



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 107 22nd APRIL 2022

GREETINGS:

Stage 4 loadshedding countrywide "call to arms"... Another "State of Disaster" in KZN due to La Nina – no coherent government response... and probably worse to follow as the ANC cadres get their hooks into the aid funds... enough already!... President Cyril Ramaphosa ropes in the big guns to keep eye on R1 billion in KZN disaster relief funds – foxes to guard the henhouse!... 450 casualties and counting, and billions needed for infrastructure repairs... what a heartening contrast is provided by Gift of the Givers!... China interested in building Joburg-Durban high speed rail link... Ah So!... Lesufi's revenge for Overvaal defeat... fuel shortages... more truck looting, major shoot-out between SAPS and gang at a Benoni transport company... it's a war zone out there.

BoJo apologises in the Commons for his "partygate" fine, acknowledges the "the hurt and the anger" caused... but are the punters buying it?... How Sturgeon gets away with Covid rule-breaking... Russia seizes first city in Donbas push... does the Ukraine have the edge in the conflict?... NATO continues servile hand-wringing... could give Uriah Heep lessons... two world economic blocks as a "tectonic shift" puts an end to decades of globalisation... not even the Queen's Jubilee is safe from BBC preaching... Prince Harry 'Queen's closest confidant' - Huh? How's that again?... electrically charged chopsticks that fool a diner's taste buds into believing their meal has been liberally sprinkled with salt... Rolls Royce secure a £210m grant to develop UK's first small nuclear reactor...

RAF DEDICATED HYMN:



The RAF's first ever dedicated Hymn was performed at the Royal Albert Hall on Monday 11th April 2022, during a Classic FM Live concert. The Hymn is titled after the RAF's motto '*Per Ardua Ad Astra*,' which translates from Latin to '*Through Adversity to the Stars*.' Based on Psalm 104, 144 and Isaiah 44, it is filled with Christian imagery of sacrifice and struggle to represent the RAF's role to defend from the air and ground.

Music imitates flight; with piano and strings playing ornamental flutters similar to the movement of feathers, before a crescendo cadence lands the piece on an Amen.

Classic FM – the UK’s most popular Classical music station – celebrated their 30th birthday by broadcasting the RAF’s Hymn on Tuesday 12th April at 20:00pm.

You make the winds Your messengers,
 Your servants flames of fire,
 You raise them up on eagles’ wings
 that tempests cannot tire.
 You make the clouds Your chariot,
 the lightning bolt Your blade.
 Give us your strength to keep from harm
 the heavens that You made.

BOMBER TASK FORCE:



Royal Air Force aircraft and personnel have been integrating with United States Air Force B-52H Stratofortress Bombers from the 69th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron as part of their 2022 Bomber Task Force mission. British Typhoons and Lightnings from RAF Coningsby and Marham have operated on multiple sorties allowing the RAF to learn more about working with the B-52 and also giving the United States Air Force vital training opportunities flying alongside near-peer capabilities. This level of interoperability has continued throughout the deployment as multiple nations have flown together and alongside the aptly named ‘BUFFS’ most notably as part of the NATO led Exercise.

COLD RESPONSE:

BUFFS have launched on multiple missions supporting Exercise COLD RESPONSE which has included working with the Royal Navy’s carriers the HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, along with 617 Squadron F-35B’s and the various personnel that make up the 30,000 troops that have deployed across 27 separate nations in what has become the largest Arctic exercise for 30 years. While the aircraft, crew and support staff are a long way from their home of Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, this has not affected the 69th’s battle rhythm. There are a few differences flying in British or European airspace for the BUFFS, though these differences are quickly identified, the crews evolve and learn from them and come out flying with greater capability in the European Theatre. Deployments like the Bomber Task Force also expose RAF Air Traffic Controllers to working with the B-52’s as they depart RAF Fairford and when they return to base, with the aircraft transiting through RAF Brize Norton’s airspace. Air Operations Control Officers from the RAF Regiment have also liaised with the B-52’s while working the Donna Nook and Tain ranges here in

the UK. Finally, the United States Air Force Europe and 69th's PAO's have also had the chance to work with RAF Media Officers from RAF High Wycombe and photographers from JADTEU ensuring that the close-partnership between the RAF and United States Air Force is well documented as both parties learn about how each other's respective media command and control works in an environment such as this.

