



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 33 – 20th NOVEMBER 2020

GREETINGS:

This week started off with a bang – an earthquake offshore Saldanha, with just a brief mention in the news headlines. We mark Day 239 of the “Great Plague”.... No shortage of other fascinating stories, trending in SA the “Great Bushiri Escape”, for which no-one, least of all Aaron Motsoaledi, is apparently to blame. Zuma’s “Stalingrad” tactics in the headlines again – Justice Zondo dismisses application for his recusal. Magashule gets bail – but is denounced by the Free State ANC. Christo Wiese steps down from Shoprite. Taxi blockade on the N1 to Pretoria.... Etihad suspends flights to SA. (Remember the codeshare adventure with SAA?) The SAA Rescue nightmare continues... Thursday is World Toilet Day! Abroad, In UK Boris continues to create seismic events of his own with threats of extending lockdown over Christmas, Dominic Cummings’ departure and severely upsetting Nicola and a few other Scots. The All Blacks go down, astoundingly, to the Argentine Pumas. Tiger Woods goes down spectacularly on the 12th at Augusta. A racing pigeon sold for a record R29 Million, trumping the R22 million Presidential buffalo... Whatever next? Covid Vaccines are apparently, now to hand. Will they be compulsory? All eyes still on the US election saga: Biden an apparent winner, but the legal challenges to an apparent evidence of election rigging continue mounting... Scytll, Smartmatic, Dominion Systems and server seizures... Joe Stalin got it right – it’s who counts the votes that matters. And the flood of media misinformation just keeps rolling along...

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

THOUSANDS OF messages paying tribute to the men and women who took part in the Battle of Britain have been sealed in a time capsule to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle’s end. The Royal Air Forces Association invited the public to document their gratitude so that future generations could experience the appreciation felt by people in 2020. Almost 6,000 tributes – including some from celebrities – were sent to the charity, which sealed them in a capsule for burial in the Association’s Remembrance Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire. The burial ceremony marked the 80th anniversary of the last daylight raid in the UK by the Luftwaffe – October 31, 1940. Tributes inside the capsule included many from those whose family members served, and, in some cases, died, while in RAF service during the Battle of Britain. Others were written by serving and former RAF personnel paying tribute to their predecessors. Former RAF fast jet pilot and ex-England rugby international Rory Underwood submitted a tribute for the capsule. Among those present at the time capsule’s burial was veteran Terry Whittaker, 83, from the RAF Association’s Erewash branch in

Derbyshire. He said: "I salute all those who were involved – 'The Few' who flew and 'The Many' who supported them. Their sacrifices were great, but their legacy of freedom was greater." AM Sir Baz North, the RAF Association's president, said: "We don't know when our time capsule will be dug up and opened, but we do know that whoever reads these tributes in the future will be bowled over by today's society's overwhelming gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Battle's hard-won victorious outcome." (RAF News)

DIPLOMATIC COUP

A British diplomat has been hailed as a hero in China after he jumped into a fast flowing river and saved the life of a young woman who was unconscious in the water. Stephen Ellison, the newly appointed British Consul General in Chongqing, was visiting the ancient town of Zhongshan on Saturday when a 24-year-old woman is understood to have slipped while taking photographs. The 61-year-old, who is also a champion triathlete, quickly removed his shoes before entering the water and rescuing the tourist.

Watch the drama filmed by onlookers - <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/11/16/>

50 LEADING LIGHTS LIST:



Air Vice-Marshal Ian Gale MBE MBA MA, the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, has been celebrated in the Kindness & Leadership, 50 Leading Lights list, created in association with Lloyds Banking Group and the Women of the Future Programme. This list celebrates 50 phenomenal leaders working in the UK today; leaders who are driving change, business growth, and making a positive impact with kindness. The diverse list recognises CEOs of the most valuable top FTSE 100 companies but also rising stars and unsung heroes, including teachers and NHS healthcare champions – all of whom embody a leadership style that holds kindness at its core and that delivers results. As Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Gale is responsible for the strategic management, coherence, reputation and all international, parliamentary and other engagement of the RAF, plus many other special projects. He is a member of the Royal Air Force Board and

a non-executive director of the UK Civil Aviation Authority. Air Vice Marshal Gale has set an impactful example of allyship through his personal commitment to staff engagement and his extensive mentorship that supports individuals and groups in their development, whilst he too learns from his mentees in turn. (RAF News)

