	<a href="mailto:bruce@jbharrison.co.za">bruce@jbharrison.co.za</a> Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams	<a href="mailto:vice-chairman@rafoc.org">vice-chairman@rafoc.org</a> Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd	Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle	Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough	Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740
	Karl Jensen	Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652
	Jean-Michel Girard	Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish	Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Web Master:	Hanke Fourie	Tel: Cell: 082 553 0210
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch	Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 12 – 26<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2020

### GREETINGS TO ALL:

This week brought the news of the passing of Dame Vera Lynn, whose songs captured so much of the spirit of the dark days of World War 2. And here at home, we marked Day 90 of the seige, and the announcement of some welcome relaxation of lockdown restrictions on small businesses and “family” visits, but Level Two Lockdown is still, apparently, somewhere in the fog of Coronavirus...

*“The barber’s shop and the beauty salon are social media where everyone receives news alerts.”*

### WE’LL MEET AGAIN....

She symbolised the spirit and sentiment of the Second World War. Forces' Sweetheart **Dame Vera Lynn** has died at 103, surrounded by her family. Dame Vera believed her singing reminded combatants during the War what they were really fighting for – as she put it, for “precious, personal things rather than ideologies which gave people hope of better times.” Her death, then, comes at a poignant time. The Queen referenced the title of one of Dame Vera's most beloved wartime songs when she told the country, separated from families and friends during the coronavirus lockdown: “We will meet again.” It was the latest proof that her warm place in the public imagination remained until long after she had ceased to have her own television show and had given up touring and singing in public. Earlier this year, she became the oldest artist to have a top 40 album. Read and watch the vast series of tributes to “an icon, a legend, an inspiration” in the media. It was just last month that she gave her final Telegraph interview, where she reminded us: “It is so important to keep going, keep smiling and keep hoping.” Her song “We'll Meet Again” will always remain a symbol of hope, strength and unity in a time of national crisis, having comforted those separated from their loved ones during the Second World War, and then through the global pandemic. Another of her hits, “The White Cliffs of Dover”, soothed and gave hope to war-weary Britons in 1942. It promised a peaceful and bucolic future in which “the shepherd will tend his sheep, the valley will bloom again and Jimmy will go to sleep in his own little room again.” Read how it mended Britain's broken heart. Her Telegraph obituary is well-worth your time. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2020/06/18/dame-vera-lynn-singer-embodied-brave-spirit-wartime-britain/>

\*\*\*\*\*

### OBITUARIES:

**AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR MICHAEL BEAVIS KCB CBE AFC RAF**, who has died aged 90, was the pilot of the first Vulcan bomber to fly non-stop from England to Sydney in Australia. He later held senior posts in the RAF and in NATO. After a period developing the techniques of in-flight refuelling

using converted Valiant bombers, the RAF carried out a number of long-range flights to demonstrate the new strategic reach of the air force – a capability that in the Vulcan’s long service would later be amply demonstrated during the Falklands war. In early 1960 the crews of the Vulcan bomber force, a key element of Britain’s nuclear deterrent, began to train in the air-to-air refuelling procedures. Beavis joined the RAF in 1947 and was commissioned two years later. As a Flight Commander on No 617 (Dambuster) Squadron based at Scampton near Lincoln, in June 1961 Beavis set the record for the fastest non-stop flight from the UK to Australia which he established by flying a Vulcan from RAF Scampton to RAAF Richmond in just over 20 hours. He became Officer Commanding No.10 Squadron flying VC10s in 1966 and Group Captain Flying at RAF Akrotiri in 1968. He was appointed Assistant Director of Defence Policy at the Ministry of Defence in 1971, Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters RAF Germany in 1976 and Director General of RAF Training in 1977. He went on to be Commandant of the RAF Staff College, Bracknell in 1980, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief at Support Command in 1981 and Deputy Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Central Europe in 1984 before retiring in 1987.

