



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 135 4th NOVEMBER 2022

GREETINGS:

The "News cycle" has been more like a "News Cyclone" in recent weeks... the rains seem to have arrived... no ISIL attack yet... King Misuzulu kaZwelithini crowned... Mad Hatter grandstanding again at Coronation... more concerned about Zulu King than SA Citizens... Ramaphosa and Malema: "two Limpopo farmers" celebrate Lesotho PM... Koko and his family allegedly spent R38 million in kickbacks... "Don of Tembisa" made R400 million on hospital contracts... City of Joburg Mpho Phalatse drama continues... Political instabilities in municipalities 'affect delivery negatively... (Yes, we had noticed)... Hijacking (and kidnapping) is on the rise in South Africa... fatal fight over chicken feet in Finetown, seven die... Big petrol price hike coming... loadshedding suspended for weekend, but back on Monday... Pit Bull owners to blame... rain or not, SA Proteas must remain positive... Lions give Stormers a torrid time at Ellis Park... Smaart Maart takes crown for Amakhosi at Soweto Derby... Sadly, Jeremy Mansfield dies – no more "Rude Awakening"...

UK's first Hindu prime minister destroying Tories' pitiful vision of diversity... Sunak and Macron pledge to "deter deadly journeys across the Channel that benefit organised criminals"... Hammer Attack on Pelosi's husband heightens US fears of increasing political violence... Halloween hell in Seoul... Ukraine electricity blackouts, Russian spies and grain shipments... "Severely depleted" Russian Army companies down to Section strength... Ukraine demands Iran stop arming Russia with drones... Russian missile strikes continue... hit on Russian warship by Kamikaze drone... Norway raises military alert level over Russian attack on Ukraine... Eco-extremists "leading the world to despair, poverty and starvation"... Lithium market hotter than ever... Red Bull racing fined £6m for cap breach... "People are going "Spare" about Prince Harry's memoir... "Just don't ask them why"... Trump says Twitter is 'now in sane hands' with Musk... Great Balls of Fire – Jerry Lee Lewis dies... tormented by nightmares? – train your strained brain...

47 SQUADRON HERCULES FOR ALAR:



A 47 Squadron crew, overseen by a Qualified Flying Instructor from 24 Squadron, recently flew their C-130J Hercules from the home of the RAF Air Mobility Force at RAF Brize Norton to Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton to run an Air Landed Arming and Refuelling Point or ALARP site. An Air Landed Arming and Refuelling Point allows a number of helicopters, fast jets or other aircraft to take on fuel where it usually wouldn't be available to them.

This includes improvised runways and in this case the taxiway at Royal Navy Air Station Yeovilton. The Air Landed Arming and Refuelling Point site is set up and run entirely by the aircrew and ground engineers of the Hercules. Air Landed Arming and Refuelling Point will be replaced by the Air Landed Aircraft Refuelling System or ALARS which is currently employed by the Atlas C1 400M, which employs the support of RAF refuelling specialists from Tactical Supply Wing. In this case the receivers included a pair of Merlins flown by the Commando Helicopter Force, alongside a single Wildcat operated by the Army Air Corps. Despite the torrential downpours that hit the aircraft during the refuel, the whole process was executed flawlessly.

RAF ALEX ANDERSON: PRIDE OF BRITAIN AWARD:



His Majesty The King pays tribute to Prince's Trust winner Pride of Britain Awards.

Alex, a Logistics Supplier at RAF Odiham, is one of the first adults with Asperger's Syndrome to secure a role in the Royal Air Force – a huge achievement, and a dream come true. With support from The Prince's Trust, Alex was able to build his confidence and employability skills, enabling him to embark on his new career. Alex has done over one thousand hours of volunteering. This includes supporting veterans and the elderly to provide a befriending service. Alex promised one veteran that once he got into the RAF he would go back in his blues uniform – a promise he kept, which was very moving for the veteran. His Majesty The King wrote: *"I particularly wanted to send my warmest congratulations to Alex on being this year's Pride of Britain Prince's Trust award winner. His is an inspirational story of triumph over adversity that shows how tenacity, courage and hard work can make even the most impossible dream come true. That he has done so in the face of so many obstacles is all the more commendable. I am enormously proud of the part the Prince's Trust has played in helping him achieve his ambition to serve our nation, and so impressed to hear how he is now assisting others in the community, both young and old. The volunteer spirit he so wonderfully exemplifies is one that I know many, many others in this room this evening share. I am full of admiration for you all and congratulate each one of this year's winners on their extraordinary achievements. You are truly the Pride of Britain".*

