



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC NEW RAMBLINGS

11th AUGUST 2026

LUNCH REPORT:

On a very nice Friday we met at the Wanderers for a lunch that would be very special on several fronts. The meal was devoured by all and there was not much left on the plates. Well done Wanderers & Protea.

After the lunch we had two nice celebrations.

Firstly - Reverend Trevor Slade had applied to become a member of RAFOC and it was decided that he should be made an Honorary Member due to his long association with us acting as our Chaplain. He was delighted and the members welcomed him to the Club.

Secondly and a real joy was to ask Basil Hersov if he would become our Honorary Life President, to which he agreed. He was welcomed by the members and our President then addressed us in his normal way by saying that he had been a Vice-President for a number of years and had never been asked to give his advice on any matters affecting the Committee. He also said all he had done was come along to lunches and 'drink with his mates.' Long may we do that.

Just after that we served the Port onto the tables with the instruction from the Chairman that nobody was to sip it till we all were ready. We then all stood and toasted Basil on his 100th birthday, which will be on the 18th August. Then in true RAF tradition we sang 'why was he born so beautiful.....' Happy birthday Basil.

THE PRESENTATIONS WERE THEN MADE:

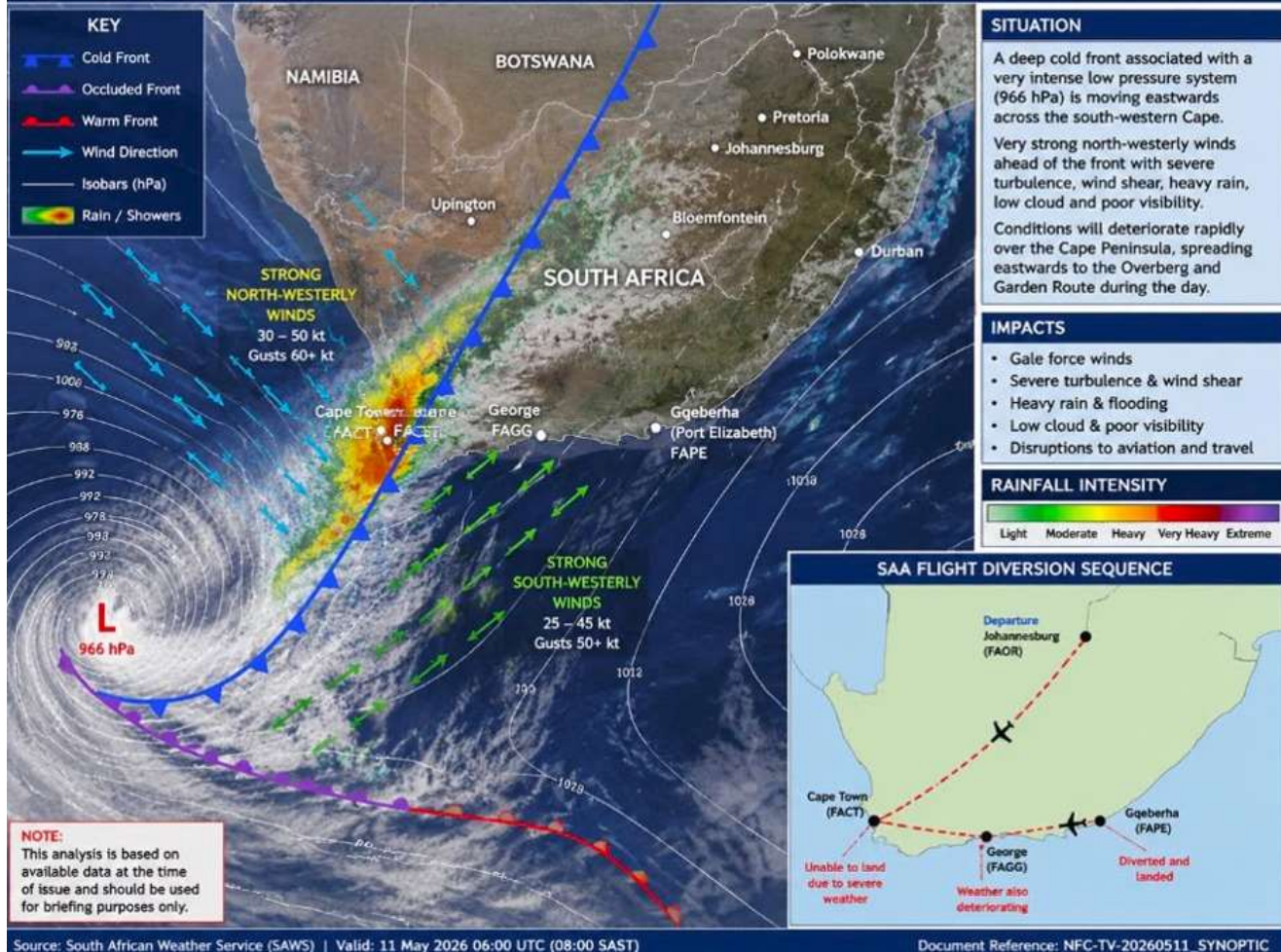
We had two presentations – the first was made by Karl Jensen on the SAA flight from Johannesburg to Cape Town reported in Carte Blanche. We were interested in this because the report was not complimentary towards SAA or the crew. Karl was able to show us what happened.

