



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 114 10th JUNE 2022

GREETINGS:

The week started with a very pleasant lunch in the Cigar Bar at Wanderers, on a splendid Highveld afternoon. A Minutes Silence was observed in memory of Lt Col Ian Crooke DSO (Late SAS). After lunch, served expeditiously, there were video presentations by Karl Jensen on the Siege of the Iranian Embassy in London, in 1980, in which Ian played a leading role. This was followed by the 60th Anniversary re-enactment of Jeff Earle's first Solo, and snippets from The Platinum Jubilee... A Toast was drunk to Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee... SA breeder to release 100 rhinos into the wild each year... Meyer Kahn, the Boykie from Brits, passes away at 82... Senzo Meyiwa trial high drama daily... mass shootings in Kyelitsha... the Mad Hatter grandstanding... Public Protector suspended (at long last)... Back on the ranch, Cyril suffers a large Forex loss and censure for failing to report it to SAPS... what happens on Phala-Phala stays on Phala-Phala?... Arthur Fraser (would you believe?) lays charges against Ramaphosa... in terms of pots and kettles, this is a great big black three-legged witches brew... more arrests of corruptors – including 2 Guptas in Dubai... Steve Biko Hospital next for the heat treatment as one wing goes up in flames...

The morning after the night before... BoJo bloodied but not bowed as he survives his Waterloo at the hands of the 1922 Committee over Partygate et al... Putin may have met his Waterloo after 100 days of Ukraine conflict, although it appears that he may be following the Roman example of creating a desert and calling it peace... Savagery unleashed on the Ukraine by Putin's modern Goths and Vandals beggars belief... Britain pledges to send Ukraine the latest M270 long-range missiles... war continues unabated... with dire long-term consequences, not least disruption to world's wheat supplies...

While the Platinum Jubilee quite appropriately overshadowed most other news, and Paddington Bear stole the show with Her Majesty, elsewhere, Bangladesh started the week with a bang... Nigerian violence claims the lives of St Francis' churchgoers... Earthquake in Cornwall... threat of biggest UK rail strike ever... Recession looms for UK... Nadal wins the French Open for the 14th time, notching up 22 Grand Slams... with his trademark notching of his shorts.

LIFE OF SERVICE: GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!



The two photographs above are family groups on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, 70 years apart. This bank holiday weekend's pomp and circumstance, with its millions of words and pictures, is a reminder not only of the Queen's own record reign, but the essential role the monarchy has played in Britain's history in peace and in war... Two generations of the Royal Family in less pressured times at the 1953 Coronation. And four generations today on the balcony...

Her Majesty provided the nation with the most moving of finales to the Platinum Jubilee with a final appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. While her advancing years may be limiting her mobility, the Queen made it clear that her determination to do her duty remains undimmed at the age of 96, with a renewed pledge to serve her country "to the best of my ability." In a "Thank You" message to all those who had taken part in Jubilee celebrations around the world to mark the last 70 years, she added: "While I may not have attended every event in person, my heart has been with you all." The Queen's balcony appearance not only provided a perfect ending to the celebrations but was also laden with symbolism and poignancy. A distinction has clearly been drawn between the Royals who work for The Firm, and those who do not....



THE LONGEST DAY:

The anniversary of D Day was largely overshadowed by the Platinum Jubilee this year... Remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice on this day 1944 and during the invasion and liberation of Europe:

'Valhalla waits, valkyries rise and fall
The warrior tombs, lie open for us all
A ghostly hand reaches through the veil
Blood and sand, we will prevail'

(*'The Longest Day'* lyrics © Iron Maiden Publishing Overseas Ltd.)

The mention of the word "tapestry" often conjures up the one named after Bayeux, which tells the timeless tale of William the Conqueror's Norman invasion of England in delicate, coloured yarn. Centuries later, Allied troops made the journey in reverse, sailing to the sandy shores of Northern France in June 1944 to liberate Western Europe from Nazi Germany." Commissioned in 1968 and bankrolled by a tobacco magnate - Lord Dulverton had trained British Army sharpshooters during World War II - a 20th-century version of the Bayeux Tapestry memorializes the deeds of D-Day. The 34 panels begin in chronological order with England's desperate fight for survival in the skies in 1940 and ends with the heroic events and aftermath of June 6, 1944. The mammoth, 272-foot artwork is on permanent display at the D-Day Story Museum in Portsmouth, England. (*Historynet*)

UMZIMVUBU TALES...



