



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 118

8th JULY 2022

GREETINGS:

Well, Eskom did warn us that the worst was yet to come... Oh what a circus, Oh what a show... Intimidation and absenteeism has remained rife, despite acceptance by both major unions of the wage offer... Gormless Mantashe thinks electricity is a luxury, and loadshedding "just a phase"... while staff at Estcourt Hospital in KZN carried buckets of water to boil in kettles in the kitchen so that they could give patients hot water... ANC's fake bogeyman, "Zimbabweans"... Christiana joined the national celebrations by burning down their Town Hall and Municipal Offices... SA on tightrope between BRICS and G7... Rand's worst week to date due loadshedding... the Circus came to town in East London for the mass funeral of the 21 youths killed in a shebeen fire... but nobody knows "who dunnit?" Ramaphosa proposes raising drinking age – pray, do tell how, Mr President?... the "Twat in the Hat" should follow BoJo's example... Light relief - Boks snatching a last-minute victory from Wales and watching possibly one of the best F1 races of the season so far, commentary enlivened by Nelson Piquet's salty comment about Hamilton the Second...

Battle of Little BoJo... BoJo bales and resigns after two of his senior Cabinet ministers resigned within 10 minutes of each other... He should have listened to General Custer... with a record number of resignations, Government in tatters... Roger Federer wants to play a final Wimbledon... Barty a sad figure in the stands... After a three-year investigation, a royal report on complaints made by staff of the Duchess of Sussex, above, will stay under wraps – Meghan "unscathed but unindicted." US celebrated the 4th of July with a traditional Chicago-style shooting... Poor Old Joe again aims at the wrong target...

Last week ended on the high note of the first 2022 Ladies Lunch, held on the Terrace on a bright Highveld Winter afternoon. By the buzz (hub bub?) of conversation everyone enjoyed themselves. Karl's videos on the Jubilee and on Ray Hanna and the "Piece of Cake" Bridge were excellent. The impromptu floor show by Karl, Geoff, and Russell as they "wrestled" with the sound added a highlight to the screenings and nearly brought the screen down... adding Rob Garbett to the mix would have been the "piece de resistance" Well done, those men!

THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE:

"In Flanders' Fields the poppies grow, between the crosses, row on row..."

Rudyard Kipling recommended the inscription "Their name liveth for evermore" for each Stone of Remembrance, a biblical text from the Book of Ecclesiasticus. He also penned a simple tribute for the headstones of the unidentified dead: "A soldier of the Great War. Known unto God." The Kipling's only son John was killed in September 1915 at the Battle of Loos in the Great War while serving as

a 2nd Lieutenant with the Irish Guards. His body was never found. Kipling never wrote directly about the loss of his son but "My Boy Jack" is clearly a thinly disguised poem about mourning and regret and also the importance of sacrifice - the father of a sailor asks for news of his son who has seemingly been lost at sea.

Two services were held in Belgium last week, to rededicate the final resting place of three Royal Air Force aviators who lost their lives during the final months of World War One. The services were organised by the Ministry of Defence Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre. They were held for Second Lieutenant Henry George Pike, of 65 Squadron, who went missing on 30th August 1918, and Second Lieutenants Alan Thompson Watt Boswell and Robert Percy Gundill, of 108 Squadron, who were killed on 2nd October 1918.



Headstones for Second Lieutenant Boswell and Second Lieutenant Gundhill RAF.

The rededication ceremonies were attended by members of their family, including Russell Evans, the great-nephew of Second Lieutenant Boswell, and Helen Towler, the great-great-niece of Second Lieutenant Pike. The services were conducted by Reverend (Squadron Leader) Klos, and supported by personnel from XI Squadron, now based at RAF Coningsby. The grave of Second Lieutenant Pike was rededicated at the Larch Wood (Railway Crossing) Cemetery, and the graves of Second Lieutenant Boswell and Second Lieutenant Gundill were rededicated at the Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, both near Ypres and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. "It was a really moving service and I am really privileged and proud to have been asked to attend and represent the family. I am really glad that the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the wider Ministry of Defence community still remember our fallen from the Great War and it is really reassuring to know that if anything ever happened to our soldiers of today, they would never be forgotten." *Helen Towler, Great-great-niece of Second Lieutenant Pike.*

MY BOY JACK:

"Have you news of my boy Jack?"
 Not this tide.
 "When d'you think that he'll come back?"
 Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.
 "Has anyone else had word of him?"
 Not this tide.
 For what is sunk will hardly swim,
 Not with this wind blowing, and this tide.
 "Oh, dear, what comfort can I find?"
 None this tide, Nor any tide,
 Except he did not shame his kind,
 Not even with that wind blowing, and that tide.
 Then hold your head up even more,
 This tide, And every tide,
 Because he was the son you bore,
 And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!

