



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

info@rafoc.org

www.rafoc.org

President:	David MacKinnon-Little	
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Colin Francis, Geoff Quick, David Lake	
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison	bruce@jbharrison.co.za Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams	vice-chairman@rafoc.org 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 27 - 9th OCTOBER 2020

GREETINGS:

Week 27 brought Day 194 of the plague and some substantial, and welcome, rainfall in Gauteng. Otherwise, it was quite a week - Much heated debate on testing and preventive measures continues in the UK, with Scotland taking more stringent measures than the UK ... The tsunami of misinformation continues The last of British Airways' jumbo jets took to the skies for the final time on Thursday, but cloud and heavy rain prevented a dual take-off of the airline's last two Boeing 747s ... Deep into the US Presidential election campaign came that news that Trump had tested positive for Covid, igniting a media frenzy, of accusations and counter accusations. The bombshell news in SA was the arrests for corruption of some prominent businessmen – hopefully, the chickens are coming home to roost!! Sadly, the murder of a top SAPS Officer who was investigating corruption within the Force, outside his home, and another awful farm murder and its aftermath, in Senekal in the Free State, show that all is not well in the state of SA ... Only a limited number of countries are “open” for air travel to SA. None of this (again) has done much good for the SA Rand. We are certainly living in chaotic times where almost nothing is predictable, where all assumptions, even those arrived at through plenty of research, data and careful contemplation, are not making much sense anymore. Even best practice, and the tried and tested are not offering communities much sense of safety in stormy weather.

RAFOC LUNCHES:

We have been keeping this issue under continuing review during lockdown. As advised last week, we have been considering a November Armistice Day Lunch, Covid restrictions permitting, at a convenient venue as Wanderers has not yet resumed functions. We are planning the Armistice Day Lunch, on Friday 6 November which will include our Ladies.

As the organisers of the lunch we will be accepting the responsibility for the wellbeing of all at the gathering as best we can. The risk is that if anyone attending tests positive at the time, or shortly thereafter, then all attending are required to go into quarantine. As far as we know, all RAFOC members have been able to “keep safe” and free from infection, so the material risk is the venue itself and its staff. At this stage, the Rand Park Golf Club, which has reopened and is operating with the necessary protocols, looks the most likely venue. Attendance will be strictly by pre-booking and no ‘walk-in’ attendees will be accommodated.

Please let the Committee know if you would attend and numbers - RSVP to bookings@rafoc.org

OBITUARIES:

Group Captain Kenneth John “Ken” Parfit RAF, who has died aged 96, flew 29 missions in Lancaster's, the majority with the Pathfinder Force. After training, Ken joined No 61 Squadron. His first of many Bomber Command raids was as part of a force of 250 Lancaster's that bombed German troops in the Caen area of France in order to support invading Canadian soldiers. Ken went on to join the 8 Group PFF (Pathfinder Force), whose vital role was to locate and mark out targets for the main bomber fleet. His last operation was in April 1945 when he was just 21. Ken's RAF career continued after the war, as he became Commanding Officer of No 84 Squadron in Aden, Yemen, which flew Beverley heavy-lift transport aircraft. A few years later, he was the Commanding Officer of No 30 Squadron at RAF Fairford, which flew Hercules C130 transport aircraft. One of his Hercules flight commanders has commented: “Nobody should be considered for a squadron commander post unless they have served their apprenticeship under someone like Ken Parfit.”

In 1974, he became Station Commander at RAF Episkopi, Cyprus, and had only been there for a few weeks when Turkey invaded the island in response to an attempt to annex it to Greece. Ken helped with arranging support for refugees, and with the repatriation of families to the UK. Ken was then posted to Ankara, Turkey, and served as the Plans and Policy Officer for the Central Treaty Organisation, which was intended to counter the threat of Soviet expansion into Middle East oil-producing regions.

On leaving the RAF in 1977, Ken worked for British Aerospace in Saudi Arabia until his final retirement in 1982. In 2015, Ken was awarded the Légion d'honneur by the French Government for his role in the D-Day bombing raids in June 1944 in support of Allied ground forces.