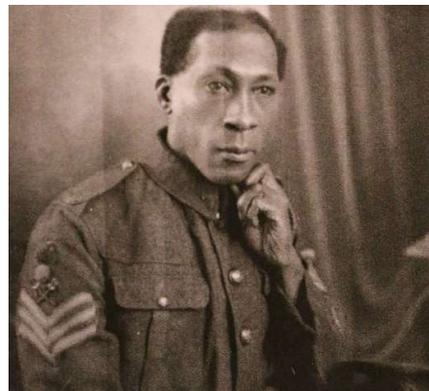
RAF SPORTS AWARDS:



The annual RAF Sport Awards celebrated another year of incredible achievements by individuals, teams, official, and administrators. Air Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, the Deputy Commander Capability and president of three RAF Sport Associations, presented the awards during a ceremony at Halton House, Buckinghamshire. Queens Colour Squadron Gunner and Bobsleigh Olympian Lance Corporal Shanwayne Stephens earned the Sportsman of the Year award, following his appearance at the Beijing Olympics 2020:

making history piloting the Jamaican Bobsleigh team back to the competition for the first time in two decades. Sportswoman of the Year was deservedly awarded to Flying Officer Sarah Bonar. She plays for RAF Woman's Rugby and the Harlequins Women's team, while also earning caps for Scotland with a recent performance at the Women's Rugby World Cup 2022. Both Shanwayne and Sarah are supported by the RAF Elite Athlete Scheme, giving leave of absence and access to kit, equipment, and training facilities alongside a service career. Further awards were given to individuals going above and beyond in the delivery of sport; unsung heroes deserving of recognition. The Lifetime Achievement Awards recognise worthy winners for their dedication over a lengthy period; not only improving the sport but assisting the next generation of rising star athletes. Finally, the RAF Central Fund Station Award recognises the best Station or Unit initiative that encourages and enables others to get physically active. As a new category introduced this year, RAF Coningsby are the first to claim the title. The stations' Coningsby Connected programme offers support services for a holistic Health and Wellbeing approach to fitness, while the Project DELAPSUS provides mobile gyms to frontline personnel and Physical Training instructors using Astra funding.

SERGEANT GEORGE ROBERTS:



A soldier during the First World War and a firefighter during the Second, the story of George Roberts is a remarkable one.

Born on the Caribbean Island of Trinidad in 1890, George travelled to England in the early 1910s. He joined the Middlesex Regiment and served at the Battle of Loos on the Western Front in Autumn 1915. He also fought in the Somme campaign in 1916, during which over one million men from all sides were killed or wounded. George was given leave to return to Trinidad in 1916, having been wounded in action. Whilst there, he recruited 250 volunteers to the army. After returning to England, he settled in southeast London, where he would live with his family until his death in 1970. During the years after the First World War, George became a prominent campaigner for veterans' welfare. He campaigned with The National Federation of Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers (NFDDSS), and later became President of the British Legion's Camberwell branch. George was also a committed civil rights campaigner. In 1931, he was founding chairman of the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP), an organisation representing British black communities formed by the Jamaican-born doctor Harold Moody. When the Second World War broke out, George was too old to join up again. Instead, he became an auxiliary firefighter on the British Home Front and the first black man to join the London Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS). He served at New Cross Fire Station, saving lives during the Blitz. In 1943, George became a Leading Fireman. He also co-founded the fire service's discussion and education groups, for which he was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM). King George VI presented George with his medal on 15 May 1945 at Buckingham Palace. Today, George is remembered by a Southwark Blue Plaque outside his former home in Camberwell. London Fire Brigade firefighters from ethnic minority backgrounds formed a guard of honour at the plaque's unveiling in 2016. He is also commemorated with a red plaque on the wall of New Cross Fire Station, which is still active today as London's oldest operational fire station. In 2021, George's great-granddaughter, Samantha Harding, featured on an episode of Secrets of the Imperial War Museum on Channel 5. Together with former IWM curator Vikki Hawkins, she explored her great-grandfather's extraordinary life and legacy.

