



## 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 6 – 15<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020

### GREETINGS TO ALL:

Well, the lockdown, enforced prohibition, obligatory masks and curfew continues. As Mark Twain once famously remarked on “progress”: “It was all right once, but it went on too long” - so the “*new normal*” is starting to wear a bit thin. Our President maintains an Olympian silence to rival that of General De Gaulle. The highlights of the past week were the fly-past’s to commemorate VE Day which, thanks to television and the internet, we were all able to watch.

### CHIEF OF AIR STAFF VE75 MESSAGE:

Friday, 8th May was the 75th anniversary of VE Day, Victory in Europe Day, the day marking the end of World War II in Europe, was celebrated in UK by the Red Arrows who led the tributes with a breath-taking fly-past over Central London (*without Heathrow control having to re-route flights*) while Royal Air Force Typhoons simultaneously flew over the cities of Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast to commemorate the allied forces, veterans and many who sacrificed for freedom. In numerous small ceremonies the Armed Forces led the nation in commemorating the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe and paid tribute to the enormous sacrifices of the “Greatest Generation” in restoring peace to the continent. Although the enormous public events planned for Central London were unable to go ahead, messages of thanks to Second World War veterans were sent from across the Armed Forces, thanking them for their resilience, determination and sacrifice. Two Second World War Spitfire aircraft flew over the White Cliffs of Dover and military bands played wartime music for the television tributes. Another very simple, but poignant, televised ceremony took place in Balmoral, Scotland, where Prince Charles and Lady Camilla laid floral tributes at the War Memorial, to the strains of “The Flowers of the Forest” played by a lone Piper, and then led the nation in the observance of the Two Minutes of Silence. Military personnel across the UK and on operations around the world paused for the two-minute silence during the National Moment of Remembrance. As most celebrations had to happen to the confines of private homes the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston recorded his message, in which he said: “We want these fly-past’s to lift eyes and spirits in celebration of peace in Europe 75 years ago today. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to that generation of heroes, from all backgrounds and many countries, who gave so much to defend the United Kingdom and free Europe from Nazi tyranny.”

You can watch and listen to his address at <https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/articles/chief-of-air-staff-ve75-message/>

## MEMORIES OF VE DAY:

Gordon Dyne has sent in a number of links to the IWM (Imperial War Museum) which is really worth an online visit. A recent link has memories of how it was 75 years ago. "To mark the occasion, IWM have put together an audio clip that in four minutes gives some idea of how it felt when the war ended in Europe. Voices of War brings together numerous first-hand accounts of VE Day from our vast sound archive. "It was so sad for those that had just lost, perhaps only the day before, one of their nearest and dearest. It was all so sad. But there was the other side that was so wonderful." Although the war in the Pacific continued until August, 'Victory in Europe' meant the beginning of the end to a conflict that had cost the lives of millions, had destroyed homes, families, and cities, and had brought huge suffering and privations to the populations of entire countries. "We fished out a Union Jack which we had which survived the bombing. We hung it outside and there were bonfires outside...and people dancing in the streets and cheering. The relief was unbelievable." Take a few minutes to listen to VE Day memories, including those of an army nurse who served in Egypt at the time, a Jamaican aircraftsman who immigrated to the UK aboard the Empire Windrush in 1948, a Jewish man from Berlin who spent six weeks in Sachsenhausen concentration camp and even Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Reflect on a time of both celebration and cautious relief, as we consider what victory really meant for people in factories and fields, and in hospitals and homes, around the world in 1945.

<https://us11.campaignarchive.com/?u=658d50dc0a76d8fea656177bd&id=4cbbfd6422&e=b6525334bf>

## COLONEL TOM MOORE:

In addition to the fly-past on his Birthday, one of "that generation of heroes", Captain Tom Moore, in recognition of his fundraising efforts, has also had a GB Railfreight Class 66 locomotive named after him. The 129-tonne No. 66731 (which has already been unveiled with the message "Thank You NHS") will be named 'Captain Tom Moore' The nameplate will have the added detail of 'A true British inspiration'. The naming took place to coincide with Captain Moore's 100th birthday (Thursday 30 April). John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, said: *"Happy birthday Captain Tom! On behalf of myself and the whole team at GB Railfreight I wanted to offer a big 'thank you' for what is fantastic fundraising that you've carried out. We are in awe of your efforts to raise money for frontline NHS workers. We thought we were good at raising money but what you've achieved for the National Health Service is quite simply fantastic. "Last week we unveiled one of our freight locos in honour of all the critical workers at the NHS, painted in their livery. It was a way of offering our thanks particularly for your efforts, and to wish you a very happy birthday. We are very proud to name this loco after you, Captain Tom. "After today it will be pulling crucial rail freight throughout the country helping to keep the NHS going, helping to get food on people's tables and also helping to kick start the country's economy as we go forward. Thank you again Captain Tom and I'm very proud that your name will be carried on our locomotive."*