**AIR COMMODORE JEREMY JOHN “JERRY” WITTS DSO RAF**, who has died aged 69, led the first bombing operation by four Tornados of the Dharhan detachment on the first night of Gulf War One in January 1991. He had joined the RAF in September 1968 and, after two tours as a pilot on Vulcans, he trained on the Buccaneer spending five years in Germany flying the low-level strike/attack bomber. After a staff appointment he took command in early 1990 of No 31 Squadron based RAF Bruggen in Germany. In early January 1991 he became the detachment commander at Dharhan with 22 Tornados, 33 crews and 400 ground personnel. In the early hours of January 16 he attacked the airfield at Mudaysis with the JP 233 airfield denial weapon dropped from very low level at night in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire. He went on to complete 14 operations and was awarded the DSO for his “Consummate courage and outstanding flying skills.” One of his officers commented: “Throughout all the troubles, Jerry stood tall taking a pragmatic view at all times. His leadership was outstanding and I do not know any one of 400 of us out there who would not follow him anywhere.” He later commanded RAF Northolt and his final posting was as air attache in Washington. He was a long-serving Trustee and more recently Life Vice-President of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **BEAUFIGHTER RISING:**

A British couple have found the wreckage of a crashed World War II fighter jet, believed to be a Bristol Beaufighter TF.X aircraft, on a beach in Northeastern England. Debi Hartley, a 51-year-old warehouse supervisor and her partner, Graham Holden, a 54-year-old lorry driver, were walking their dog Bonnie on Monday on a beach in the town of Cleethorpes when they spotted the plane. The couple did not initially realize what the wreckage was, and spent 45 minutes exploring it and taking photographs before identifying it, Hartley told CNN. After they returned home to begin researching it they discovered the plane dated back to World War II. Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum confirmed to CNN it believed the plane to be a Bristol Beaufighter TF.X, with the aircraft serial number JM333, from No 254 Squadron RAF. Ian Thirsk, RAF Museum head of collections, said in a statement to CNN that the aircraft crashed on April 21 1944 soon after take-off from nearby North Coates in Lincolnshire after both engines failed. "The crew were uninjured and escaped to safety," Thirsk added.

## **GREEN HOWARDS** *(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEKS – RAMBLINGS 11):*

Dave Evans writes: “Well done folks - another excellent edition. The following may be of interest: It’s a small world! Reading Andrew Muttitt’s item on the Green Howards and VE Day was very close to home for me – my father had joined up as a territorial before WW2 started – in the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Green Howards. He went over to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force, and was heavily involved in the defence and the retreat to Dunkirk. B Company, which he was part of, had ceased to exist by the time they got to the beaches. He had suffered a head wound from shrapnel – he had

been bent over and the shrapnel had gone in under his helmet! He was evacuated as part of those 300 000 plus who did get away, and by the time he was well enough to go back into service, his unit had moved on, so he spent the rest of the war in England in a training unit – still in the Green Howards. He died of a massive cerebral haemorrhage just before his 47<sup>th</sup> birthday – we wonder to this day whether the shrapnel all those years back had done more damage than anyone realized at the time...”

## **BAOR: PREPARATION OF THE MESS CROQUET LAWN:**

Bob Napier has contributed this sequel to his anecdote on “The Blue Party”: After the grand entrance of the 40 Regiment Livers-in at the Blue Party, The Powers That Be felt that junior officers’ time should be spent a bit more constructively. The Second in Command was A Great Enthusiast and he felt it would be a good use of their energy to make a croquet lawn at the back of the Mess. The mess “garden” was in fact a patch of semi-grassed area surrounded by a very thick, mosquito infested pine forest. Conceived, designed and overseen by the 2IC, work started with the grudgingly press-ganged subalterns, but it wasn’t long before large amounts of earth, flora and fauna were dug up, relocated and landscaped by a determined work force of just the Project Architect and the Unit Training Officer (another Great Enthusiast), watched loyally from the Mess windows by the beer comforted junior officers. In a new attempt to galvanise the youngsters, a Sunday was designated as a “Gardening and BBQ Day” to remove those trees identified as obstacles to the Finished Vision. After several hours the final, largest tree was strung with a Heath-Robinson type pulley and rope system designed so that the subalterns could heave the falling tree from its primary gravitational course towards a planned final resting place to be chopped up. The angles of descent calculated, the Second in Command assumed the role of set director: I was ready to deliver the final axe blow; my fellow officers were gripping on the rope. The order was given to “Chop!” I swung the axe, the tree started to fall and the next thing I saw as I stood up was five pairs of feet travelling past me at head height, their owners clinging onto the rope, accompanied by more than a few expletives. The tree continued on the descent path that nature intended onto the Mess roof. A scuttle of senior captains watching from the patio narrowly missed being flattened, but luckily the only casualty was a newly bought pair of expensive sunglasses and several mess roof tiles. The single most important calculation left to chance had been the disparity of weight between 5 young officers versus a ton of tree. The project continued with rapidly diminishing support from all sides, except the 2IC who kept on gamely until he was posted, leaving a legacy that disappeared back into the forest within months. The croquet lawn was put out the front of the Mess, onto a perfectly suitable lawn that had existed from the start.

