



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 9 – 5th JUNE 2020

GREETINGS TO ALL:

Well, after the “big freeze” of the previous week, the highlight of this week was certainly the relaxation of “lockdown” to “Level 3” and the re-opening of liquor outlets, and the lifting of the overnight curfew. Press and social media were abuzz with scenes of queues waiting to get into outlets, most of which were quickly sold out of available stocks, particularly of beer – for home consumption only. Restaurants and pubs remain closed and travel is restricted. What Boris Johnson called the “fog of coronavirus” persists... But a not unwelcome announcement in SA is that Covid19 has put AARTO on ice (or eish)....

RISE, SIR TOM!

Captain Sir Tom Moore said he was "overawed" to hear that he will be knighted. "To get this honour is so outstanding that I really can't say how different I feel, but I certainly feel I've been given a very outstanding honour by the Queen and the Prime Minister," he told BBC Breakfast. "I thank them all very much. I'm certainly delighted and I am overawed by the fact that this has happened to me." Sir Tom added he was "looking forward" to receiving the honour from The Queen, but hoped she wasn't "heavy handed with the sword as I'm a weak soul", he said. The 100-year-old Second World War veteran raised almost £33 million for health service charities by walking laps of his Bedfordshire garden. Prime Minister Boris Johnson described Sir Tom as a "true national treasure" and praised his "fantastic fundraising" which he said, "provided us all with a beacon of light through the fog of coronavirus". Mr Johnson recommended Sir Tom be exceptionally honoured by the Queen, who has approved the honour, Number 10 said. His knighthood comes just weeks after he was made an Honorary Colonel to mark his centenary and fundraising efforts.

MEMBERS NEWS:

Gordon Dyne sent a copy of “Ramblings” to **Ivan Holshausen** (Korean War Veteran, SAAF and RRAF) in Pietermaritzburg who in turn sent it to fellow Korean War Veteran **Peter Henning**, now in the UK, whose response gives some interesting insights into RAFOC’s early history: “Thanks for the newsletter of the Jhb RAFOC. I was a member, and on the Committee, of Cape Town RAFOC which had as its Chairman one of the founders of the club **Gordon Jefferies** and of which Johannesburg is an offshoot. We insisted that members were commissioned and ex- Allied Air Force members with the result that we eventually died off. Johannesburg admitted ex- Army and civvies who called themselves captains of industry and were rather held in contempt. Our members retained their ranks, even junior ranks, and amongst them was a large bunch of 27 Squadron current members and 27 eventually formed the bulk of the Committee. We had ex Lancaster pilots who had done 2 tours of

Germany - quite a thing - Pathfinders on Lancs and Mosquitoes and an American Lightning pilot who had flown Lightnings up through the islands to Japan. One star was our ex BoB pilot who had been shot down twice the second time by Adolf Galland. He maintained contact with Adolf who had him at a dinner for ex Luftwaffe pilots, mentioned that he had shot down - forgotten his name for the moment - and promised that he would not do it again !! It was a pure social club, dinners and lunches which became daytime only and as members died off we closed down. A great pity. But we remained pure Air Force to the end. I notice Basil Hersov is on the heading. Do you remember him from Baragwanath? He was on 3 Squadron (SAAF) when I was a member flying from Baragwanath. Happy Days - oh yes, Basil and his brother had Jag XK120's much envied by all us poor plebs. Cheers for now - going for a walk this afternoon, we have walked this town flat but got to keep fit"

*(The BoB pilot was **Pat Wells** (RIP) – see the story of the Gallands visit to South Africa, sent in by David Haggie, Week 6 Ramblings)*



A lovely picture with the aircraft types – Mosquito, Spitfire, Hurricane, Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf - captures something of the spirit of those far – off days ... Salute!