Bantu Holomisa drew attention to the sorry tale of men and women wanting to wear the SANDF uniform again and answer the call to serve has not been resolved by a board of inquiry (BOI) with eight hundred plus "enlistees" still in the dark as to whether closure - good or bad - will ever materialise.

Making matters worse for those who answered the call for people with military experience to report for enlistment at Umzimvubu Regiment in Eastern Cape mid-last year is five deaths among volunteers, two from coronavirus and three of "other causes" on being sent back home.

Add to this the 815 enlistees, after going through all the necessary processes as apparently set out in an order to the regiment, were sent home three months after reporting for duty.

During their three months in camp, they were literally at the mercy of the regiment leader group who tried in every manner possible to make the situation easier with the help of 14 SA Infantry (SAI) Battalion and the Army Support Base (ASB) in Port Elizabeth.

Officers and non-commissioned officers travelled extensively to source mattresses, blankets, boots and uniforms and even rifles. One officer, preferring anonymity for fear of victimisation, told *defenceWeb* the way “enlistees” were treated as a result of logistics shortcomings was “an absolute disgrace” as their human dignity was infringed on. That no preparation was done or logistic pre-stocking in the event of KwaZulu-Natal or Gauteng-type insurrection or other violence ahead of them arriving was obvious. With just about nothing provided in terms of clothing, accommodation and food, it was evident whoever was in charge of pre-planning for similar scenarios did not perform and was caught off-side.

The officer who spoke to *defenceWeb* indicated the direct order to the regiment was to receive the “enlistees,” all with the required past military training, complete administration and prepare them for deployment.

This was impossible because the logistic situation was such “it could hardly serve a platoon.” As of May, this year, only 57 of those who voluntarily reported for duty were paid a month’s salary with further payment still on hold. (*DefenceWeb*)

CHEERS FOR TODAY:

Special “Pothole Replacing” crews are being deployed by a number of municipalities... We have had a respite from Eskom loadshedding (or sabotage) in the last week... but chaos and crisis continues. The on-going process of communicating with Fourteen, Wanderers Caterers in order to improve lunch proceedings is continuing, with some progress being made... Our next function will be the **July Ladies Lunch, 12h30 for 13h00 Friday 3 July 2022**, on the rear Terrace at Wanderers, (*where the annual dinner was held.*) Cost of the lunch is **R250** and we request you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. Bookings can be made to bookings@rafoc.org and please give the names of any guests you will be bringing. A topical speaker is planned and we hope it happens. We look forward to seeing as many as possible on the First Friday in July. Watch this space... And so... as Winter cold bites, enjoy the lovely Autumn colours everywhere, keep the home fires burning and the bright side up...

TAILPIECE:

RATS AND WIVES

It was a practical session in the psychology class. The professor showed the students a large cage, with a male rat in it. The rat was in the middle of the cage. Then, the professor put a piece of cake on one side of the cage and put a female rat on the other side.

The male rat ignored the female rat, but instead, ran towards the cake and ate it.

Then, the professor changed the cake and replaced it with some bread. The male rat ran towards the bread.

This experiment went on with the professor changing the food every time. And, every time, the male rat ran towards the food item and never towards the female rat.

Professor asked the students:

“This experiment shows that food is the greatest strength and attraction, do you agree?”

Then, one of the students from the back row said:

“Sir, why don't you change the female rat? This one might be his wife!”

The professor stood straight up, his finger pointing towards the student:

“Boy, you just got yourself an A in my Course!”

MATT



'I've made the Jubilee Trifle even more royal by adding a layer of Coronation Chicken'

MATT



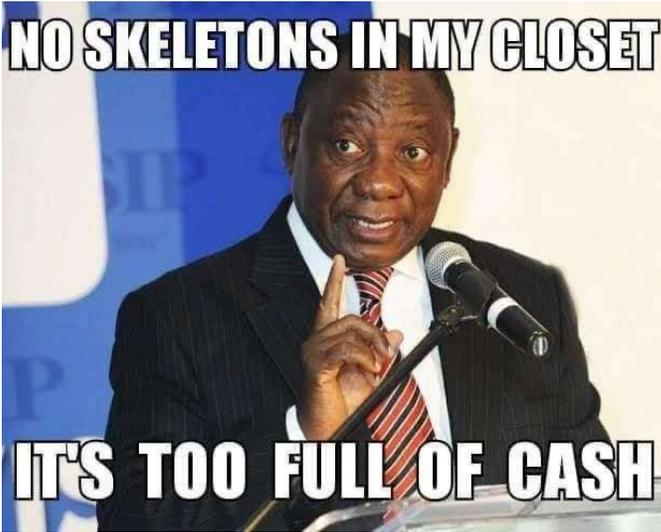
'As our special tribute to Her Majesty we've cancelled 70 flights today'