FLIGHT OF A LIFETIME: HURRICANE BE505 L-XP:

THE DAUGHTER of a World War II Hurricane pilot has achieved a long-held ambition after she flew in the same aircraft her father piloted during combat. Eugenie Brooks fulfilled her dream of flying in Hurricane BE505 L-XP last month in memory of her father, Pilot Officer John William Brooks DFC DFM, who served with 174 (Mauritius) Squadron. With pilot Anna Walker, Eugenie took off for an unforgettable trip from Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar – in what is now the world's only two-seater Hurricane – to the white cliffs of Dover, before flying over RAF Manston, Plt Off Brooks' wartime base. Throughout the flight Eugenie carried a photograph of her father in the aircraft's cockpit during his WWII service. After her memorable flight, she said: "I did this not only for my Dad but for all those brave pilots who did not survive. My Dad was the best in the world and this flight in his old aircraft with his serial number has made my life complete." The two-seater Hurricane is currently part of Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar's fleet. Eugenie revealed it was her father's favourite aircraft. Robin Brooks from Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar said: "Eugenie's day at the Hangar and her flight was filmed

for a feature length TV programme to be shown early next year on the Yesterday channel. (RAF News)

OBITUARY:



SQUADRON LEADER Tom Rosser OBE DFC RAF who has died aged 100, flew 60 missions in his unarmed Spitfire taking photographs over Burma. He was awarded the DFC. Born in Scotland, he enlisted in the RAF in 1940 and trained as a pilot. After gaining his 'wings', he was sent to 232 Squadron to fly the Hurricane from airfields in the north-east of the UK for convoy patrols. He was transferred to 122 Squadron, flying similar operations, but this time in the Spitfire. In March 1942 he joined a party of reinforcements for hard-pressed squadrons based in India and he joined 79 Squadron at Kanchrapara near Calcutta. At the end of his time in Burma, Rosser left for the Middle East to command the photographic reconnaissance training flight of 74 Operational Training Unit based in Palestine, where he remained for a year. After a period in Egypt he returned to England having been overseas for almost four years. He had hoped to remain in the RAF but slight colour blindness thwarted his attempts. Rosser joined the Colonial Service and was soon posted to Nigeria.

Following the announcement in October 1958 that Britain had agreed that Nigeria would become an independent state on October 1, 1960, he was responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the Independence Day celebrations attended by the Princess Royal, representing The Queen. For his services, he was appointed OBE. In October 2016 he took to the skies in a Spitfire again, 71 years after he last flew the iconic aircraft. Two years later, as part of the RAF centenary celebrations, he was one of two veteran Squadron Leaders chosen to hand over the commemorative RAF 100 baton to a new generation of RAF cadets at Biggin Hill, having been flown from Northolt in an aircraft of the Royal Squadron. He enjoyed the day 'very much' and said it was 'a different style of flying being in The Queen's Flight in comfort.' (RAF News)

BLOODHOUND STILL IN HUNT FOR SPEED TITLE:

World Speed King - Wg Cdr Andy Green says his bid to smash his own record by hitting 1,000mph in the rocket-powered Bloodhound car is still alive. The project stalled in 2018 when Bloodhound plunged more than £20 million into the red and was placed into receivership. The project was bailed out by UK engineering tycoon Ian Warhurst and the team hit more than 600mph across the Hakskeen Pan – a dry river bed in South Africa – before the team hit financial problems once more. Speaking in a Channel 4 TV documentary to be screened this Saturday, former combat pilot Andy says Bloodhound is still in the running to break the 770mph record he set with entrepreneur Richard Noble in 1997.

SUSTAINABLE GREEN PEACE?