*(Brown Jobs always amused the RAF with some of their outcomes, this being one – Assistant Ed)*

## **LIGHTNING F35 ENGINES:**

Recent articles in the aviation media reveal that the F35 Fighter performance is compromised by engine issues. Bruce Prescott has kindly contributed the following piece on the issue: As stated the F35 Needs a Bigger, More Powerful Engine because the current one is just not cutting it. In an attempt to simplify the situation with the F35, here is some more info on the F35 engine saga. I underline the adaptive cycle engine for specific reasons (in simple terms it incorporates 3 bypass systems [instead of just one or two bypass systems and being able to control the engine’s bypass combinations and ratios according to circumstances high thrust at altitude, acceleration, hovering, etc., unlike a typical modern airliner having just one un-adjustable bypass ratio [typically 75% of the thrust being provided by the fan, not by the driving gas turbine engine]. Upgraded future versions of the Lockheed Martin F35 Joint Strike Fighter could see the stealthy jet’s Pratt & Whitney F135 turbofan replaced with a new adaptive cycle engine. The current F135 engine is at the limits of its capabilities and can’t push the jet to the outer edges of its airframe’s capabilities - especially at low speeds told us unrestricted flight envelope operations are required. Basically, the F35 airframe gets too hot at lower flight levels because of the limitations of the F135 engine which has to run at high temperatures to generate maximum power. The F135 generates 28,000 lbs of thrust normally, but produces over 43,000 lbs of thrust with the afterburner engaged. Today the F35 has flight restrictions at low altitude because of “thermal management” issues. The U.S. Air Force is funding the

development of next-generation engines under the Adaptive Engine Technology Development (AETD) and Adaptive Engine Transition Program (AETP). These new engines which are called variable cycle or adaptive cycle engines—will be able to optimize their performance for various combinations of speeds and altitudes for maximum efficiency. *Contributed by Bruce Prescott.*

## **SPACE SHUTTLE DISCOVERY 35 YEARS!**

On the 18 June 1985 Space Shuttle “Discovery” launched on its fifth mission. The third of five fully operational orbiters to be built, its first mission, STS-41-D, flew from August 30 to September 5, 1984. Over 27 years of service it launched and landed 39 times, gathering more spaceflights than any other spacecraft to date. Like other shuttles, the shuttle has three main components: the Space Shuttle orbiter, a central fuel tank, and two rocket boosters. Nearly 25,000 heat-resistant tiles cover the orbiter to protect it from high temperatures on re-entry. Discovery became the third operational orbiter to enter service, preceded by Columbia and Challenger. Discovery launched the Hubble Space Telescope and conducted the second and third Hubble service missions. It also launched the Ulysses probe and three TDRS satellites. Twice Discovery was chosen as the “Return To Flight” Orbiter, first in 1988 after the loss of Challenger in 1986, and then again for the twin “Return To Flight” missions in July 2005 and July 2006 after the Columbia disaster in 2003. Project Mercury astronaut John Glenn, who was 77 at the time, flew with Discovery on STS-95 in 1998, making him the oldest person to go into space. It embarked on its last mission, STS-133, on February 24, 2011 and touched down for the final time at Kennedy Space Center on March 9, having spent a cumulative total of almost a full year in space.

## **NAUGHT FOR OUR BORDER SECURITY:**

The South African National Defence Force’s (SANDF’s) Joint Operations division has stated that safeguarding South Africa’s air borders has been totally neglected due to insufficient funding, and called for more to be done under Operation Corona. Joint Operations Chief, Lieutenant General Rudzani Maphwanya, was due to give a presentation on Operation Corona to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD) on 18<sup>th</sup> June, but his presentation was postponed as committee members took exception to the absence of the Chief of the SANDF, General Solly Shoke. The presentation was supplied to committee members electronically ahead of the meeting. The presentation said that since the redeployment of the SANDF to the borders, air border safeguarding “has been neglected in total. This is entirely attributed to the insufficient budget negatively impacting on the availability of air assets and surveillance sensors.” “The South African Air Force (SAAF) has a very limited and outdated Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and air surveillance (radar sensor) capabilities, which are further aggravated by the lacking budget restricting related procurement projects. There are currently no aerial patrols done over either the land or maritime borders.”