Squadron leader Allan Scott DFM RAF, who has died aged 99, shot down at least five enemy aircraft over Malta making him a Spitfire “ace”. He joined the RAF in March 1941 to train as a pilot. In June 1942 he was ordered to Gibraltar. The island of Malta was under siege from relentless bombing attacks and additional fighters were desperately needed. Thirty-two Spitfires were embarked on the aircraft carrier HMS Eagle, which then sailed eastwards into the Mediterranean. Early on the morning of July 21 Scott and his fellow pilots took off from the deck and the 30 that became successfully airborne set off for Malta in four groups. As the formations passed Cape Bon in Tunisia a cultured English voice gave them a heading to steer north-east. It was a German spoof to lure them to enemy-held Sicily. The Spitfire leader was suspicious and made a radio call to Malta. He was answered by a voice he recognised when the correct heading for Malta was given. Scott was soon in action, first with 603 Squadron and then with 1435 Squadron. On 10 August Allan shot down at least five enemy aircraft over the besieged island. Operation Pedestal: A convoy of 50 ships entered the Mediterranean with crucial supplies for the beleaguered island, came under intense attack and losses were high. As they neared Malta, fighter cover became available to the survivors, including the tanker SS Ohio. The most intense period of fighting was to be in October, which became known as ‘The Last Blitz,’ when the Axis air forces mounted a concentrated bombing campaign. Malta's fighter pilots were scrambled three or four times each day. In December he was awarded an immediate DFM, the citation concluding: ‘he has exhibited the greatest courage and determination to engage the enemy.’ Scott returned from Malta at the end of 1942 and became an instructor at a fighter-training unit. He was later commissioned and joined 122 Squadron, equipped with Spitfires. He flew intruder missions over northern France attacking road and rail transports from low level. In January 1944, the squadron received long-range Mustang fighters and Scott flew bomber escort missions. In the build up to D-Day the Mustangs were fitted with bombs and Scott flew dive-bombing sorties. In July 1944, he undertook a test pilot's course and for the rest of the war he tested a wide variety of aircraft at maintenance units before they were ferried to squadrons. By the time he left the service in late 1947 he had tested more than 80 different types of aircraft. After a brief period as an airline pilot Scott rejoined the RAF in 1950. In October 1953, the Tiger Moth bi-plane he was flying suffered a structural failure and crashed. Scott was severely injured and was unable to return to flying for two years. He later served in Iraq and flew transport aircraft worldwide. In 1963 he transferred to the air traffic control branch and retired from the RAF in 1976. He retained his great interest in flying. On his 70th

birthday he flew a Tiger Moth and to celebrate the RAFs' 100 Anniversary in 2018 he flew in a two-seat Spitfire. He had hoped to do so again to celebrate his own 100th birthday next year. A few years ago he commented: "Flying a Spitfire to me was wonderful, it becomes part of you." A modest, unassuming gentleman, Scott rarely spoke of his wartime service. In his retirement he became a supporter of the RAF Benevolent Fund, and the current Controller of the Fund, Air Vice Marshal Chris Elliott, described him as: 'indefatigable in his championing of RAF veterans.'

Flight Lieutenant Stuart Sendall-King RAF:



Celebrities, Church leaders and aviators have paid tribute to the man behind the world's largest humanitarian airline – Stuart Sendall-King, who has died aged 98. The former RAF Flight Lieutenant co-founded the Mission Aviation Fellowship – an international charity using aircraft to deliver food, fresh water and medicine to the most isolated and forgotten people on the planet. During a career spanning seven decades he supported the D-Day Landings as a 247 Sqn Engineering Officer, pioneered aid missions in Sudan, was awarded the Légion d'Honneur, and was inducted into the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, joining names such as Neil Armstrong and Jim Lovell. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who joined MAF missions to South Sudan and Uganda, said: "Stuart's tremendous contribution to the founding of MAF has had a profound impact on the ministry of many people across the world and the Anglican Communion. I was saddened to hear of his death, and I pray for Stuart's family and the MAF staff at this time." Sendall-King's eldest daughter Rebecca said: "Dad's life motto was always to be the best man he could be for God in every season of his life. He strived to be the best bachelor, then the best husband, the best father and finally the best widower. He was always so determined and committed to MAF. He is an inspiration to us all." Today MAF operates 138 purpose-built light aircraft in more than 26 countries, employs over 1,300 staff and partners with more than 2,000 humanitarian organisations. In his bestselling book "Hope Has Wings", Stuart described the inspiring, faith-filled journey that has seen the charity fly to more remote and inaccessible destinations than any other commercial airline. Sir Cliff Richard, who wrote a foreword for the book's early publication, said: "Stuart was there from MAF's earliest beginnings. He shared its first exploratory flight into the heart of Africa, and experienced its triumphs, tragedies, joy and pain. MAF brings hope and help to people in extreme need and suffering. It is a vital story of faith – exciting yet humbling." Stuart died on August 29 at his home in Folkestone, Kent in the charity's 75th Anniversary year. He leaves behind three children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. To mark its 75th anniversary, MAF is publishing a book "Above and Beyond" dedicated to Stuart. (Simon Mander in RAF News) (Notable SAAF airmen Steve Smith and Gordon Marshall played a key role on MAFs development in Africa, and our member and friend the late 'Lin Barratt served for many years on the Board of MAF SA)