NATO, YOU GOT FAT...

NATO, you got fat and flabby and lazy. You sat on the laurels earned by and taught to you by the deaths of sixty million in WW2. You thought and taught, that it could never happen again. During the cold war, you maintained your armed forces and remembered the horrors that tyranny and authoritarianism can create. Your warriors remained alert and ready while your academics and historians taught the lessons of the past. You remembered the sacrifices of a whole generation. But you grew soft! You questioned the morality of defensive war, you allowed holier than thou students to reduce your heroic actions to the level of the thug. At school, you stopped teaching your own history with pride and instead gave equity to those who would undermine your values. You let that great grubby god 'Money' steal your values and virtue, substituting cash with the excuse 'Someone else will take it if I don't'. Generals allowed their armies to be reduced to bland green reservists whose sole purpose was to march in concert with the lowest common denominator. Cheap and cheerful made it look good. By reducing your effectiveness in the name of 'equality', you trained your youth to cry and whine when confronted with failure and disappointment. You trained them to remain childish like puppies for their entire existence. While the monsters of communism and fascism rebuilt their followings you wore your Hugo Boss, took your cash, and told us we were yesterday's people. You were the new awakening. Well, you are awake now the monster has returned and yes, he still has nuclear weapons, he still cares nothing for your values, and he certainly doesn't care if you cry, or die! Where are your warriors, where are your leaders? Where are the men and women who understood evil and the lessons of history? Not in your parliaments, not in your police forces and not in your schools. All your human rights are as nothing when a T72 tank comes down your road. Tanks don't understand 'INAPPROPRIATE'. There are new sacrifices to be made. Are you prepared to meet them as you ought?

"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

You are awake now little children, and it's time to grow up! Slava Ukraine.!

Robin Horsfall (ex SAS): Writer, Veterans Campaigner, and Public Speaker.

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT THOMAS ANTHONY GLADSTONE AFC RAF:

Glen Kidston's co-pilot in the ill-fated flight to Durban was an accomplished airman in his own right, and the manager of the enterprise. Born in Stockton-on-Tees, Co. Durham, he was the son of Thomas Hopwood and Maud Gladstone, and volunteered for service in the RFC straight from school and was awarded the Air Force Cross on 10 October 1919 in recognition of distinguished services rendered during the war. The following article appeared in the "Yorkshire Post " on Wednesday, 6 May 1931:

IDENTIFIED BY A VISITING CARD. Storekeeper's Discovery of Wreckage. VAN REENEN, Natal, Tuesday. A vivid story of how Lieut.-Commander Glen Kidston, the "flying millionaire with a charmed life" and his companion, Captain T.A. Gladstone, met their deaths in a crash at Mauba, about 16 miles from here, was told to Reuter's correspondent to-night by Mr. Helman, the Mauba storekeeper, who discovered the tragedy. "I was busy in my store" said Mr. Helman, "when above the roar of the gale outside I suddenly heard a terrific crash. I rushed into the open and was horror-stricken to see the tangled wreckage of a large aero plane which had fallen nearby." The bodies of the two occupants were so mutilated that I had to search for some means to identify them. Eventually I found a visiting card near one of the bodies. It bore the name Lieutenant-Commander G.P. Glen Kidston. "I hastily summoned a neighbour and then hurried to the telephone and reported the tragedy to the magistrate at Harrismith."