E-TOLLS ARE DEAD:

Civil action group Outa is celebrating a grand victory after finance minister Enoch Godongwana on Wednesday (26 October) sounded the death knell for the controversial Gauteng e-tolling system during his mid-term budget speech. The minister brought the debates around the future of e-Tolls to an end by announcing that the South African government, through National Treasury, would finance 70% of road agency Sanral's outstanding debt on the project, with the remaining 30% coming out of the Gauteng provincial budget. This amounts to a transfer of R23.736 billion from the national government to the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) to pay off government-guaranteed debt – conditional on a solution to phase 1 of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project (GFIP). E-toll debt is currently sitting at R47 billion. While the minister did not say outright that e-tolling was over, a statement from Gauteng premier Panyaza Lesufi following the announcement made it clear that the e-toll matter was finalised. "We believe that this... brings great relief to the people of Gauteng who have had to bear the brunt of paying e-tolls for roads which serve a national purpose," he said.

FOCQUERIE:

I arrived in Johannesburg yesterday morning on BA55, which was already two hours late out of LHR. Yet as we approached ORT we were put into a holding pattern for about 20 minutes, together with BA57, AF990 and LH572. The British captain phrased it this way: "Ladies and gentlemen we are aware that many of you have connecting flights and we have endeavoured make up time en route. We are however now in a hold. It seems that the Johannesburg airfield has something of a problem with their radar which is currently not working, radio contact is also a little patchy down there, so, we do thank you for your patience while these problems persist." There was a collective outburst of amused eishes and shrugs and resigned laughter from Saffas on board. However the British woman beside me had tears in her eyes... "What's happening? We're not safe, are we?" she asked, blowing her nose. She was still crying on the ground when she realised she'd missed her flight to Durban. I reminded her that there would be another Durban flight, gave her my bottle of Rescue Remedy and took her to a BA rep who was being mobbed. All four flights had landed semi-simultaneously and so the immigration hall was chaotic. Very few arrivees paused to have their temperature taken and dozens of stressed people were weaving through the queues at speed, in attempts to make their connecting flights. My British lady wasn't the only passenger freaking out or in floods of tears. The reactions were all completely understandable, but in a small way, it reminded me once again of just how resilient South Africans are. We are accustomed to such high levels of focquerie in our daily lives, that when government or quasi-government systems don't work, we're not shocked or even very much disconcerted. Honestly, we don't give ourselves enough credit for our resilience and sense of humour whilst living and working within the parameters of a difficult macro-environment." *(Facebook Post)*

DANGEROUS DANCE WITH PUTIN:



It is possible, perhaps likely, that right now South African armaments, explosives or propellants are being used by Russia in its illegal occupation of parts of Ukraine. If this is indeed the case, it would make South Africa complicit in the prosecution of an unjust war, but more than that - complicit in some of the most brutal acts of terrorism against a civilian population, including the targeting of schools, places of worship and civilian infrastructure. It would also, if true, expose South Africa to possible secondary sanctions from Western nations. If so, once more South Africa would find itself a polecat among respectable nations, sanctioned by its peers and principal trading partners. It may indeed hinder the development of the South African arms industry itself. Of course, we don't know whether or not South Africa is supplying arms as the government refuses to confirm or deny this. But the response of the Defence Minister, Thandi Modise, to a written question by the DA leader, John Steenhuisen, is revealing if somewhat bewildering. The question was: "Whether the Armaments Corporation of South Africa sells arms and ammunition, propellant powder and/or explosives to the Russian Federation? (1) If not, what is the position in this regard? (2) If so, what are the relevant details?" What was remarkable about Modise's answer was her unwillingness to provide the simple answer "no", which would have settled the matter and given some legitimacy to South Africa's threadbare claim to be "neutral" in relation to the conflict. Instead, she said: "Armscor may also, with the approval of the minister, exploit such commercial opportunities as may arise out of the corporation's duty to acquire defence materiel or to manage technology projects. Armscor may therefore from time to time enter into commercial agreements with foreign entities and/or governments, including the Russian Federation, subject to the National Conventional Arms Control Act, the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act, and the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act." In the calculus of benefits - party versus state, arms industry versus the economy, expediency versus human rights - South Africa can only be a loser if it's selling weapons to Russia. And if it's not, why did the defence minister not simply say so? (*Daily Maverick*)