THIS FLAG DIDN'T COST R22 MILLION... AND FLUTTERS CLOSE TO SANDTON

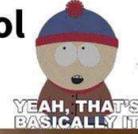
NO SKELETONS IN MY CLOSET

IT'S TOO FULL OF CASH



Politics World

Man who accidentally left 300,000 guns for Taliban gives lecture on gun control



YEAH, THAT'S BASICALLY IT

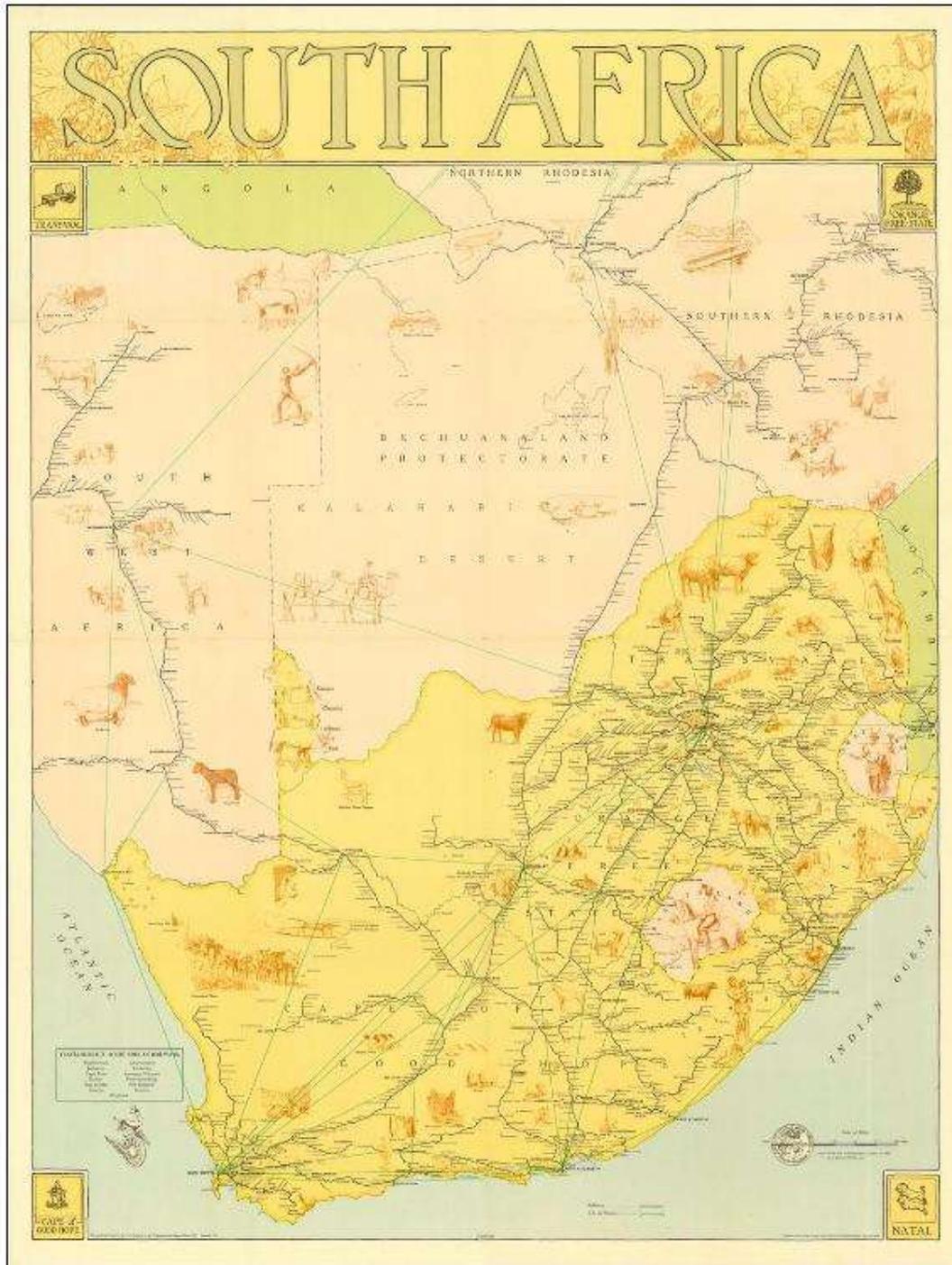


by Stephen Francis & Rico

MADAM & EVE



THE WAY IT WAS...