## **UK ARMED FORCES WEEK 2020:**

Monday 22 June marked the start of Armed Forces Week, a series of events, videos and articles celebrating the range of activities and people comprising Her Majesty’s Armed Forces. Beginning with an opening welcome by Her Majesty the Queen, the week will explore the work of our people at home and around the World and will close with Armed Forces Day on Saturday. The week’s finale will be Armed Forces Day itself. In response to the pandemic many elements of the day that were to have been hosted in Scarborough will now take place as a virtual event that will shine a spotlight on local and national military veterans, and serving personnel, honouring their unstinting commitment, service and sacrifice. Visitors to the Scarborough Armed Forces Day website will be able to view military related videos and personal stories, enjoy images and personal recollections from previous Armed Forces Day events, and take part in themed activities and competitions.

## UK-QATARI TYPHOON JOINT SQUADRON:

The Royal Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Squadron, known as No.12 Squadron, have marked an important milestone as they commenced flying as a Joint Squadron. Based at RAF Coningsby, No.12 Squadron is a unique initiative between the UK and Qatar and will provide the QEAF with valuable experience operating the Typhoon as they prepare to receive their first aircraft. With deliveries commencing in 2022, the aircraft are part of a £5.1 billion deal between BAE Systems and the Government of Qatar. The flags of both nations were raised at RAF Coningsby this week as Typhoons with new Squadron markings flew for the first time, signaling the Squadron's readiness to train pilots and ground crew from both air forces. The UK has a long history of working with international partners in our Armed Forces, with such defence engagement recognised as key to strengthening partnerships and promoting our national interest. However, No. 12 Squadron is the first Joint Squadron in the RAF since the Second World War and Battle of Britain.



## DEFENDING UK CYBER SPACE:

The RAF's role is broadly defined as "Defending the skies of Britain and projecting Britain's power and influence around the world" – as in the Qatari case. The organisation uses a combination of state-of-art static radar, mobile units, aircraft, and satellites to gather minute-to-minute information on air activity. The Air Surveillance and Control Systems Force continuously compile a "Recognised Air Picture" of the airspace in and around the UK, providing vital early warning of potential threats such as unauthorised aircraft or missiles to support the RAF's "Command of the Air." But today they also monitor potential threats in space – and cyber-space: from space weather and debris that can damage orbiting satellites, to hostile acts from our adversaries. Potential adversaries are growing their capability and confidence to launch cyber-attacks that could disrupt the UK's critical civilian and military air and space systems such as air traffic control. Successful cyber-attacks could prevent our ability to protect UK airspace and provide air power overseas. The RAF's cyber-security specialists are working to combat such threats – "defending Britain's cyberspace".

## CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the twelfth weekly Newssheet - "Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings" - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest (preferably nothing on the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact through the lockdown. Thanks to all those who have contributed! Take care – keep safe in these troubled times, and remember that all this, too, shall pass... Remember also that Gordon Dyne is coordinating orders for Rick Peacock-Edwards book "**Rate of Climb**". So, let's hear from you...Please send your suggestions or contributions to [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org)

## TAILPIECE:

This is what those of us who are aged 70 or 80 years plus, might look forward to.... This incident apparently happened at an assisted living centre: The people who lived there had small apartments, but they all ate at a central cafeteria. The manager recalls: One morning one of the residents didn't show up for breakfast so my wife went upstairs and knocked on his door to see if everything was okay. She could hear him through the door and he said that he was running late and would be down shortly, so she went back to the dining area. An hour later he still hadn't arrived, so she went back up towards his room, but found him on the stairs. He was coming down the stairs, but was having a hard time. He had a death grip on the handrail and seemed to have trouble getting his legs to work right. She told him she was going to call an ambulance, but he told her no, he wasn't in any pain and just wanted to have his breakfast. So, she helped him the rest of the way down the stairs and he had his breakfast. When he tried to return to his room, he was completely unable to get up even the first stair step, so they called an ambulance for him. A couple of hours later she called the hospital to see how he was doing. The receptionist there said he was fine, and they had found the cause of his difficulty with walking - he just had both of his legs in one side of his boxer shorts. I'm sending this to my children so that they don't sell the house before they know all the facts.....

**MATT**



*'If Mickey Mouse catches coronavirus we'll have to tell Lord Lucan, Adolf Hitler, Marilyn Monroe...'*