With air traffic flights and passengers drastically down in 2020, the 2019 top issues of aircraft emissions and "flight shame" have all but disappeared. But they will reappear just as soon as traffic recovers. "As we come out of the coronavirus, climate change and airlines' reaction to it will be front and center," JetBlue Airways CEO Robin Hayes told the Global Sustainable Aviation Forum in September. And at least some of the money now being loaned to airlines by governments will have to go into environmental projects, he said. "I really don't think we have a choice. Customers will demand

it. Governments and regulators will increasingly pay attention to it.” With that in mind, one of the most repeated comments of the forum, staged by the not-for-profit organization Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), was the need to scale up and accelerate production of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF). SAF, several speakers commented, is the only short - to medium - term option for the airline industry if it is to reach decarbonization targets, notably the industry’s pledge to reduce emissions to 50% of 2005 levels by 2050. The world’s fuel producers are starting to put real resources behind this, but the task they face is vast. Today’s SAF production capacity is around 20,000 tonnes annually; that will have to expand to as much as 500 million tonnes by 2050 to meet anticipated demand. That will require huge investment from both refiners and governments - the latter possibly through taxation systems to give incentives for new production facilities. The coming decade will be critical in expanding production exponentially. “2050 seems a long way away, but unless we break the back of this in the next 10 years, we won’t get there,” London Heathrow Airport CEO John Holland-Kaye said. “Let’s not waste biofuels on trucks and cars.” (Aviation News)

BOEING MAX TO FLY:



SEATTLE, Thursday Nov. 18, 2020 -- The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today rescinded the order that halted commercial operations of Boeing (NYSE: BA) 737-8s and 737-9s. The move will allow airlines that are under the FAA's jurisdiction, including those in the U.S., to take the steps necessary to resume service and Boeing to begin making deliveries. "We will never forget the lives lost in the two tragic accidents that led to the decision to suspend operations," said David Calhoun, chief executive officer of The Boeing Company.

"These events and the lessons we have learned as a result have reshaped our company and further focused our attention on our core values of safety, quality and integrity." Throughout the past 20 months, Boeing has worked closely with airlines, providing them with detailed recommendations regarding long-term storage and ensuring their input was part of the effort to safely return the airplanes to service. An Airworthiness Directive issued by the FAA spells out the requirements that must be met before U.S. carriers can resume service, including installing software enhancements, completing wire separation modifications, conducting pilot training and accomplishing thorough de-preservation activities that will ensure the airplanes are ready for service. "The FAA's directive is an important milestone," said Stan Deal, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "We will continue to work with regulators around the world and our customers to return the airplane back into service worldwide." In addition to changes made to the airplane and pilot training, Boeing has taken three important steps to strengthen its focus on safety and quality.

Organizational Alignment: More than 50,000 engineers have been brought together in a single organization that includes a new Product & Services Safety unit, unifying safety responsibilities across the company.

Cultural Focus: Engineers have been further empowered to improve safety and quality. The company is identifying, diagnosing and resolving issues with a higher level of transparency and immediacy.

Process Enhancements: By adopting next-generation design processes, the company is enabling greater levels of first-time quality.

For more information, visit www.Boeing.com/737-max-updates.

THE SENA LINE: GREEN SHOOTS IN MOZAMBIQUE:

Railway rehabilitation between Mozambique and Malawi, via the Sena Line through the Mutarara-Vila Nova de Fronteira and Vila Nova da Fronteira-Bangula branch, is expected to begin soon.

Connecting the Sena Line, between Mutarara and Bangula, the intention is to export sugar to the European market, through the Port of Beira. Janfar Abdulai, Ministry of Transport and Communications of Mozambique, has guaranteed the funding for the 44km, estimated at USD 46 million, thus creating all conditions for the start of the contract. The Malawian counterpart of Transport and Public Works, Mahumed Sidik Mia, noted that, their first phase would begin with the rehabilitation of 71km, between Vila Nova da Fronteira-Nsange and Nsange-Bangula.