Borrowed Machine It was learned tonight from Johannesburg, that Lieut-Commander Kidston was not flying the aero plane in which he made his England to Cape Town dash last month, but a Puss Moth machine belonging to a local flyer. At the time of the tragedy the airmen must have been flying in the teeth of a hurricane through dust-laden air. It is thought here that they came unexpectedly upon the range of the Drakensberg Mountains, and failing to avoid them, crashed to the ground. The airmen had left Johannesburg on a tour with a view to developing air services... A subsequent article appeared under the headline: CAPT. T.A. GLADSTONE. Work for Development of African Air Route. Captain T.A. Gladstone, who was unmarried, lived with his mother, Mrs. T.I. Gladstone, at Castle Hill, Middleton St. George, near Darlington. He went to South Africa in January in connection with the organisation of an air mail service from England to Central Africa, Johannesburg, and Cape Town, by the Cobham-Blackburn Air Lines, Limited, of which he was a director. Mrs. Gladstone, the mother of Captain Gladstone, is at present staying at Eastbourne for her health. His sister, Mrs. Green, lives at the Manor House, Carlton Husthwaite, near Easingwold. A close friend of Captain Gladstone said last night: "I have been in very close touch with Captain Gladstone for many years, and I can say definitely that he has literally given up his life since the war to the development of this African air route. It was absolutely due to his pioneer work in conjunction with Sir Alan Cobham, who knew him personally, that the route was made possible. He carried out negotiations with all the Governments along the route and obtained subsidies from various Governments. The present Imperial Airways African route is based entirely on Gladstone's pioneer work." Captain Gladstone was in the early thirties and was educated at Uppingham. During the war he served in the Royal Flying Corps, and I understand that he gained a decoration for his courage in rescuing a comrade when their machine crashed into the sea. In the course of his adventurous work in Africa he had many hairbreadth escapes. Twice his machine crashed and was completely destroyed."

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE...

Releases from the Vaal, Bloemhof and Hazelmere Dams:

The Department of Water and Sanitation opened two sluice gates at the Vaal Dam on Tuesday, 12 April 2022 at 10h00. A further three sluice gates were opened on, Wednesday 13 April. – others followed and eight gates are now open. The decision comes after huge ongoing inflows were experienced because of the recent downpours - at one stage inflows were at 1065.67 cubic meters per second. The Vaal - which supplies most parts of Gauteng - now stands at 110,5% while Bloemhof Dam is at 106,9%.

CHEERS FOR NOW:

The venue for future lunches will, it is hoped, be the Wanderers Club in the Cigar Bar. As attendance grows beyond 40, we will be able to use the new indoor Terrace area (Previously Centre Court) We are working on Menus and service issues with Fourteen, the Caterers, in order to streamline proceedings... We are also considering re-introducing Guest Speakers. Our next function will be the May lunch, 12h30 for 13h00 Friday 6 May 2022, again in the Cigar Bar.

And so...about time to break out the 25-piece patio set, 1 chair and 24 beers...Cheers!!

TAILPIECE:

I know a man who kept a tally of his scores,
And most of them were made outdoors,
He had a way,
To make them stay,
Then showed me where he kept their drawers.
(The Sherriff of Nottingham Road)

"The Lie said to the Truth, "Let's take a bath together, the well water is very nice. The Truth, still suspicious, tested the water and found out it really was nice. So, they got naked and bathed. But suddenly, the Lie leapt out of the water and fled, wearing the clothes of the Truth. The Truth, furious,

climbed out of the well to get her clothes back. But the World, upon seeing the naked Truth, looked away, with anger and contempt. Poor Truth returned to the well and disappeared forever, hiding her shame. Since then, the Lie runs around the world, dressed as the Truth, and society is very happy... Because the world has no desire to know the naked Truth."

Famous Painting: Truth Coming Out Of The Well, Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1896. (Via Clive King)

Beijing Hotel Brochure translated....

It has been translated directly, word for word from Mandarin to English.

Getting There:

Our representative will make you wait at the airport. The bus to the hotel runs along the lake shore. Soon you will feel pleasure in passing water. You will know that you are getting near the hotel, because you will go round the bend. The manager will await you in the entrance hall. He always tries to have intercourse with all new guests.

The Hotel:

This is a family hotel, so children are very welcome. We of course are always pleased to accept adultery. Highly skilled nurses are available in the evenings to put down your children. Guests are invited to conjugate in the bar and expose themselves to others. But please note that ladies are not allowed to have babies in the bar. We organize social games, so no guest is ever left alone to play with them self.

The Restaurant:

Our menus have been carefully chosen to be ordinary and unexciting. At dinner, our quartet will circulate from table to table, and fiddle with you.