RED ARROWS RELOCATE:

Following the announcement in July 2018 that RAF Scampton would close, it was announced last week that RAF Waddington has been selected as the only viable alternative basing location for the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team (RAFAT) – the Red Arrows. There will now be an assessment study to examine and cost the options before developing a business case for the eventual move. The relocation will take place before RAF Scampton closes in late 2022. More than 30 alternative sites were assessed for their suitability and, of these, three potential future locations for RAFAT were subsequently approved. An Operational Safety Assessment has now confirmed RAF Waddington is the only suitable alternative to RAF Scampton. The airspace over RAF Scampton will be retained for the team's training and display practice. Describing the development, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, Chief of the Air Staff, said: "We will be sorry to leave Scampton but I am delighted the Red Arrows will remain in Lincolnshire when they move to their new base at RAF Waddington. The people of Lincolnshire have provided fabulous support for the Red Arrows over many years, and the team is proud to call it home."

SECOND OLDEST AIR FORCE IN THE WORLD – AN ALTERNATE VIEW?

The South African Air Force has always proudly proclaimed itself as the second oldest Air Force in the world after the Royal Air Force. It has always been disputed publicly by the Royal Australian Air Force, who claim is that they were the second oldest active air force, the SAAF being a paper Air

Force for a number of months before actual flying took place. However, recent research would indicate that it is neither of them!!

The winner for the oldest independent Air force in the World is Finland, Hauptmann Carl Seber was appointed as Commander in Chief, Flying Forces on 10 March 1918, and he organised the Aviation force as an independent Air Force with 6 March 1918 being taken as the formation date. Next in line to form an independent air force was Great Britain, the Royal Air Force, which came into being on 1 April 1918. The Royal Australian Air Force's Air Board was formed in November 1920, in clear anticipation that the new service would supersede the army's interim "Australian Air Corps" which was maintaining Point Cook airbase taking receipt of its Imperial Gift aircraft in Melbourne in March 1920. Separate recruiting for the RAAF was done to the Air Corps, and on day 1, March 1921, 149 personnel were taken on strength. The RAAF immediately adopted the RAF rank structure whilst the AAC used the army structure.

The SAAF dates its beginning to 1 February 1920, when Sir Pierre van Ryneveld was given the Rank of Temporary Colonel and appointed Director Air Services. This actually took place on 1 June 1920 and was backdated to 1 February 1920. He was however not the head of a viable flying service. The service only had its first flight by 26 April 1921. The title "South African Air Force" was not used officially until 1 February 1923 when the SAAF was listed under the Union's reconstituted Defence Act as one of the Corps of the Permanent Force. Van Ryneveld did not stand outside the Army organisation, as demonstrated by his later appointment as Commander of Army troops near Pretoria and Commandant of the Military College, and even Chief of General Staff – all while running the Air Force!

A Canadian Air Force was set up between February and April 1920 to supersede the Army and Navy air services but was a non-permanent body that existed mainly as a training facility for civil aviation. The RCAF was formed on 31 March 1924 with 263 airmen. So, it looks like the RAAF was formed in the strongest shape as a separate, autonomous air force organisation".

*(Sent in by **Dave Evans**, who comments: "We've been having a debate about the world's oldest air forces recently among the Friends of the SAAF Museum. Here is what **Phil Scallan**, our National President, has found". There's a challenge - Look forward to members' comments! – Ed)*

SCHNEIDER TROPHY:

The whole history of the Schneider Trophy was one of extraordinary adventure and a story of extreme endeavour. It was an avenue along which aeronautical science reached a high peak. In the few years of its existence it gradually eliminated the many, who could not stand the pace, and finally rewarded the fittest. Success was linked to tragedy in many of its stages and there was also the ironic fact that whilst some nations were spending millions of pounds on the construction of racing seaplanes, the donor of the trophy was dying in comparative poverty. **Jacques Schneider**, the French Under Secretary for Air, presented the trophy to the Federation Aeronautique Internationale at the Gordon Bennett Banquet, where he was a guest of honour, held in Paris on December 5th 1912. He made a speech telling of his dreams of continents being linked together by "hydroplane flying services". The trophy was valued at 1000 pounds and in addition M. Schneider presented prize money of a thousand pounds each to the first three winners of the contest. At the time he never dreamed that the competition would commemorate his name for all time in aviation circles and become the most prestigious and exciting flying event of the century. Three successive wins would entitle the winner to retain the trophy. It is interesting to note that before Great Britain's final triumph, both America and Italy had each had two successive wins, Italy in 1920/21 and America in 1923/5. Flt. Lt. Johnny Boothman flew the course on Sunday 29th September 1931 at an average speed of 340.08 mph to capture the Schneider Trophy for Britain for all time. National pride was further boosted when Flt. Lt. G. H. Stainforth took the S6 up and created a new World Speed Record of 407.5 mph. The races were over, but the lessons learned from the technology developed, and put into practice at Calshot, live on to this day. The planes served no other purpose than being out and out racing machines but none the less the knowledge gained proved to be invaluable in many areas of aeronautics regarding engines and airframes generally.