The second phase is to establish the Beira-Lilongwe section. Funds are currently being raised through traditional international cooperation partners. With this development it is envisioned that passenger rail services, suspended decades ago, will once again return. Transnet Engineering recently signed a maintenance contract with CFM, the Mozambique operator.

RAFOC DECEMBER LUNCH:

Our December Lunch will be on Friday 4 December 2020 12h30 for 13h00 at Rand Park Golf Club. We have decided to stay at RPGC, which is open and operating with the necessary protocols, as the best available venue since Wanderers is still refurbishing. Those members who attended the November Lunch will know it is a very congenial venue. As the organisers of a RAFOC lunch we will be accepting the responsibility for the wellbeing of all at the gathering. 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. We also respect the decision of members who continue to avoid gatherings. Details of the lunch, likely to be priced at R300 per head for a Christmas menu, will be circulated in following week’s Ramblings. Note that pre-payment by EFT is essential. RPGC is a cash free venue, so you need to be prepared to pay by card for additional drinks. Look forward to seeing you there!

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the thirty-third weekly Newssheet - “Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings” - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest (preferably not on the antics of ex-Presidents or NCCC!) 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....

Take care – we’ve made it so far - keep safe in these troubled times, use your PPE, and remember that all this, too, shall pass....

We’ll keep you posted on further venue developments for next year at Wanderers as negotiations progress.

So, let’s hear from you... Please send your suggestions or contributions to bookings@rafoc.org

TAILPIECE:

Who will be blamed for Bushiri’s disappearance?

- a) Bheki Cele
- b) Jan van Riebeeck
- c) Apartheid
- d) Brackenfell High School...

Zuma will "exercise his right to say nothing", says Zuma's legal counsel, advocate Muzi Sikhakhane. He would, wouldn't he?

Downing Street erupted into all-out civil war last week and Dominic Cummings, who had never seemed more secure, was out on the No10 doorstep, cardboard box in hand.

Township Joke: “Okay, my turn to shuffle – Give me the cards. Hey, problem! There are cards missing ! Where is the Ace?” “In Court – facing charges of corruption!”

I just found a leaflet in my post box, informing me that I can have sex at 82! I'm so very happy, because I live at 74.... so its not far to walk home afterwards...

I always read my wife's horoscope so I can see what kind of a day I'm going to have...

My wife made me coffee this morning and winked at me when she handed me the cup... I've never been more scared of a drink in my life!

The Irish never hesitate to come to the aid of their fellow man. Shortly after take-off on an outbound, evening Aer Lingus flight from Dublin to Boston, the lead flight attendant nervously made the following painful announcement in her lovely Irish brogue: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm so very sorry, but it appears that there has been a terrible mix-up by our catering service. I don't know how this has happened, but we have 103 passengers on board, and unfortunately, we received only 40 dinner meals. I truly apologize for this mistake and inconvenience." When the muttering of the passengers had died down, she continued, "Anyone who is kind enough to give up their meal so that someone else can eat, will receive free and unlimited drinks for the duration of our 6 hour flight." Her next announcement came about 2 hours later: "If anyone is hungry, we still have 40 dinners available."

ENJOY LIFE....It has an expiration date!!

After the months of lockdown, It has come to this:

1. The dumbest thing I ever bought was a 2020 planner.
2. I was so bored I called Jake from State Farm just to talk to someone. He asked me what I was wearing.
3. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house & their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
5. This morning I saw a neighbour talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into my house & told my cat. We laughed a lot.
6. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Pyjamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
8. This virus has done what no woman has been able to do. Cancel sports, shut down all bars & keep men at home!
9. I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch him/her with a 6-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!
10. I need to practice social distancing from the refrigerator.
11. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the Backyard. I'm getting tired of the Living Room.
12. Appropriate analogy. "The curve is flattening so we can start lifting restrictions now" is like saying "The parachute has slowed our rate of descent, so we can take it off now."
13. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask & ask for money.
14. The spread of COVID-19 is based on 2 things:
 - 1 How dense the population is.
 - 2 How dense the population is.

MATT



*'My new car is electric.
It has nearly enough range
to drive to the nearest
charging point'*

MATT