THE WAY IT WAS – 80 YEARS AGO:

In February 1940 RANA, (Rhodesia and Nyasaland Airways) as a company, ceased to exist as it was absorbed into the Southern Rhodesia Air Services. The staff became employees of SRAS, either as volunteers or as conscripts from the Southern Rhodesia Air Force, but there were few conscripts among the staff as the vast majority were volunteers.

Some of the aircraft, but not all, assumed their battle livery. As such they were responsible for a good deal of military transport, but normal commercial services continued operating as Southern Rhodesia Air Services (SRAS) a government organisation that impressed all civil aircraft at the beginning of the war and undertook all passenger flying within the colony and to surrounding countries.

SRAS provided for both Rhodesian Air Training Group communications and airline services. And it maintained, and even increased, its normal commercial services after South African Airways in Johannesburg and Wilson Airways in Nairobi ceased to function in the early years of the war. It provided the only means of air travel for civilians between Johannesburg and Nairobi and between Salisbury and Nairobi, via Mpika, Mbeya and Dodoma. However, some SRAS aircraft never shed their civilian status: two Rapides VP-YAU and VP-YBT and Leopard Moth VP-YAZ. Since Mozambique was neutral, aircraft VP-YAU, VP-YBT and VP-YBZ were operated with civilian registrations, along with Leopards VP-YAT and VP-YAZ. Some were occasionally 'decivilianised' and 'recivilianised' to meet the exigencies of the service. SRAS departures from Belvedere to Blantyre and Nairobi presented numerous problems. Passengers had to be squeezed in next to their luggage, HM Royal Mail and the odd crate of live chicks! On several occasions aircraft even got bogged down at the western end of Belvedere Aerodrome (Salisbury, now Harare). Night landings there were always something of an adventure and as often as not it was left to the engineer on duty to work the airfield lighting – goose neck flares along the runway. Airfields were primitive en route. Apart from landline telephones, radio communications were non-existent. (Mitch Stirling: "They Served Africa with Wings")

THE WAY IT IS – 80 YEARS On:



This week two Typhoon jets from RAF Coningsby are flying alongside their German counterparts at an airbase in Estonia to strengthen ties as NATO partners. It's key for us to constantly work with our allies to improve working relationships. The aircraft, of 3 (Fighter) Squadron, are being hosted by Eurofighters of the Tactical Air Force Wing 71 'Richthofen' at Ämari Air Base Eesti õhuvägi as part of the NATO Baltic Air Policing (BAP) mission. The Germans are at Ämari as part of a rolling programme undertaken by several NATO air forces. The two air forces will be flying combined training missions under the so-called 'plug and fight' concept and examining ways in which air and ground crews can work side by side.

OPERATION JOINT WARRIOR:

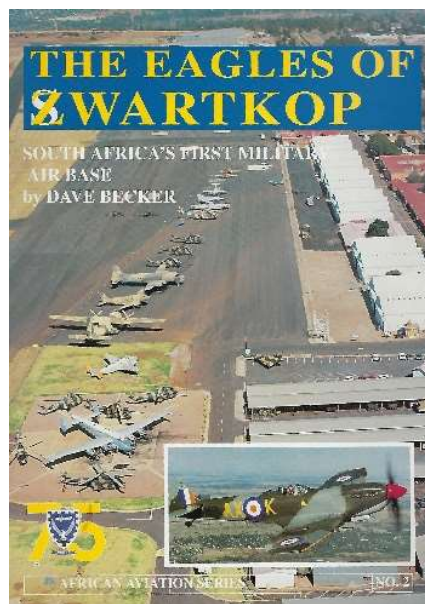
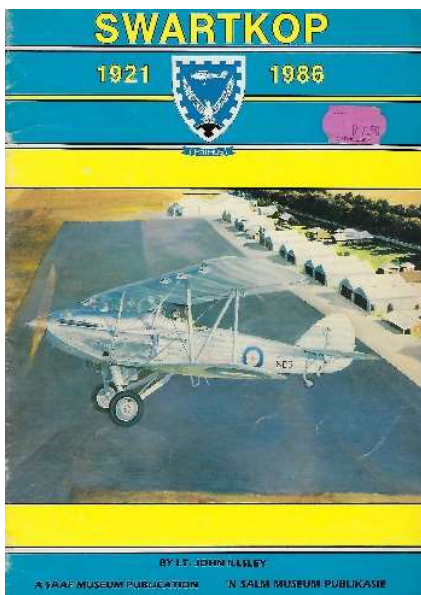


HMS Queen Elizabeth has embarked the largest number of warplanes ever onto her deck as she prepares to take her place at the heart of a UK-led NATO Carrier Strike Group. Two squadrons of F-35B stealth jets, the RAF's 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) and the US Marines Corps VMFA-211 (The Wake Island Avengers), have joined the 65,000-tonne carrier as she sails for exercises with allies in the North Sea. With a total of 14 jets and eight Merlin helicopters, it's the largest concentration of fighter jets to operate at sea from a Royal Navy carrier since HMS Hermes in 1983, and the largest air group of fifth generation fighters at sea anywhere in the world. In this month's group exercise, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be joined by seven Royal Navy destroyers, frigates and auxiliaries, plus other supporting units, to form a fully sovereign Carrier Strike Group, ready to fight on the surface and in the air. The Carrier Strike Group will be put through its paces off the north east coast of Scotland as part of Joint Warrior, NATO's largest annual exercise.

Usually based in Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma, in Arizona, VMFA-211 arrived in the UK just under two weeks ago. Landing at the home of the Lightning Force, RAF Marham after the trans-Atlantic flight, they worked up with 617 Squadron conducting the RAF led Exercise Point Blank before embarking in the carrier.

THE HISTORY OF AIR FORCE BASE SWARTKOP:

Next year, 2021 is AFB Swartkop's 100th Anniversary and the FSAAFM (Friends of the SAAF Museum) need your help to update the rich history of Swartkop over the period since these two books were published.



They were written more than twenty years ago, on the history of Air Force Base Swartkop – one of the oldest continually operating air bases in the world, if not the oldest. Swartkop 1921 – 1986, by John Illsley, was published in 1989. The other: The Eagles of Swartkop – South Africa's First Military Air Base: by Dave Becker, published in 1996, Swartkop's 75th anniversary. You may well own one or both of them. Next year is the Centenary, and we are going to fill in as much of the recent history as we can, since those books were published. The first priority is to collect all the relevant information, stories, anecdotes, etc. Depending on how much we collect, we will then decide what to do with it – at the very least, it will go into the Library at the SAAF Museum at AFB Swartkop. We hope that what we will collect will be material which can be used generate a 'Volume 2' on the history of the Base. If you have any material – photos, stories, printed material, etc. – which you think may fit into what we're looking for and are willing to share it, please contact us so we can discuss it, and look at possible ways forward such as copying material, interviewing, people, etc. And please also forward this notice to any friends or other contacts you know who may be able to contribute. We would far rather have too much material which we can edit down, than lose anything because someone thought 'it wouldn't be of interest.' So don't be shy about what you mention or send – cover anything which you think may be relevant. In the first instance, please contact Ian Grace on his mobile at 082 452 5291 or on iang@xsinet.co.za .

CSAAF RETIRES:

Lieutenant General Fabian Zimpande “Zakes” Msimang retired as the Chief of the South African Air Force (SAAF) during a ceremony at Air Force Base Swartkop on 30 September 2020 after eight years at the helm of the airborne arm of service of the South African National Defence Force. His successor has yet to be announced.