Sometimes one longs for bygone days when one encounters a rare relic of a functioning and proud South African transport system that ran a complex railway and air network effectively as a business enterprise run by government, writes *Kathy Munro*.

I recently obtained a copy of this unusual 1954 railway map of South Africa showing each and every railway station throughout South Africa, South West Africa (now Namibia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the Bechuanaland Protectorate (Botswana). The map also shows the principal air routes of Southern Africa. It was issued by the Publicity and Travel Department of the South African Railways and was printed by the Government Printer in 1954. The map was designed and drawn for the SA Railways by the Trigonometrical Survey Office in 1947 and revised in 1953 (I wonder if there were earlier versions of this map?) It folds out measuring 28.5 x 38 inches and folds up into 4 segments across five divisions. It is enclosed within grey paper covers.

It was meant to be a tourism promotion item with enquiries being directed to the London and New York commercial liaison officers of the South African Railways. At one time such maps must have been handed out as part of the travel planning advice for potential tourists who could have travelled entirely by rail throughout Southern Africa, or have been more adventurous and flown from the coast inland. But it was still the era when more people would have travelled by train than have flown and Johannesburg had just completed its new station with its vast light filled concourse. It is interesting because no roads are shown. I remember 1954 when I was growing up in Johannesburg as a time when any trip to the coast would have been a 'once a year holiday adventure' and we travelled with all the paraphernalia of a complete mechanics tool kit, a canvas water bottle cooling on the radiator; there were no motorways and a journey from Johannesburg to a South Coast (Natal) holiday destination probably took 10 to 12 hours and we always stopped over in Ladysmith at the Royal Hotel.

Each corner of the map shows the pictorial logo of one of the four provinces of the Union of South Africa (1910 – 1961): Natal, Transvaal, the Orange Free State and the Cape Province. The country had not yet become a republic nor had the mad scheme to create 10 Bantustans and debar black people from citizenship of South Africa yet been developed and implemented. The map presents South Africa as a fabulous and romantic tourist destination in the pictographs. It is the slice of Africa with all the possibilities. The small pictographic icons within the map conveyed semiotic messages about the appeal and essence of a South Africa of sunshine, beaches, blue skies and wide spaces. It is all about advertising the best of the country, but in a tourist friendly way – the perfect destination for those who sought out idyllic train journeys. The images show the big five wild beasts, domesticated animals, villages, waterfalls, mines, a marble quarry, hot water springs and more. South Africa's people are portrayed as rural, not urban. The modern economy of industry and mines did not include a glimpse of the migrant male mine worker.

South Africa's railway network is theoretically today the eleventh largest in the world at 22 387 route-km or 30 400 track-km. It comprises 12 801km of national network, 7 278km of branch lines and 2 228km of narrow-gauge urban network, as well as 80km of standard gauge regional rapid transit network (*information sourced from Wikipedia*). According to the Department of Transport website, in 2017 there were 525 train stations in South Africa. However, today we hear much about the decaying railway network, stolen tracks and abandoned station buildings. The reality is a once fine railway system in disarray. South African Airways fell on desperate times during Covid and ceased operations for 18 months.

In the 1950's it was a different narrative. Like Mussolini's fascist Italy, the trains ran on time and a beautiful map accompanied you on your travels. The map is a souvenir of bygone days.

(Article by Kathy Munro in the Heritage Portal)

AVENGING CHURCH STREET- OPERATION SKERWE:

On 20 May 1983 a powerful car bomb placed by MK Operatives exploded outside the Air Force Headquarters building in Church Street, Pretoria, during the afternoon rush-hour period killing 7 members of the SADF and 10 civilians (197 SADF personnel and civilians were wounded). A deed like this could not go unpunished and the SAAF retaliated with vigour during Operation Skerwe on 23 May.