Your Room:

Every room has excellent facilities for your private parts. In winter, every room is on heat. Each room has a balcony offering views of outstanding obscenity! You will not be disturbed by traffic noise since the road between the hotel and the lake is used only by pederasts.

Bed:

Your bed has been made in accordance with local tradition. If you have any other ideas please ring for the chambermaid. Please take advantage of her. She will be very pleased to squash your shirts, blouses and underwear. If asked, she will also squeeze your trousers.

Above all:

When you leave us at the end of your holiday, you will have no hope. You will struggle to forget it.

Two old Jewish gentlemen, Sid and Abe, are sitting in a Mexican restaurant one day. Sid asks Abe, "Do you know if any people of our ancestry were ever born and raised in Mexico?" Abe replies, "I don't know, let's ask our waiter." When the waiter arrives, Abe asks, "Are there any Mexican Jews?" The waiter says, "I don't know senor, I ask the cooks." He returns from the kitchen after a few minutes and says, "No senor, the cook say no Mexican Jews." Abe isn't satisfied and asks, "Are you absolutely sure?" The waiter, realizing he is dealing with "Gringos" replies, "I check once again, senor," and goes back into the kitchen. While the waiter is away, Sid says, "I find it hard to believe that there are no Jews in Mexico. Our people are scattered everywhere." The waiter returns and says, "Senor, the head cook Manuel, he say there is no Mexican Jews." "Are you certain?" Abe asks again. "I just can't believe there are no Mexican Jews!" "Senor, I ask EVERYONE," replies the exasperated waiter. "All we have is Orange Jews, Grape Jews, Prune Jews, Tomato Jews, and Apple Jews, but no Mexican Jews.

MATT

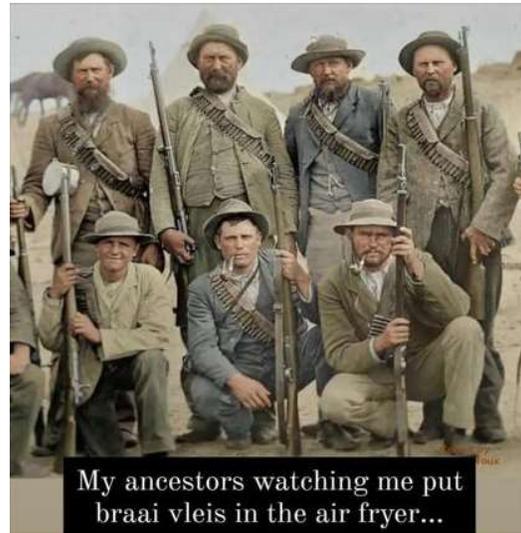


'And if this goes well we plan to move all GP appointments here'

MATT



'Yes, I've eaten all the Easter eggs, but there's a war going on and we should focus on the bigger picture'



CRYPTO CURRENCY:

On the morning of the Russian invasion last month, a 20 year old Ukrainian fled his home with a USB stick and a passcode. These gave him access to \$2000 in Bitcoin.

As there was a run-on Ukrainian banks after the invasion, he could not easily access his bank account. He traded Bitcoin for Polish Zloty in an online exchange. That was used to pay for a bus out of the country and a hostel bed for him and his girlfriend in Poland. In Poland he was able to access his Bitcoin through a number of ATM's and make direct payments through an online network. Those standing in line at Ukrainian banks could only withdraw a limited amount and in the days after the invasion many ATMs ran out of cash.

This experience makes a compelling case for the holding of at least some cryptocurrency, particularly in a country you might have to flee, has tight exchange controls, high inflation and could have bank runs. But the world of crypto currencies and its fast-growing derivatives is not for the uninitiated.

As it becomes easier to operate in this world, these sorts of assets will gain far greater traction, and disruption on an enormous scale is promised.

There are increasing signs that a battle has broken out between the establishment of big banks, central banks and governments on one side, and the emerging world of crypto finance on the other. Commercial banks could find themselves replaced by new means of borrowing and payment in digital currencies. And in the process central banks and big banks could face an existential crisis. The established financial system is fumbling in its effort to come up with a response.