RAF CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY OF WINDRUSH:



UNDER ANC COLOURS? – HEAVEN FOREFEND!

NEW COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM:



A new command and control system is helping to protect the UK from aerial threats. Initial Operating Capability for GUARDIAN has been declared with the roll-out of a Control Reporting Centre (CRC) at RAF BOULMER, providing a dynamic, real-time map of both friendly and hostile aircraft. Managed by Defence Equipment and Support - the Ministry of Defence's procurement arm - and delivered by IBM, the system links the radars and radios of the UK and NATO to communicate between the ground and aircraft. GUARDIAN will also be installed at 78 Squadron in Swanwick, Hampshire. The Control Reporting Centre operates 24/7 and will have 50 dual workstations at Boulmer.

and 29 dual workstations at Swanwick which, when fully operated, could be staffed by more than 100 RAF battlespace management personnel at the two sites. The command-and-control upgrades of GUARDIAN will continue improving the rapid exchange of real-time information and speed and accuracy of decision making. It also receives early warnings from NATO reporting centres to prepare the UK for incoming potential threats. GUARDIAN enables the RAF to dispatch fighter jets to identify, intercept and escort aircraft being flown aggressively, or which are suspected of being a threat. It can also be used to escort aircraft of special interest, such as a passenger airliner that might have lost communications with Air Traffic Control. "The new GUARDIAN system provides a capability which has more capacity to cope with the demands of Homeland Air Defence whilst also preparing operators to support missions across the globe. It is an exciting time."

Wing Commander Misiak, Officer Commanding 19 Squadron.

ONE BRAVE MAN:



This story was posted recently on an "In Memoriam" website: "Out of respect to this member of INTAF (Rhodesian Paramilitary Unit) I am posting this belated acknowledgement because he saved the life of a Sapper and others, subsequently losing his own. "1979 – District Security Assistant ROGERS MUNGANIWA, Keep Protection, INTAF, KIA. Killed in a vehicle ambush in the Burma Valley, Op Thrasher. The morning convoy to Burma Valley was ambushed just before the crest of the Chishakwe pass. The Pookie was immobilised by an RPG 7 hit to the engine. The following Leopard, driven by a Vedette, managed to crest the hill under heavy fire and the engine died from bullet damage just on the other side, but managed to free-wheel away from the zone. Rogers was driving the Puma at the back of the convoy and was hit on the driver's cab by an RPG 7. Although terribly wounded he continued on, dropped to 2nd gear and pushed the disabled Pookie, and the Engineer therein, over the crest of the hill and out of the killing zone. He then stopped the Puma that had about 16-unit members in the back, applied the handbrake, climbed out and dropped dead from his severe injuries. It was later established that there were over 30 firing positions and that at least 5 rockets were fired. No unit members were hit except by shrapnel but, several rifles and the one MAG took direct hits. By selflessly acting to get both his unit and the Pookie out of the killing zone he saved the life of the Engineer in the Pookie and his friends on the Puma. His bravery was never formally acknowledged. "He was a man of Men, and his fathers were Men before him"

FORCED VACCINATIONS, QUARANTINE AND TREATMENT?

The health ministry is facing a wave of resistance to proposed regulations which could force South Africans to submit to medical examination, quarantine and treatment. The proposed legislation, which is being challenged in the courts, has been described as "draconian", "irrational", "out of touch with reality" and "unconstitutional." One of the organisations opposing the draft regulations is Sakeliga, a business support lobby group, which claims the policies were designed with the ulterior motive of enforcing a "covert" Covid-19 vaccine mandate. Separately, Michelle Clarke, the DA's spokesperson for health, said "essentially, it is the ANC government's way of clinging to power by extending the State of Disaster permanently through legislation."