SADF intelligence had definite information that the Pretoria bombing had been planned by the ANC in Maputo. It was then decided on 21 May that 12 Impala aircraft (*from 4 and 8 Squadrons and 85 AFS*) and a Canberra would carry out a bombing raid to wipe out the ANC bases in retaliation for the Church Street bombing. The targets selected for the reprisal raid were:

- Gubuze House - the planning office of the 'Transvaal Urban Machinery, the ANC unit responsible for terrorism and sabotage in the urban areas of Transvaal,
- September House - planning office of the 'Transvaal Rural Machinery' Logistics HQ Supply Point,
- Command HQ - where final briefings for terrorism missions into South Africa were given,
- 'Main Camp' where training in weaponry and explosives was given studies made from images taken by a Seeker drone showed that these targets were on the outskirts of Maputo in a tree-lined street, some of them partly hidden by foliage from trees.

At 06:40 on 23 May the formation took off from AFB Hoedspruit. The formation of Impalas loaded with 68 mm rockets (24) and 30 mm cannon carried out the extremely difficult attack with military precision. During the low level attack Des Barker in the Canberra was overheard in serious conversation with Maputo Tower saying, "Maputo Tower this is Mike Zero One. We are carrying out strikes against ANC dissidents in your country and request that you keep your air force on the ground as we have no quarrel with the Mozambique government."

On the return leg the Impalas faced a serious challenge: low fuel. Levelling at 15,000 feet they had the option of jettisoning the high-drag rocket pods but to their credit retained them. Thirty miles out from AFB Hoedspruit the aircraft entered a stream formation as they began the descent to facilitate a straight-in landing for all 12 aircraft. In some cases fuel state was so critical a go-round was impossible. The fuel consumption figures used during the planning were those used at 85 ADFS and were renowned for their accuracy. However, much of this sortie had been flown at sea level, not the usual 4,000 feet of the northern Transvaal - that was the difference. This operation is a testament to the skill of the pilots of the South African Air Force.

Updated information: Two pairs of Mirage F1AZ aircraft from 1 Squadron also participated in the operation to ensure the safety of the smaller and slower Impalas. One pair ensured that the SA-3 missile site in Maputo would be unable to fire during the attack. The second pair was on standby in the remote case that enemy MiG fighters would try to intercept the attacking aircraft. The Mozambican government and the ANC reacted quickly to sanitize the news of the destroyed buildings. In their excellent propaganda they claimed the SAAF had struck a jam factory and a crèche. The SADF claimed 41 ANC terrorists, 17 Mozambican nationals and eight civilians killed. I suppose the real figures will never be known but the ANC paid in blood for their attack on Church Street.

This display is dedicated to Colonel Conrad (Coen) van den Berg SM MMM. He was one of the 12 Impala pilots that carried out the attack while attached 4 Squadron. He later served as SAAF Liaison officer in SWA and participated in Operation Modular. In 1990 he was appointed as Military Attaché to West Germany in Bonn. His final post was as Officer Commanding SAAF College from 1997 to 1999.

As a civilian he served as the Head of Flight Safety at South African Airways. Colonel van den Berg passed away on 27 October 2012 at the age of 63 but his legacy lives on with this small display in his honour.

Source: "From Fledgling to Eagle" by Brig. Gen. Dick Lord (highly recommended if you are interest in this and other SAAF operations)

In 1968 Dick Lord did a two-year exchange tour with the US Navy at NAS Miramar flying A-4 Skyhawks and F-4 Phantoms. There he wrote the USN Air Combat Manoeuvring Manual, and his training methods were instrumental in the creation of 'Top Gun' in 1969. His theory was put into practice by other British pilots on exchange, or lent from UK-based training units, such as 764 NAS Air Weapons Instructors (AWI) Course at RNAS Lossiemouth. He completed tours of air warfare instruction flying Hunters from the naval air stations at Lossiemouth, Scotland and Brawdy, Wales. Dick died on 26 October 2011 after a long illness.

POSTSCRIPT: *(No names, no packdrill!)*

Two RAFOC members recently had the opportunity of going through the planning and execution of this operation, with original ops maps and aerial photography, with one of the senior Impala pilots who participated – a gripping journey back into the events of that day...

(Still) FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS:

The History of the US Navy's Top Gun School.

Shelagh Anderson and the BSAP Reserve Air Wing.