HEINEKEN KEEPS IT GREEN:



Heineken South Africa launched a solar power plant at its Sedibeng, Midvaal brewery in Gauteng on Wednesday (26 October) – moving closer to reducing carbon emissions in all its operations. The solar plant began producing power in May this year and is the largest freestanding solar plant powering a brewery in South Africa and the largest within the Heineken group. The plant boasts 14,000 panels with an energy capacity of over 6.5MW providing 30% of the brewery's electricity demand. The 19-ha (190,000 square metre) project will generate 17,000 MWh per annum.

"This project supports Heineken's goal to reach net zero status in all its production sites by 2030. It is the latest move made by the company on its journey towards more sustainable brewing. The newly installed solar plant follows a water reclamation plant unveiled at the same facility earlier this year," said Heineken's engineering, strategic projects and sustainability manager Richard Kriel. This embedded grid-connected solar project incorporates single-axis tracking technology that enables the panels to move with the rise and setting of the sun. The construction process took approximately seven months to reach completion. During this time, a total of 127 job opportunities were generated, of which people from the local Sedibeng community filled 100. The various job opportunities include technicians, construction teams, general workers and community members who attend to the cleaning of the solar panels and vegetation control to maintain optimal performance. The plant, which has an estimated lifespan of 25 years, has been undertaken in partnership with The Sola

Group, a vertically-integrated provider of renewable energy solutions in South Africa. “Sola is proud to be associated with Heineken and their commitment to procuring clean, low-carbon energy. Embedded generation projects right at the source of consumption help reduce the load on the electricity supply network without additional grid infrastructure upgrades,” said Sola Group CEO Dom Wills. (*Businessstech*)

SANCTIONED SUPERYACHT:



South Africa’s government said it has “no reason” to apply sanctions brought against Russian tycoon Alexey Mordashov and that his \$500 million (R9 billion) megayacht is free to dock at its ports. Mordashov is the biggest shareholder in steelmaker Severstal PJSC and was sanctioned by the European Union, the UK and US after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The mogul’s 142-meter Nord passed north of Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on Tuesday and is expected to arrive in Cape Town on 9 November, ship-tracking data compiled by Bloomberg shows. Geordin Hill-Lewis, Cape Town’s mayor and a member of the main opposition Democratic Alliance, on Monday called for the vessel to be denied entry. But the government, which in March abstained from a United Nations vote condemning the invasion, rejected the plea. “South Africa has no legal obligation to abide by sanctions imposed by the US and EU,” Vincent Magwenya, President Cyril Ramaphosa’s spokesman, told reporters Tuesday in Pretoria, the capital. “We have no reason to prevent their entry into South Africa.” Mordashov, Russia’s third-richest person, has been in Moscow since the Nord’s earlier arrival in Hong Kong, a spokesperson for the billionaire said last week. The spokesperson declined to comment on the vessel’s movements. “South Africa’s obligations with respect to sanctions relate only to those that are specifically adopted by the United Nations,” Magwenya said. “Currently, there are no UN-imposed sanctions on the particular individual.” (*DefenceWeb*)

BASOPA BLACK FRIDAY:

After a long year of financial strain, South Africans are going to be more focused than ever on bargain-hunting for the best deals on offer for Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Shoppers will also be looking for bargains ahead of the festive shopping season. It is also estimated that a significant portion of Black Friday shopping this festive season is going to happen online due to the pandemic’s acceleration of the uptake in online shopping. It is worth noting, however, that scammers and fraudsters are also gearing up to cash in on this period with the hopes of fleecing unsuspecting shoppers. “We have to be on the lookout for dodgy deals and be smart when it comes to prices that seem ‘too good to be true’. Unfortunately, more online shopping activity means more opportunities for cybercrimes to take place,” explained Cyber security expert and Goldfish CEO, Dan Thornton.