Just for comparison: Wright brothers' first flight December 1903: Schneider Trophy record: WINNER 1913 – France, at speed of 45.75 MPH WINNER 1931 – Great Britain at a speed of 340.08 MPH

(Article (abridged) sent in by John Page, who adds: "I would like to add my comments to many others and say how much I appreciate the regular "Ramblings". They certainly go some way to making up the lack of "face to face" meetings and bring a lot of thoughts and memories to brighten up a rather dull day. A very big THANK YOU". And thank you, John.)

ANGLO QUILTS CBD:



Change is an urban constant. Buildings and businesses come and go. Cities rise and fall. Anglo American's move to Rosebank in 2021 is no exception in that regard. However, while the mining giant's resettlement provides fresh opportunity for the city and the company, it still hurts to witness the downtown departure of a grand Johannesburg mining institution, synonymous with 44 Main and the golden metropolis. A SA legend, relegated to a generic corporate name plaque, backlit on the tenant board of a soulless glass box in the suburbs. At the turn of the previous century, the situation was very different. Rosebank was practically "out in the country" and the growing city of Joburg was where it was at. Marshalltown was at its centre. Named after pioneering industrialist HB Marshall, it encompasses the well-managed south-western mining and financial district of downtown Joburg.

Marshall's obituary in The Rand Daily Mail of July 23rd 1947 notes that the area quickly became the city's financial centre, home to institutions such as the Rand Club, the stock exchange and Anglo American. The city grew rapidly as businesses flocked to stake their claim above the richest goldfield in the world. For a season, Joburg was Africa's very own New York. Last week Anglo American announced a planned 2021 shift of its head office from this precinct to the decentralised Rosebank node. A press statement outlining the move explains that the company "has been exploring options to bring all of its SA corporate offices together in one location to support its future workplace strategy — which is based on creating a workplace that is safe, smart and collaborative."

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/life/2020-05-21-architecture-what-anglos-exit-means-for-joburg-cbd/>

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the ninth 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 antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) 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

Thanks again to all who have sent in notes of appreciation or contributions. We'll do our best to fit them all into successive issues

Keep safe and well and stay at home, off the streets and out of trouble.... Meantime, keep the bright side up – and remember, all this, too, shall pass ... And on the bright side, New Zealand has been voted the least corrupt country in the world, and South Africa the most corrupt. We beat the All Blacks again!!...

TAILPIECE: In Praise of Women Who Read:

One morning a husband returns to the lakeside cabin after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, the wife decides to take the boat out, since it is such a beautiful day. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and reads her book. Along comes a Game

Warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning, Ma'am, what are you doing?"

"Reading a book," she replies, (thinking, "Isn't that obvious?")

" You're in a Restricted Fishing Area," he informs her.

" I'm sorry, officer, but I'm not fishing, I'm reading."

" Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I'll have to write you up a ticket and you'll have to pay a fine."

"For reading a book?" she replies.

"You're in a Restricted Fishing Area," he informs her again."

"But officer, I'm not fishing, I'm reading."

" Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I'll have to write you up a ticket and you'll have to pay a fine."

"If you do that, I'll have to charge you with sexual assault," says the woman."

"But I haven't even touched you," says the Game Warden.

"That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment."

"Have a nice day ma'am," and he immediately departed.

MORAL OF THE STORY:

Never argue with a woman who reads. It's likely she can also think. Send this to four women who are thinkers. Sure, God created man before woman. But then you always make a rough draft before the final masterpiece.

MATT



*'My husband's cooking, so
I'm going out to catch
coronavirus - apparently
you lose all sense of
taste and smell'*

And after 75 years of progress,
here we are:

