



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC NEW RAMBLINGS 24<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2026

### NOT SAA THIS TIME:

RYANAIR Flight 1879 : 10 July 2026:-

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators look into an event where on 10 July 2026 a passenger was partially sucked out of a cabin window on Ryanair Boeing 737 NG Flight 1879 Greece to Germany.

It is said a fan blade broke off minutes into the flight and tore through the No. 2 engine, shattering a passenger window, damaging parts of the fuselage and causing depressurisation of the aircraft. Some statements from Ryanair, on this, apparently differed somewhat from the victim's fellow passengers and the NTSB.

A bit of background :-

- This aircraft had suffered 4 suspected bird strikes in the year prior to the above incident.
- The crew reported unusually high levels of vibration in the second engine after take off.
- About 9 mins into the flight a 'loud bang' was recorded followed by cabin depressurisation releasing oxygen masks. The pilot hastily reduced altitude.
- Flight attendants saw 'the passenger in seat 11F was partially lodged in the damaged cabin window and that the entire window was missing.' It is claimed that he still had his seatbelt on. The passenger's wife and two other passengers held his legs (his r/h shoulder and head were already out the window). The seriously injured passenger was moved to seat 12 and attended to by a doctor.
- Following this 2016 incident, the NTSB found bird remains, including feathers in the engine that failed. Aging the bird-remains now form part of this latest investigation.

Another article I read elsewhere mentioned that this latest preliminary NTSB report refers to 'an engine fan blade fractured due to metal fatigue.'

No doubt publication of the final NTSB findings will take a good many months.

*Financial Times 15 Aug 2016 sent by Rob Tannahill*

### BOTH HYDRAULIC GAUGES READ ZERO:

Kim Campbell pulled on the controls. Nothing happened. Her damaged A-10 rolled violently left and pointed toward Baghdad below. It was April 7, 2003, and Captain Kim "KC" Campbell had just finished

attacking enemy positions that were pinning down American troops near the Tigris River. Moments later, enemy fire struck the rear of her aircraft and disabled both hydraulic systems. Ejecting was still an option. But Campbell was directly over hostile territory. So she tried something A-10 pilots rarely expected to use outside training:

manual reversion.



Instead of hydraulic assistance, the emergency system allowed her to control the aircraft mechanically through cables and linkages. It demanded far more physical effort and offered much less control. Then the aircraft responded. The nose came back up. Campbell and her flight lead turned south toward Kuwait while anti-aircraft fire continued around them. Her wingman inspected the damage from beside her and reported hundreds of holes through the fuselage and tail, plus a large hole through the right horizontal stabilizer. The flight home took nearly an hour. Then came another decision. Previous attempts to land an A-10 in manual reversion had ended badly, and the emergency checklist warned pilots to attempt such a landing only under ideal conditions.

Campbell chose to try. As she crossed the runway threshold, the damaged jet suddenly rolled left again. She corrected it. All three wheels touched down. Then she activated the emergency braking system and finally brought the aircraft to a stop.

A senior Air Force officer later said Campbell had landed the crippled A-10 better than he normally landed one with every system working.

For her actions, she received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor. She later retired as a colonel after more than 24 years in the Air Force.

The A-10 was famous for surviving extraordinary damage. On that day, its pilot proved just as difficult to bring down. Would you have attempted the landing, or ejected once you reached safer territory?

[#KimCampbell](#) [#A10Warthog](#) [#USAirForce](#) [#Aviation](#) [#Facts](#)

## SOUTH AFRICA'S BASIC EDUCATION HAS HIT ROCK BOTTOM:

According to the latest 2026 data, 81% of Grade 4s are now functionally illiterate.

We didn't just stay near the bottom — we dropped to dead last on the planet.

This happened while South Africa spends one of the highest shares of GDP on education in the world — roughly 2X most European countries and 3X more than Japan, the global leader in basic education outcomes.

Here's why: <https://youtu.be/rkkEU-LZiOU>

## Typhoons get new drone killer

RAF jets have deployed with Britain's new anti-drone munition for the first time. Based at Akrotiri in Cyprus, 9 Squadron Typhoon FGR.4s have already sorted with the new AGR-20 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS), which was introduced into British service after less than two months of testing.

Developed from 70mm unguided rockets, APKWS pairs the same motor and warhead with a laser-guidance system, enabling small, cheap drones to be targeted, as well as offering a limited air-to-ground capability. Previously, RAF jets had employed Meteor, AMRAAM and ASRAAM missiles, which, although effective, cost between

£200,000-£3,000,000 per unit. APKWS munitions are understood to cost between £20,000-£22,000 each.

Fired from a modified LAU-131 A/A extended length launcher, the Typhoon is cleared to carry up to 14 APKWS in two pods, although it has the potential to carry more on its inboard pylons. The rockets are usually

augmented by a pair of ASRAAMs, four Meteors and a Litening III targeting pod.



APKWS mounted on a Typhoon FGR.4  
SGT TIM HAMMOND/MOD

# Still going!

It was good to see mention of the Rhodesian support for RAF operations in Arabia in the latest issue. Although replaced by the Hunter as the RRAF's primary fighter, the Vampire continued in use though the mid-1960s, though the original FB.9s were grounded by the mid-1960s. The T.11s lasted ten years longer, with the last two withdrawn in 1977. By then, these had been replaced by ex-SAAF aircraft, with 21 T.55s transferred from 1969 and 13 FB.52s in the early 1970s. These saw service during the long Rhodesian Bush

War, including cross border raids into Mozambique. On November 23, 1977, during a strike on Chimoio as part of Operation Dingo, Vampire FB.52 R1386 was hit by ground fire and crashed near Untali, killing Air Lieutenant P Haig.