There has to be an open question as to when other countries might follow China's lead in banning crypto currencies. Last September China banned its citizens from mining, holding and trading crypto currencies. The Chinese central bank said the crackdown was necessary to help prevent financial crime, maintain capital controls and ensure stability. This is a useful test case to see if such a draconian response actually kills the use of crypto currencies in a country.

Jamie Dimon, the Chief Executive Officer of one of the world's largest banks, JP Morgan Chase, disparages crypto currencies as "tokens" as they are not backed by a government. But crypto currencies do essentially fulfil the three criteria needed for an instrument to be considered as money. Admittedly, all are fulfilled with difficulty. Bitcoin is volatile – it is about 40 percent off its record high against the US dollar in November last year. As a store of value, they might be less desirable because of the volatility, but this is changing with "stablecoins", which are linked to a fiat currency or a commodity. Crypto currencies are a means of exchange, although generally lack the ease of use of fiat currencies. And finally, they are a unit of account. They are enjoying greater global acceptance. Bitcoins are legal tender in El Salvador and the crypto world is growing.

Last week Peter Thiel, a founder of PayPal, took aim at the "finance gerontocracy" for their "hate factory" to undermine Bitcoin, and warned that they will pay the consequences.

Banks and central banks will have to aggressively defend their turf. The more they try to ban or crackdown on private digital currencies, the more desirable such assets are likely to become. The less they do, the more digital currencies and assets will flourish and contribute to a low-cost and seamless payment system.

Many financial institutions are now acting as middlemen for the distribution of digital assets – there are crypto Exchange Traded Funds, and some banks will help you buy digital assets.

But this new world is difficult to control because its assets live on a distributed digital ledger – a blockchain -which cannot fall under the control of any authority. Blockchain software allows the establishment of "Decentralised Autonomous Organisations", which could take on other roles. Due to encryption there is privacy for holders, and law enforcement and other prying eyes can only gain access with considerable effort. Much can be hidden in the dark recesses of the web.

Governments and central banks have an innate fear of crypto currencies becoming too big. That is the reason the US Federal Reserve and the US Treasury turned down Facebook's attempt to launch its own digital currency, Libra. With no comprehensive regulatory framework in place the regulators did not like the idea of giving a tech giant the go ahead to print its own money.

The world of crypto has become a lot more sophisticated since the birth of Bitcoin with the release of Satoshi Nakamoto's white paper in 2008. And with sophistication they could become more difficult to regulate.

“Beyond Bitcoin” a locally published book released last month by Steven Boykey Sidley and Simon Dingle, is a good guide to the emerging alternative world of digital finance. What stands out is the rapid innovation of new instruments. From the start volatility has been an issue. But there are now “stablecoins”, which, as mentioned earlier, are linked to a fiat currency or commodity. There are also ways to seek out the best yields in the crypto world and change from coin to coin.

Boykey Sidley and Dingle expect that central banks will eventually surrender to the inevitable and will publicly settle in a crypto currency.

By contrast another recently published book in SA, by David Buckam, Robyn Wilkinson and Christiaan Straeuli, sees cryptocurrencies as a path to further undermining trust in financial systems. The end of money has come about because of erosion of trust in the existing banking and financial system, they argue. Crypto currencies are viewed in the book as flawed in large part because of security flaws, lack of regulation, and because they facilitate the hiding of illicit activity.

What happens when the mania around cryptos turns to panic and one, if not more, of the digital currencies collapse. This has happened to most asset classes and there is no reason for it not to happen to this one. There would be no bailouts and with that, massive losses would be incurred globally.

To try and counter the rise of private currencies, central banks could soon issue their own digital currencies. But their intention is to control rather than permit greater freedom. If they are configured as programmable, spending could be prevented on purchases deemed “bad”, taxes and fines automatically deducted, and assistance given to those in need.

Whether it comes about as a result of Central Bank Digital Currencies or private crypto currencies, the Chief Economist at the Efficient Group, Dawie Roodt, expects a consolidation of currencies as people move into those they trust most. That could mean far fewer currencies in time, certainly raising questions about the future of the Rand, but also the nature of sovereignty. Digital currencies could yet emerge as the most fundamental challenge to the power of the state.