Thornton also shared some tips to help you avoid shopping scams this Black Friday, Cyber Monday and holiday season:

1. If a deal is too good to be true, it probably is.
2. Don't give out any of your personal information.
3. Treat social media marketplaces with extreme caution.
4. Only sign off on secure payments.
5. If you've been scammed, react immediately. *(Citizen)*

CHEERS FOR NOW:

These Ramblings were compiled in the congenial surrounding of the KZN North Coast, slightly more relaxed than those in which your Editor usually labours in the "cyclone of news"... we may drop into Nkandla for a cup of tea... I have developed a lasting respect for journalists and columnists such as our own James Clark, who churned out "Stoep Talk" in the Star for many years... James, here's to you!

Our next Members lunch will be on Armistice Day, Friday 11 November, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers... we will lay wreaths at 12h45 at the Wall of Remembrance before lunch. As normal, limited wine will be available on the table. Price remains R250 per head and we request you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. *(no cash deposits please, as this eats into almost 10% of the R250 as bank charges)* Use your name and "November Lunch" as reference, please... Please also note that we are committed to pay for the number of meals booked. Look forward to seeing as many as possible... looking further forward, we confirm that Prof Anne Samson, noted author and historian, is due to be with us in December at the Ladies' Christmas lunch.

And please be aware that Word Editor now checks for "sensitive Geopolitical references"...

TAILPIECE:

At a party, a young wife admonished her husband, "That's the fourth time you've gone back for ice cream and cake. Doesn't it embarrass you?" "Why should it?" answered her spouse. "I keep telling them it's for you."

My teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future there would be autocorrect... And for that I am eternally grapefruit.

TERRORIST ATTACK ON BUILDING IN SANDTON FOILED ...

Apparently, over the weekend three terrorist vehicles set out from different parts of Gauteng to converge on their target in Sandton.

Unconfirmed reports indicate that:

- (i) Vehicle 1 hit a pothole in Daveyton, blew tires, and declared that 'the others should go ahead without them'
- (ii) Vehicle 2 stopped in Hillbrow to 'ask for directions', but were hijacked... the vehicle was stripped down and available 'on the market' as spares about 30 minutes afterwards...
- (iii) Vehicle 3 did manage to get through to their target. However, due to 'loadshedding' they couldn't open the front doors to the building... it didn't have battery backup... and they decided to retire to a nearby pub... Unfortunately the pub was full of Boere from Brakpan who didn't like the look of these terrorists and decided to bliksem them for fun.

The lesson is clear... DON'T MESS WITH SA... Here we will moer you.

Some Laws that we didn't learn at school...

01. *LORENZ'S LAW OF MECHANICAL REPAIR* Once your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch.
02. *ANTHONY'S LAW OF THE WORKSHOP* Any tool, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.

03. *KOVAC'S CONUNDRUM* When you dial a wrong number, you never get an engaged tone.
04. *CANNON'S KARMIC LAW* If you tell the boss you were late for work because you had a flat tyre, the next morning you will have a flat tyre.
05. *O'BRIEN'S VARIATION LAW* If you change queues, the one you have left will start to move faster than the one you are in now.
06. *BELL'S THEOREM* When the body is immersed in water, the telephone rings.
07. *RUBY'S PRINCIPLE OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* The probability of meeting someone you know increases when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.
08. *WILLOUGHBY'S LAW* When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.
09. *ZADRA'S LAW OF BIOMECHANICS* The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.
10. *BREDA'S RULE* At any event, the people whose seats are farthest from the aisle arrive last.
11. *OWEN'S LAW* As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold...

Please keenly observe the operation of these laws in your daily life... and you may, surprisingly, find them true.

MATT



'Some older boys say election giveaways don't exist and it's really your parents who pay for everything'