SURREAL SOUTH AFRICA:

A couple of weeks ago, after a particularly bizarre, genre-bending (and in my opinion poorly written) mafia-esque episode of The South Africa Show, which featured a spy boss, a cash-stashing, buffalo-trading president, and his housekeeper who turned out to be part of an international crime syndicate, I wrote an email to the scriptwriters of the show. Being a Life and Culture writer, I expressed concern that this and other recent plotlines were making it increasingly difficult to suspend disbelief. Not to mention all the bad actors who always somehow get elevated to lead roles. Sadly, I've yet to receive a response from the show's writers. In fact, I suspect they never actually read my email. Because just a few days later, they amped things up some more and the show got even crazier. Just as the show's continuously traumatised fictitious nation (that's us) was mourning yet another tragedy, the scriptwriters saw fit to write in a "stage 6" plot that saw the nation's electricity supply cut three times a day, for hours at a time. I can't say for sure what they were drinking in the writing room, but considering these crazy plot twists of late, I'm pretty sure it's not rooibos. Come to think of it, not even good old Klippies could inspire such wild ideas. Like I told the show's writers in my letter, this extreme dependence on unrealistic plot twists and cliffhangers seems a bit lazy. The past 27 seasons of this show have kept my colleagues and me hooked! There aren't many shows that can provide such an engrossing blend of so many genres. Ever since Hollywood stopped making those Scream movie sequels, I worried that the comedy-horror genre was dead. But thankfully, The South Africa Show scriptwriters are always hard at work, serving drama, thriller, espionage, comedy, and so much horror! Sometimes all in one episode. Yes, it can be tough to watch at times. Still, we really don't want season 28 to be its last. To this end, we will write many more strongly worded letters to the show's directors and scriptwriters. We will regularly review new episodes and point out where they've gone wrong. We will point out the bad actors. Most importantly we will keep you abreast of the happenings in every episode, even the ones you might miss; or the ones you forget in between the plot twists. (*Malibongwe Tyilo in Daily Maverick*)

CHEERS FOR TODAY:

The fresh threat of Eskom loadshedding has been well and truly realised as the wildcat strikes and intimidation continued – along with the general chronic chaos and crisis... A merciful piece of news was that both major unions had accepted wage settlements.

Our next lunch to brighten the gloomy and cold outlook will be a Members Lunch at the Wanderers in the Cigar Bar on Friday 6 August 12h30 for 13h00... As normal, limited wine will be available on the table. Price remains **R250** per head and we require you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. Please note that we are committed to pay for the number of meals booked. Look forward to seeing as many as possible.

And so... as Winter cold and dark continues, enjoy the crisp weather, keep warm... and enjoy this edition of Ramblings with a couple of extra stories, including Ian Crookes' Telegraph Obit courtesy of Geoff Quick.

TAILPIECE:

I knew a man who was going at it again,
Much like old Queen Isabella of Spain,
If truth be told,
As he was old,
He found it exceedingly difficult in a biplane.
(*The Sheriff of Nottingham Road*)

Eskom has kindly asked if you could put off your own power today... As the guy that normally does it is stuck without petrol...

MURPHY'S OTHER 12 LAWS:

1. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
2. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

3. He, who laughs last, thinks slowest.
4. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
5. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
6. Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.
7. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
8. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
9. The things that come to those who wait, may be the things left by those who got there first.
10. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
11. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
12. The shin bone is a device for finding furniture in the dark.

THE TROUBLE TREE:

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit, and his ancient one-ton truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation... His face was wreathed in smiles, and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. "Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children... So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again." "Funny thing is, he smiled, when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.

THIS ONE IS WORTH SENDING ON:

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance. We all need a "Trouble Tree!"

MATT

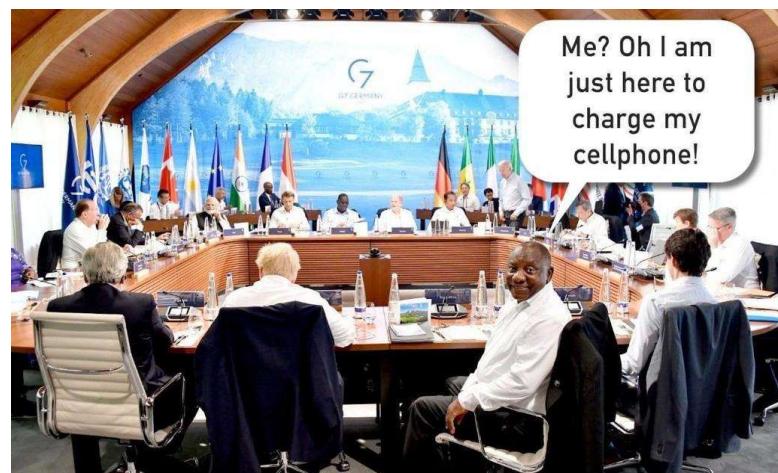
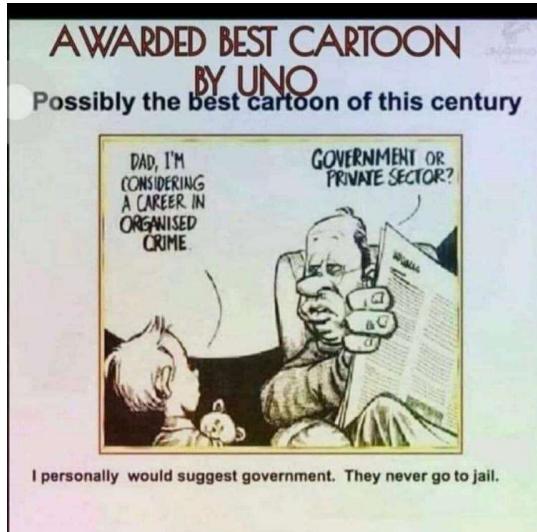