NSRI: WE NEVER STOPPED WORKING:

In their latest Newsletter a number of NSRI volunteers reflect on how they adapted to lockdown in order to continue working effectively. CEO Dr Cleeve Robertson comments “We have been busy operationally, with more medevacs in 6 months than we usually have in a year (lots of coronavirus cases), as well as a constant stream of rescues.” The NSRI was founded in 1967, 53 years ago and provides a remarkable, all-volunteer service around South Africa's coastline and in inland waters. Patti Price has a special place in the hearts of Sea Rescue volunteers and is recognised as the founder of the NSRI. Station 10's (Simon's Town) base is named in her honour. But her spirit is not only revealed in her doggedness and the dedicated appeal she made for a rescue service, older Simon's Town crew members describe her as fearless, not only in the way she negotiated the steep hills in the area on her motorcycle, but also how she craftily dodged the stakeouts the Security Police put on her Boulder's Beach flat. Patti was a founder member of the Black Sash movement and had been a much-loved stage performer in her youth. 'To initiate is more than to build' is a fitting attribute to a lady who started the process upon which the NSRI was built.

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the twenty-seventh weekly Newssheet - “Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings” - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest that will help us all to keep in contact through the lockdown. Thanks again to all those who have contributed and continue to do so! We will use contributions progressively as we move upwards and onwards.... Rick Peacock-Edwards' book “Rate of Climb” is available from www.loot.co.za for convenient local collection at Clicks.

Scully Levin's great new book “Punching Holes in the Sky” is also now available. Karl Jensen advises “I have read it and anyone with a smidgeon of interest in aviation, let alone knowing Scully, will simply love this “unputdownable”, well written tome full of pictures. The books are on limited offer at R250

and are all signed by Scully personally.” Karl has stock and has very kindly agreed to handle local orders: karlpix@icon.co.za or WhatsApp 082 331 4652.

Take care – keep safe in these troubled times, use your PPE, and remember that all this, too, shall pass ... We'll keep you posted on developments at Wanderers should they occur ... So, let's hear from you...Please send your suggestions or contributions to bookings@rafoc.org

TAILPIECE:

Bored during lockdown? Call a Women's Rights group and ask to speak to “the man in charge”...

Do you know how weird it is being the same age as old people?

I drink wine because I don't like to keep things bottled up...

Two weeks ago, we had automatic gates fitted to our driveway that open in response to my wife's voice. They haven't closed yet....

When my wife makes me angry, I look at her through the prongs of my fork and pretend she's in jail. It heals me spiritually.

Men at 25 play football, Men at 40 play tennis, Men at 60 play golf. Have you noticed that as you get older your balls get smaller?

“How was your blind date?” “Terrible! He showed up in a 1932 Rolls Royce”. “What's so terrible about that?” “He was the original owner....”

One of our “country members”, Bruce Prescott, no doubt prompted by last week's “Tailpiece” sent in this reassurance, which many members may find encouraging:

A N O S O G N O S I A

“Temporary forgetfulness” A fairly simple analysis by French Professor Bruno Dubois of the Institute of Memory and Alzheimer's Disease (IMMA) at La Pitié-Salpêtrière - Paris Hospital. He addresses the subject in a rather reassuring way:

"If anyone is aware of his memory problems, he does not have Alzheimer's."

- I forget the names of families ...
- I do not remember where I put some things ...

It often happens in people 60 years and older that they complain that they lack memory.

"The information is always in the brain, it is the "processor" that is lacking."

This is "Anosognosia" or temporary forgetfulness.

Half of people 60 and older have some symptoms that are due to age rather than disease. The most common cases are:

- forgetting the name of a person
- going to a room in the house and not remembering why we were going there
- a blank memory for a movie title or actor, an actress
- a waste of time searching where we left our glasses or keys ...

After 60 years most people have such a difficulty, which indicates that it is not a disease but rather a characteristic due to the passage of years.

Many people are concerned about these oversights hence the importance of the following statement:

"Those who are conscious of being forgetful have no serious problem of memory.

"Those who suffer from a memory illness or Alzheimer's, are not aware of what is happening."

Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of IMMA, finally reassures the majority of people concerned about their oversights:

"The more we complain about memory loss, the less likely we are to suffer from memory sickness."

WITHOUT A SINGLE DEGREE, THEY BUILT US
ROADS THAT HAVE LASTED AN ETERNITY...



AND THEN, THE ENGINEERS ARRIVED!!!



MATT



*'I'm ringing to see if you've
been in Sheffield or Leeds
recently. Am I speaking to
President Trump?'*

MATT



*'If you show the early signs
of becoming an armchair
expert, you must
self isolate till 2021'*