MATT

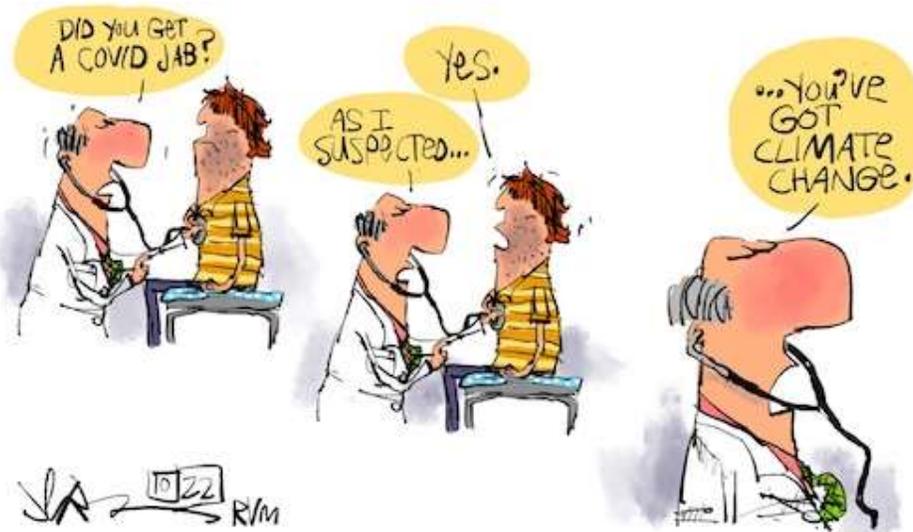


'Lunatic'



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JOE McCOOL:



With a name like McCool, could Richard Miles McCool, Jr. be anything other than . . . cool?

Dubbed the “Typhoon of Steel” due to its ferocity, Army and Marine divisions in the Battle for Okinawa sought to wrest the island from Japanese control to sever the last southwest supply line to mainland Japan, while establishing the island as a base for American medium bombers. In June of 1945 amid the chaos and constant onslaught of Japanese aerial attacks, 23-year-old Lt. McCool, commander of USS LCS-122, was stationed at Radar Picket 15, just north of Okinawa. McCool, Landing Craft Support and other destroyers were assigned to alert U.S. forces on the island of approaching enemy aircraft. While on picket duty on June 10, the Oklahoma native got word that the destroyer USS William D. Porter - yes, the same “Willie D” that almost killed President Franklin D Roosevelt - had been struck by a kamikaze. McCool worked relentlessly to rescue the ship’s crew and, miraculously, there were no fatalities. The following day, however, McCool and his crew were not as lucky. The first kamikaze came at McCool low - so low, in fact, that he “was afraid that the people in the 40-millimeter gun mount might have been hit by the wheels.” The second kamikaze however, followed too quickly. “I did get the guns on it, but not enough to do any good, so it hit eight to 10 feet below where I was standing... I don’t really remember much of what was going on after that... When I finally came to, I was the only person there in the conning tower.” Severely wounded and suffering severe burns, McCool refused medical treatment and rallied his men to fight the flames

quickly engulfing the LCS-122. According to his Medal of Honor citation, McCool “proceeded to the rescue of several trapped in a blazing compartment, subsequently carrying one man to safety despite the excruciating pain of additional severe burns. Unmindful of all personal danger, he continued his efforts without respite until aid arrived from other ships and he was evacuated.” Recovered from his wounds, McCool remained in the Navy before retiring in 1974 with the rank of Captain. McCool’s full Medal of Honor Citation reads:

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commanding officer of the U.S.S. LCS (L) (3) 122 during operations against enemy Japanese forces in the Ryukyu Chain, 10 and 11 June 1945. Sharply vigilant during hostile air raids against Allied ships on radar picket duty off Okinawa on 10 June, Lt. McCool aided materially in evacuating all survivors from a sinking destroyer which had sustained mortal damage under the devastating attacks. When his own craft was attacked simultaneously by two of the enemy’s suicide squadron early in the evening of 11 June, he instantly hurled the full power of his gun batteries against the plunging aircraft, shooting down the first and damaging the second before it crashed his station in the conning tower and engulfed the immediate area in a mass of flames. Although suffering from shrapnel wounds and painful burns, he rallied his concussion-shocked crew and initiated vigorous firefighting measures and then proceeded to the rescue of several trapped in a blazing compartment, subsequently carrying one man to safety despite the excruciating pain of additional severe burns. Unmindful of all personal danger, he continued his efforts without respite until aid arrived from other ships and he was evacuated. By his staunch leadership, capable direction, and indomitable determination throughout the crisis, Lt. McCool saved the lives of many who otherwise might have perished and contributed materially to the saving of his ship for further combat service. His valiant spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of extreme peril sustains and enhances the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service”.

A sailor and hero befitting his name, indeed. (Claire Barrett, HistoryNet)