At independence, the Air Force of Zimbabwe had least five single-seat Vampire FB.52s and three T.55s in service with 2 Squadron at Thornhill. At the first AFZ Open Day on October 25, 1981, two FB.52s (1380 and 1378) and a T.55 (4221) were on static display, along with an impressive display of the weapons they

could carry. They were the last operational Vampires anywhere in the world.

However, it was not quite the last word of the Rhodesian Vampires. One of the original T.11s, RRAF-119 (later renumbered R4032 and the last to be withdrawn in November 1977), was sold to Australia. It was restored at the Old Aeroplane Company at Tyabb, Victoria, to its original colours, wearing Rhodesian 'assegai' roundels as displayed in the feature. On January 12, 2001, in the hands of Group Captain Alan Page RAAF, it took to the air once more and is still regularly seen at flying displays. Thus, the saga of the Rhodesian Vampires is not quite over, more than 70 years after the first delivery!

**Jim Wilkins**



(Ed. Moorabbim Airport (just outside Melbourne) has a group of restorers that are working on a static display Vampire. I was there a couple of years ago while visiting one of my sons who relocated to Australia and recommend a visit to the museum if you get a chance. The Australian airforce flew the F111 and they also have static cockpits to view. [Men's Shed take on task of restoring former RAAF Vampire jet | ABC NEWS - YouTube](#) )

## ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2026, CAPTAIN CHESLEY “SULLY” SULLENBERGER WILL TAKE HIS PLACE AMONG THE LEGENDS OF AVIATION:



Seventeen years after safely guiding US Airways Flight 1549 onto New York's Hudson River, Sullenberger will be enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio.

The honor places him alongside names such as Orville and Wilbur Wright, Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh, Chuck Yeager and Neil Armstrong, a distinction reserved for fewer than 250 people throughout the history of powered flight.

For Sullenberger, now 75, the recognition carries a meaning beyond another medal or award. His actions on January 15, 2009, became one of the most famous examples of skill, judgment and composure in aviation history.

After both engines lost thrust following a bird strike, he and First Officer Jeffrey Skiles had only minutes to decide where to land. Sullenberger ultimately brought the Airbus A320 down on the Hudson, allowing all 155 people aboard to survive.

Over the years, countless honors have recognized what happened that day. But this one is different.

The man who brought 155 people home safely is now being given a permanent place in aviation history.

## A PIECE OF HISTORY:



Looking back at the Air Force I knew, the Vulcan was always admired, as was the English Electric Lightning. We still have a Lightning pilot as a member but sadly the two members who were part of the V Bomber lot are not with us anymore. Imagine if you were called on to go and attack the enemy with a nuclear bomb, when you got back home was probably gone and the World changed forever.

Thankfully that never happened. If you click on this link, you can see one of the last displays made by the Vulcan and hear that unmistakable 'OLYMPUS HOWL' as it powers up on the last pass.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGYSTacyIVE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGYSTacyIVE)

## SWITZERLAND'S FIRST F-35 FIGHTER JETS ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN ITALY:

August 19, 2026 By: Peter Suci



Main assembly of Switzerland's first F-35A lightning II fighter jet is underway at facilities in the United States and Italy.

### Production Progress

- **Main Assembly Start:** Assembly began in May 2026 at the Lockheed Martin plant in Marietta, Georgia.
- **Component Manufacturing:** Parts like fuselage sections and wings are also being built at the Leonardo facility in Cameri, Italy.

### Delivery and Training Timeline

- **Training in the US:** The first eight jets will arrive at Ebbing Air National Guard Base in Arkansas starting in mid-2027 to train Swiss personnel.
- **Arrival in Switzerland:** The first jet assembled in Cameri will transfer directly to Switzerland by mid-2028.
- **Base Deployment:** Jets will deploy to Payerne (mid-2028), Meiringen (2030), and Emmen (2032).

## A GOOD NEWS STORY FROM SAA – BUT MANY YEARS AGO!!



*Aerolene Chetty posing with her parents, brother and Martie Hinze (nee De Beer), after having blown out her six candles with a true jet-blast. Insert is Captain Mynhardt Slabbert.*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1973 an Air Hostess Delivered a Baby at 35,000 Feet.

On a routine flight from Johannesburg to Durban, Air Hostess Martie de Beer (later Martie Hinze) faced the most extraordinary call of duty.

When passenger Mrs. Molly Chetty went into early labour mid-flight, there was no doctor on board - only Martie's calm professionalism and training.

She took charge, and just seven minutes later, little Aerolene Chetty became the first baby born on a South African Airways aircraft. The commander, Captain Mynhardt Slabbert, even suggested the name "Aerolene" as a tribute to her unique arrival.

Aerolene's parents had planned for her to be born in Durban under grandma's watchful eye.

At the time SAA gifted her a model of the aircraft, an engraved silver mug, egg cup and spoon.

Six years later SAA celebrated her sixth birthday with cake and handed her a cabin bag and pen.

Martie de Beer sadly passed away a few years ago after a brave battle with multiple sclerosis. Her legacy lives on - not only through the life she helped bring into the world but through the care and humanity she showed every day.

[#ThisDayInSAHistory](#) [#SAHistory](#) [#MartieHinze](#) [#AirHostess](#) [#MiracleBaby](#) [#AviationHistory](#)

*(Ed. We have retired SAA Captains in the club, if you are one or knew Martie or Captain Slabbert, share some good feeling stories and we will include them next week.)*

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