*'Specialist subject: things
Boris Johnson was
unaware of between
March and June 2022'*

MATT



*'OUT!!! Rishi Sunak and
Sajid Javid have quit
the Cabinet!!!'*



Larry the Cat
@Number10cat

"I can no longer, in good conscience, live with this Prime Minister. Either he goes, or I do"



The new eskom slow cooker now available





ARMED FORCES DAY 2022:

Saturday 25th June was Armed Forces Day 2022. In SA the British High Commission, Pretoria, hosted a Reception on Wednesday 30 June 2022. Towns and cities across the UK have marked Armed Forces Day with more than 100 events taking place nationwide. The annual event is a chance for the whole country to celebrate the work of service personnel, reservists, veterans, cadets and their families and friends. The celebrations were in the Best of British traditions, with Flags flying, Bands playing and Men Marching...



Armed Forces Day takes place on the last Saturday each June. Armed Forces Day 2022 celebrations began on Monday 20 June when the Armed Forces Day flag was raised on buildings and famous landmarks around the country. Reserves Day on 22 June also provided an opportunity for the country to recognise our Reserve Forces. Showing support for the Armed Forces provides a much valued morale boost for the troops and their families. The public can find out more about what

they are doing at home and around the world by visiting the official sites of the various Forces. The UK Armed Forces defend the UK and its interests. They are busy working around the world, promoting peace, delivering aid, tackling drug smugglers, providing security and fighting terrorism. This year the Armed Forces Day national event took place in Scarborough, after being postponed for the previous two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Crowds in their thousands were treated to a spectacular display on land, at sea and in the air. RAF displays included the RAF Falcons parachute team landing on the beach, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Red Arrows.

FALCONS DISPLAY OVER SOUTH BAY:



Marching military bands and contingents from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, the Yorkshire Regiment and the Royal Air Force, were joined by Military Veterans and Cadets in a showcase parade along the Scarborough foreshore, consisted of nearly 1000 personnel.



Those marching were cheered and saluted by an enthusiastic public as well as HRH the Duke of Kent. Alongside His Highness, was Secretary of State for Defence, Rt Hon Ben Wallace and Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir Tony Radakin. As well as the event in Scarborough, many parts of the UK, and Armed Forces communities around the world, held localised events.



OBITUARY - TELEGRAPH

Lt-Col Ian Warren Thomson "CROOKIE" Crooke DSO SAS, who has died aged 80, led a secret SAS mission to rescue hostages held by rebel forces in 1981 in The Gambia. In July 1981, the president of the former British colony, Sir Dadawa Jawara, was in England for the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer at St Paul's Cathedral. While he was away, a Marxist coup d'état took place. Economic hardship, together with several years of poor harvests, had prepared the ground for a rebellion. There was resentment, too, that commerce in the country was dominated by foreigners at the expense of local businessmen. Troops from neighbouring Senegal had been sent to fight the rebels who had seized Lady Chilel Jawara, one of the president's two wives, her children and other hostages. The insurgents also controlled the country's armoury, airport, and a radio station in the capital, Banjul. Banks and shops were broken into and safe deposit boxes rifled. Liquor stores were looted and many of the gunmen were youths who had never handled weapons before and were drunk. The intervention of Senegalese forces led to an escalation of violence on the part of the rebels, and the president, a long-time ally of Britain, asked Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, for assistance. Advised to move cautiously, she agreed to send a small reconnaissance team to liaise with Senegalese troops, report on the situation as it developed and await further instructions. Lieutenant-Colonel (now General Sir) Michael Rose, the CO of 22 SAS, decided to send Crooke. He told him to choose the men to accompany him and take whatever arms and equipment he needed. Crooke and two sergeants passed through the special forces security system at Heathrow airport and boarded a flight to Dakar in Senegal. There, they met a team from Delta Force. The elite Special Forces unit from the American army was commanded by Major "Bucky" Burruss but had no clearance from Washington to go into The Gambia. Burruss and Crooke, however, had built up a close rapport, having taken part in joint training exercises. Rose, in Hereford, was using a Delta force satellite radio to keep anxious officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office informed of developments. The FCO had strong reservations about intervening in the rapidly deteriorating