He has also been appointed the first Honorary Colonel of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate, in recognition of his incredible NHS fundraising feat that embodies the Army's values and standards and has captured the nation's heart. General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith, Chief of the General Staff (CGS) made the appointment, which has been approved by Her Majesty the Queen, the day before Capt. Tom's centenary. Capt. Tom was informed in a letter presented by the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Miller) at Captain Moore's home in Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire.



<https://www.railadvent.co.uk/2020/04/class-66-locomotive-named-captain-tom-moore-by-gb-railfreight.html>

## MERLIN MAGIC:

The mention of the DH 98 Mosquito prompted a number of responses, including this one from Bruce Prescott in Howick: "When Sir Stanley Hooker paid a visit to Atlas Aircraft in the late 1960s as an adviser/consultant, he selected me to go to England to work with his staff for more on-the-job experience, especially in turbojet performance and manufacturing quality control. He was my mentor at the time, and I am grateful for having a copy of his book, "Not Much of an Engineer", autographed and given to me by the Chief Designer of the Hawker Harrier, Dr John Fozard. According to the book he was the man responsible rescuing Rolls Royce from bankruptcy in the RB211 days and is accredited of having been responsible for a redesign of the Merlin's air inlet duct and supercharger. This was initiated by the requirement for the engine to provide more power to enable the Spitfire to reach an altitude of 40 000 feet. The redesigned engine was installed in the Spitfires, Mustangs, Mosquitoes and a special mission Lancaster."

## WOODEN WONDER:

And this from Dave Evans: "Here's a photo of a large (1/32) "Wooden Wonder" (*this one's polystyrene*) I built a year or two back, if you're desperate enough to use it as a filler. It's very difficult to compare the capabilities of aircraft of different eras - was an SE5 a better fighter than a Starfighter? They are therefore normally rated against what else was around at the time. Using the latter criteria, a lot of people say the Mosquito was the world's best ever warplane!"

*(Ed: Hermann Goering thought so!)*



## THERE I WAS...

Ernie Todd's RAF reminiscences about AVM Johnnie Johnson and others generated a further contribution from Brian Stableford as he looked back on his Service days and recollections of the then Senior Officers. AVM Johnson had been involved in an episode which saw one of Her Majesty's aircraft being tasked to transport soil from Kenya for his garden in the "barren rocks of Aden". This, and other peccadilloes, had led to his early retirement....."Indeed the RAF in the '60's was run by a cabal of ex WW II eccentrics and woe betide your future if you crossed any of them. Johnny Johnson had been drummed out of the brownies just before I got to Aden. It was an 84 Sqn Beverley that he sent to Nairobi. One of his many sins was that he also imported the new Dacron cloth from Singapore and decreed that all KD in Aden, had to use his brand. Ironically, it was a complaint submitted by an Airman in stores that brought him down. How are the mighty fallen! My 105 Squadron Commander was one Eddie Rigg, who was awarded an AFC for doing the spinning trials on the Hunter at Boscombe Down. He also wore the cap as the Transport Wing Commander (Argosies, Beverley's Twin Pioneer's and a lonely Dak) After a "tourex" send off party got out of hand at departures, where he was present, he got a letter from the Station Commander, as the Wing Commander, complaining

about 105 Squadron. He promptly wrote back, saying that the "105 Squadron had been severely reprimanded." The Station Commander at Khormaksar was one Mike Beetham, who was to become CAS during the Falklands War. He insisted on inspecting officer's quarters in the mess, where he ordered the Station Warrant Officer to take a very "bashed" SD cap and burn it. When its owner got back from the squadron, he wrote a formal complaint, that the only memento of his father, killed in the war, had been destroyed. Now, a WW II Bates cap and badge was completely different from a 1960's cap. But reduced to ashes, Beetham had no leg to stand on and had to apologize. He also wrote in Routine Orders, that the habit of circling tourex dates on calendars was to cease. When he thereafter found a circled date, he called in the culprit and demanded an explanation. "That's not my "tourex" date, Sir, that's yours." The last anecdote about him, was when he did go tourex, he gave the traditional "farewell" drink in the bar. Determined to drink his mess bill off the clock, every officer on the base, turned up. After a very brief appearance, Beetham excused himself and left. The party raged on for another three hours, resulting in a phenomenal bill. Beetham decreed, that since he had only been there for five minutes, he would only pay 1% of the bill. The balance was to be split between all the Officers on the base!! (*Group Captain Beetham went on to greater things – see below*) Part of the Argosies woes, was that the Army insisted that it should carry a Saracen Armoured Car. This required a strengthened floor which added over a ton to the weight. That done, it never ever carried the Saracen! The Army also insisted that the Hastings carry a Landrover, slung under the belly. Thus, the Hermes ended up as the Hastings as tail dragger, and never carried the under-slung load.