The flight took off from Johannesburg with enough fuel as required by regulations to make the approach and then do a diversion to George. What actually happened was that George was outside limits and Port Elizabeth was the next airport. This was about an hour away.

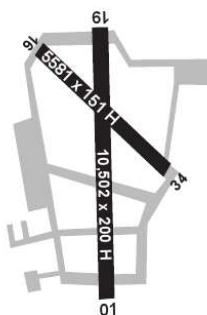
Below is from his presentation.

SYNOPTIC ANALYSIS – 11 MAY 2026 06:00 UTC

Major Cold Front affecting the Western Cape



Cape Town (FACT)

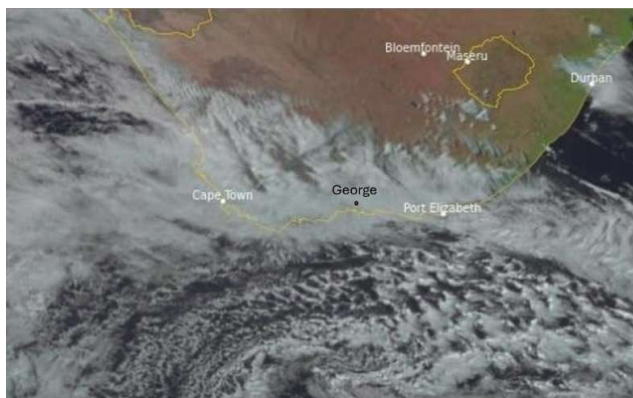


acukwik.com

As can be seen from the synoptic chart above, the weather was not good and was not going to get better to use 01 but an attempt would be made. The wind was out of limits for a landing on 01 runway and as the cloud base was below 700' runway 34 was precluded. 34 could have been used if the cloud base was above the minimum.

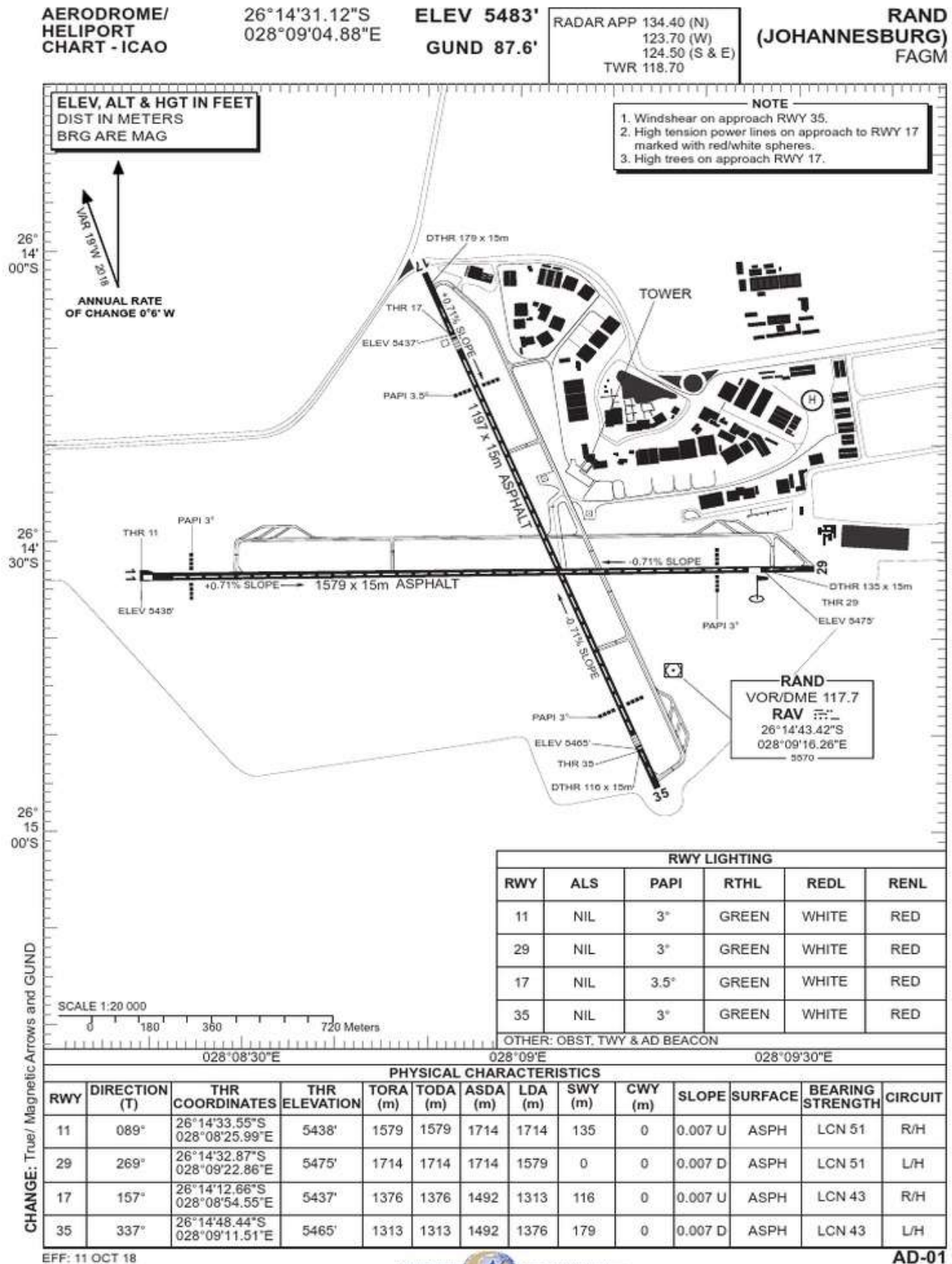
Off to George.