situation. A French-trained Senegalese unit had recaptured the airport at Banjul, and Crooke and his small team, still in civilian clothes, flew there. A recce on foot confirmed their assessment that the rebels would not put up an effective resistance against a show of strength by trained troops and Crooke encouraged the Senegalese to employ a more forceful strategy. One of his sergeants stayed with the Senegalese force co-ordinating an attack. Crooke persuaded a taxi driver to take him and the other sergeant through the rebel lines to the British High Commission. There they learned that the rebels were holding Lady Jawara and her children at a British clinic nearby. Crooke said that he intended to rescue them, and when the High Commissioner demurred he insisted that he telephone the doctor at the clinic and say that SAS men were on their way there. Crooke and his sergeant disarmed the guards on the door of the clinic before slipping inside the building. The rebels were taken by surprise, and in a matter of minutes the hostages were freed and safe in the High Commission. Reinforcements enabled the Senegalese forces to establish control of most of Banjul. President Jawara flew in from Dakar and broadcast to the Gambian people from the Senegalese High Commission in an attempt to restore order. Within a week the coup, which had cost almost 1,000 lives, was over and Sir Dawda Jawara's government reinstated. But the FCO was upset by Crooke's high-handed treatment of the High Commissioner and there was talk of him facing a court-martial for exceeding his authority. On his return to London, however, he was taken to 10 Downing Street to brief the PM. She took a different view from her officials. He received a DSO and the Sergeants DCMs. In a private award ceremony.

Ian Warren Thomson Crooke was born on March 12 1942 in Darjeeling, India. He spent much of his childhood in Rhodesia before returning to England to attend preparatory school and then Wellington College. In August 1962, he was commissioned into the King's Own Scottish Borderers and served with the 1st Battalion in Aden and then in Borneo during the Confrontation with Indonesia. After a posting to Osnabrück, West Germany, in 1977 he transferred to 22 SAS Regiment. Always known as "Crookie", he served in Northern Ireland on two emergency tours in command of a troop and then a squadron. He was twice Mentioned in Despatches.



A visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales to Pontrilas SAS training base in Herefordshire in the 1980s. Crooke is to the Princess's right.

In 1980, during the Iranian Embassy siege, Rose commanded 22 SAS in the operation to rescue hostages taken by heavily armed terrorists. Crooke was one of the two officers tasked with co-ordinating the military operation with the Metropolitan Police and the security services.



Crooke (right) in the Falklands in front of a downed Argentine Pucara

After the Gambia mission, in 1982, at the outset of the Falklands Islands conflict Crooke, the SAS Operations Officer, played an important part in arranging an early deployment of D and G squadrons. He subsequently commanded B squadron in a planned operation to attack the Argentinian Air Force on their home bases, which had to be aborted when the Argentinians surrendered. After commanding 23 SAS, Crooke retired from the Army in 1986. He became managing director of KAS International, a security company set up by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir David Stirling, the founder of the SAS. The original policy to gather intelligence evolved into a more ambitious plan to employ former SAS men for anti-poaching operations in southern Africa. (*Operation Lock*, by Dr John Hanks) After it became involved in commercial espionage in England, it was wound up. Crooke settled in South Africa. In 1993 he took part in a free-fall parachuting display for charity but he suffered a stroke and was seriously injured on landing. With characteristic courage and determination, he learnt to walk, talk and write all over again. Ian Crooke married first (dissolved), in 1972, Susan Godby. In 1990 he married Lesley Lock, who survives him with a son and two daughters of his first marriage and two stepsons of his second.

Ian Crooke, born March 12 1942, died May 17 2022 (Telegraph)