**MARSHAL OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE SIR MICHAEL JAMES BEETHAM, GCB, CBE, DFC, AFC, DL** (17 May 1923 – 24 October 2015) was a Second World War bomber pilot and a high-ranking commander in the Royal Air Force from the 1960s to the 1980s. As Chief of the Air Staff during the Falklands War he was involved in the decision to send the Task Force to the South Atlantic. At the time of his death Beetham was one of only six people holding his services' most senior rank (*excluding Prince Philip's honorary rank*) and had the longest time in rank, making him the senior Marshal of the Royal Air Force. In July 1959 Wing Commander Beetham captained the first aircraft, a Valiant bomber, to fly non-stop from the United Kingdom to Cape Town. He was awarded the Air Force Cross in the 1960 New Year Honours. After several staff tours, during which time he was promoted to Group Captain on 1 January 1962, Beetham was appointed Station Commander RAF Khormaksar (in Aden) in November 1963. At the time of his arrival, Khormaksar was the RAF's largest overseas base and markedly overcrowded. That December saw the start of major attacks against British forces in Aden (*the Aden Emergency*) and over the next two years Beetham spent considerable time dealing with the security of his overcrowded station. However the security problems did not prevent the aircraft based at Khormaksar being used on operations in the neighbouring region of Radfan.

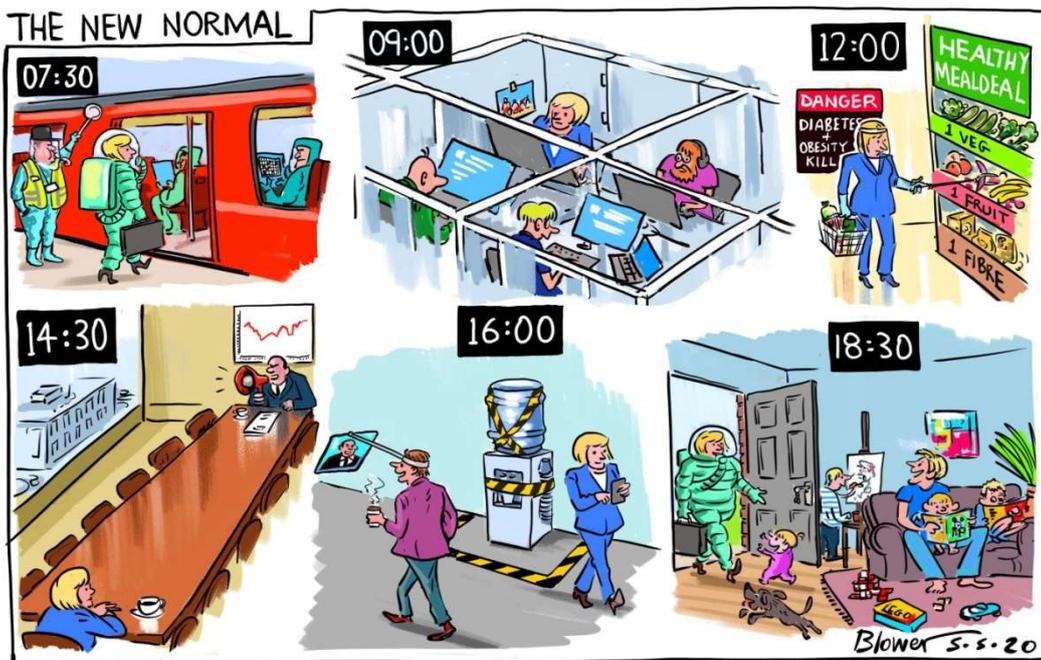
## AVIODOME OR AVIODROME?