The picture below shows how the weather was following them and eventually a safe landing was made in Port Elizabeth with low fuel, but they made it.



Only when we had the explanations from Karl did it all add up that it was a series of weather conditions and not the way that it was reported in the Carte Blanche that was the cause and effect. The crew did what they were trained to do.

The second presentation was by Dennis Spence on the landing at Rand airport of the two 747's, he was lucky enough to do both deliveries. He used runway 11.





My wife has trouble getting her car into the garage, but this is narrow and the view is from on high. When seated, a pilot's eye level is approximately 28.5 feet (8.7 meters) high, putting the flight deck at about the height of a three-story building.



Dennis Spence

Stuey Lithgow

Dennis had super skills and so we thought of sharing his CV and capabilities.

- Born in South Africa and grew up in then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

- Completed an apprenticeship in the Royal Rhodesian Air Force and won the Rolls Royce Trophy for the best apprentice of the year in 1970.
- Sent on Officers course and completed basic flying training before attending Witwatersrand University to study Aeronautical Engineering.
- While at University completed the SA Commercial Pilots License and Flight Instructors Ratings and also flew in the Rhodesian Air Force as a Reserve Pilot during University Vacations.
- Flew in the South African Air Force as a Citizen force Pilot on 41 Squadron
- Joined SAA in 1978 and flew as a Second Officer on the Boeing 707, as First Officer on the Boeing 727, Boeing 737, Airbus A300 and the Boeing 747.
- Promoted to Boeing 737 Training Captain in 1991, Boeing 747 Training Captain in 1998, Boeing 747 Chief Training Captain in 2002, Airbus A340 Senior Captain in 2004 and Head of the SAA Pilot Selection Board in 2008, and Manager of the SAA Cadet Development Program.
- Retired from SAA in April 2012, and has been involved as an external simulator instructor at Alt Academy Training Center, and is type rated on the Boeing 737-300/400/500/800 and the Airbus A319/320,
- Still is actively flying the Boeing 737-300 and 400 for Africa Charter Airline, who operates for Lift Airlines and Bid Air Cargo.

Qualifications:

- South African and Australian Airline Transport Pilots License with over 27000 flying hours
- South African and Australian Grade 1 Flight Instructors Rating, with over 10000 hours of flight instruction
- South African Civil Aviation Designated Flight Testing Officer
- South African Civil Aviation Aircraft Maintenance Engineer's license
- Represented South Africa in the Advanced World Aerobatic Championships in 1995 and acquired South African National Colours for Aerobatics
- Owner and leader of the Goodyear Pitts Special Aerobatic Team

Thank you to both Karl and Dennis for the presentations.

JUST SO YOU KNOW:

Just as I was about to close off and send Ramblings when a link was sent from a member, who said it was interesting (if not revulsion). It makes reading very interesting for sure, so we included it. Do read the link as well so you can see that's it's not fibs and there are others.

'The CEO at the **SA Civil Aviation Authority**, which regulates the aviation sector, earned R9.7 million on average in 2024/25. That's 93x the average annual salary of the 102 workers in the lowest salary band, which was R104 000.'

(Puke as a lot of our members deal with the CAA and have not many good words to say about them or their control of civil aviation)

Source: <https://www.moneyweb.co.za/news/south-africa/mind-the-gap-state-execs-earn-millions/>

END