Geoff Quick writes: "My thanks to whoever picked up my typo regarding the "museum under the dome" at Schipol (The Aviodome). Unfortunately, they corrected it to "Aviodrome" which is a later and different Museum at Lelystad, nowhere near Amsterdam. Incidentally the Aviodrome houses a Dornier 24 flying boat, which was transferred from the custody of RAF Museum at Hendon following a change of RAFM collection policy where it was originally included to provide a contrast to the Stranraer. Apparently, a recent candidate for pride of place now at Hendon is a collection of a hundred hats! Cheers, Geoff." (*It was I, Geoff. Mea Culpa! Ed.*)

## THE FIRST AND THE LAST:

Also, on the topic of senior Air Force personalities, David Haggie wrote in to say: "I have in my possession a book titled **The First and the Last** – the autobiography of Adolf Galland, signed by him. My Father's date on it says 1997, and there is an inscription written as follows: "To Dawn Haggie (my mother) with best wishes. It was wonderful to meet you. Heidi Galland Feb 1997". If my memory serves correctly, my parents met the Galland's in Cape Town that year with Pat Wells

(known I'm sure to all of us. He was a Battle of Britain member of the Few and had a DSO). The reason for this meeting was that Pat and his wife were with the Galland's touring the wine route, and the reasons that they were doing this was (I think) as follows. At a D Day ceremony in France in the '90s, Pat had met Galland. On discussing their wartime exploits, they determined that they had met over the skies of France (date unknown) and Galland shot Pat down. This led to them meeting in the Cape, and the four of them (Mr and Mrs G, and Mr and Mrs W) went wine tasting! Lovely story. Anyone with more detail (or indeed confirming the story) this would be good to know. The book is quite extraordinary – as Chief of Luftwaffe fighter command, he sparred with Hitler on the best way to fight the air war. My best wishes to all at RAFOC – no wine, no tobacco and no lunches! Purgatory!”



## WHERE THERE'S A WILL....THERES AN EMERGENT BUSINESSMAN:

Lockdown regulations in South Africa have seen an increase in demand for products currently not available, with the national border protection tasking reporting a half a million Rand increase in the value of contraband seized last month compared with March 2019. Statistics from the Joint Operations Division of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) show contraband, including cigarettes, other tobacco products and alcohol, conservatively valued at R1,07 million was confiscated by patrolling soldiers on South Africa's land borders with Botswana, eSwatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe between 1 and 31 March. This is R472 063 more in Rand terms than the previous March. At the same time, it appears lockdown protocols and regulations, whether in South Africa or its neighbours, has not affected the efforts of dagga smugglers. No doubt entrepreneurial opportunities abound...

See also the article "Black markets in Booze and Cigarettes are Thriving" on the "Daily Friend" site:

<https://dailyfriend.co.za/2020/05/12/black-markets-in-booze-and-cigarettes-are-thriving/>

## MI AMIGO MEMORIAL:

The "Mi Amigo" memorial is a war memorial at Endcliffe Park, Sheffield, England, marking the World War II crash site of the **USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress Mi Amigo**. On 22 February 1944 the heavily damaged USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft Mi Amigo was returning from a bombing mission over Aalborg, Denmark. Around 5pm, engines faltering, it emerged out of low clouds and crashed in the park with the loss of all ten crew. The pilot of Mi Amigo, from the 364th Bomber Squadron, based at Chelveston, Northamptonshire, was Lt John Kriegshauser who received a posthumous US Distinguished Flying Cross for his courage in sacrificing the crew rather than hit

children playing in the park. Among those children were Tony Foulds, then eight years old, and Keith Peters, aged nine, who was interviewed by Forces Broadcast Network (British Forces Broadcasting) for a 2015 documentary also broadcast on Sky TV. Tony Foulds, the schoolboy that witnessed the plane come down, has been looking after the shrine for decades. Sadly, hooligans recently stole pictures and flags from the Memorial, prompting a surge of public condemnation in the media. The Goths and Vandals walk amongst us... (Sent in by Gordon Dyne)

## CHEERS FOR TODAY:

This is the sixth weekly Newssheet - "Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings" - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest (*nothing on the Facebook Fancies, OR the Ministers of Lockdown and Disorder, OR Ebrahim Patel's strange taste in clothes, Please!*) that will help us all to keep in contact through the lockdown. So, let's hear from you....Please send your suggestions or contributions to [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org)

Thanks to all who have sent in notes of appreciation or contributions. We'll do our best to fit them all into successive issues – if your contribution hasn't yet appeared – we'll get there! Meantime, keep the bright side up – and remember, all this, too, shall pass...Keep safe and well and stay at home, off the streets and out of trouble....Keep your masks On - Remember, 19 000 criminals have been released from prison to make space for errant citizens!

The Committee.

## TAILPIECE:

In a small American town, a band of squirrels had become quite a problem.

The Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist Church, the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran Church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

The Episcopalians tried a more imaginative path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol poisoning. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do...

But the Catholic Church came up with a more very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

And not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since....

