



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

info@rafoc.org

www.rafoc.org

President:	David MacKinnon-Little
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Geoff Quick, David Lake
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison bruce@jbharrison.co.za Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams vice-chairman@rafoc.org Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740
	Karl Jensen Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652
	Jean-Michel Girard Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish Hanke Fourie Tel: Cell: 082 553 0210
Web Master:	Rob Tannahill Nedbank - Melrose Arch Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063
Almoner:	
Bank Account:	

RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 137

18th NOVEMBER 2022

GREETINGS:

SA infrastructure crumbling – ja wel, no fine... Eskom doesn't have money to burn diesel anymore... intense and protracted load shedding ever in the next six to 12 months... saboteur contractor arrested at Camden Power Station... Government wants to tell doctors where they can work – they would, wouldn't they?... Hawks re-open Cele graft probe... Mount Ayliff Magistrate killed in dive by shooting in Mbizana, E Cape... EFF demands Jacques Pauw new book be withdrawn... Senzo Meyiwa saga rumbles on... Takatso troubles... SA flying school implicated in training pilots for Chinese Air Force... Rassie's latest rant against World Rugby match officials... Dominic Rumbles in the jungle....

Bitcoin manias, panics and crashes... collapse of cryptocurrency exchange FTX... Ministers face backlash over new £63m Channel deal with France... Shetland submarine sabotage... Dominic Raab in the dwang... OK, Joe Biden does not have Covid... CIA holding secret talks with Russia on Ukraine – what are they thinking?... Sergei Lavrov, Russia's veteran foreign minister – dodged claims he was hospitalised in Indonesia... Ukrainian flags raised in Kherson... “dirty bomb” threat still hanging... Russian soldiers flee Kherson naked... barrage of Russian missiles today hit cities across Ukraine... G20 condemns Russian missile attack on Poland... Biden hallucinates: Poland missile ‘unlikely’ to have been fired from Russia... woke new gender ID plan utterly surreal... women barred from Kabul parks...

RAF SUPPORT TURKISH AIR FORCE:



Personnel from RAF No 11 Group, Joint Force Air Component, have deployed to Turkey on Exercise Volkan, to assist with preparations for taking on the NATO Response Force commitment. The exercise, held in Eskişehir, saw the UK personnel deploy to support the Turkish Joint Force Air Component's training as they work up to hold this NATO commitment in 2025. This exercise, the second such training activity, was designed to test the Turkish Joint Force Air Component's ability to conduct operational

planning and deliver complex joint operations in challenging scenarios. This exercise was the latest bilateral training opportunity between the two air forces this year, that has also seen air-to-air training serials during the RAF's NATO Air Policing mission in the summer and also RAF Typhoons deploying to the Turkish Konya Air Base, to take part in Exercise Anatolian Eagle. The 11 Group Joint Force Air Component personnel that deployed on the exercise included specialists in Air Operations, Logistics, Communications and Intelligence. This allowed these personnel to share best practice and knowledge with their Turkish counterparts, whilst also gaining understanding of Turkish procedures. Wing Commander Norton, the Naval and Air Attaché, based at the British Embassy in Ankara, visited the exercise. Brigadier General Turan, the Turkish Joint Force Air Component Commander, during an exchange of gifts between the RAF personnel and the Turkish Air Force, expressed his thanks to deployed UK Turkish Joint Force Air Component personnel and highlighted the valuable role of they had played throughout the exercise. (RAF News)

RAF HERCULES PILOT AWARDED AIR FORCE CROSS:



Royal Air Force C-130J Hercules pilot, Squadron Leader Bindloss-Gibb, has been awarded an Air Force Cross at Windsor Castle. This has been awarded for the actions he and his crew took during Operation PITTNG, when evacuating Afghan and UK personnel from Kabul Airport under highly challenging circumstances. The citation for the medal award stated that through his highly professional actions he undoubtedly saved many lives and protected his crew from the hazards of the operation.

After receiving his award from His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, Squadron Leader Bindloss-Gibb said: "I am humbled and honoured to accept this award on behalf of my crew for our actions on Operation PITTNG last year. For all of us, the Operation represented a test of the skills we had practised in exercises and training routinely but PITTNG was far from ordinary. The crew worked tirelessly under demanding conditions, and I am extremely proud to have been part of that Royal Air Force contribution. This award is recognition of the crew, 47 Squadron and the Royal Air Force's Air Mobility Force's continued ability to deliver when it counts". (RAF News)

USS GERALD R FORD, WORLD'S LARGEST WARSHIP:



The USS Gerald R Ford, the US Navy's newest aircraft carrier, has been anchored in the Solent off Portsmouth following its arrival on Monday morning. The nuclear-powered ship is more than 1,100ft (335m) long - HMS Queen Elizabeth, the largest warship built in the UK, is 918ft (280m). The warship, which cost almost \$13bn (£8.1bn, 9.7bn euros), has been carrying out NATO exercises in the North Atlantic. The giant ship, named after the 38th US president, can be seen from Gosport and the Isle of Wight.

FIFA FOULS UP:

More than 6,500 modern day slaves are reported to have died since Qatar was awarded the 2022 World Cup. Hundreds of thousands more still toil for as little as a dollar an hour. FIFA stands to make billions of dollars but refuses to compensate workers or their families fairly. Advocates and athletes around the world are already pressuring FIFA and our voice could make a difference. FIFA is under pressure to set aside \$440 million for these workers - the same amount that will be awarded to the competing teams. Rights groups, footballers, and even some of the World Cup's top corporate sponsors are part of the push. Despite warnings, FIFA chose a host country well known for using forced labour and for abusing poor and desperate migrant workers. FIFA helped create this problem, and now it has to help solve it.

SHETLAND SHENANIGANS:



"Scottish Police have declared a major incident after the south subsea cable between the islands and the mainland was cut. The force said some landlines and mobiles were not usable and that officers were patrolling to try to reassure residents. Repairs to another cable connecting Shetland and Faroe are ongoing after it was damaged last week. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said it was an emergency situation for the island. The Scottish government's resilience committee had met and was working with partner agencies to ensure support was provided, she added. She said the assumption was the damage was accidental, adding: "There is nothing to suggest otherwise, but work is continuing to assess exactly what the cause of the problem has been." (BBC 20 Oct 2022)

'Edward Stringer, a retired RAF Air Marshal who was formerly director-general of Joint Force Development and director of operations at the UK Ministry of Defence, wrote this piece: "Late last month, the undersea cable that supplies internet to the Shetland Islands was cut in two places. Such incidents are usually accidents, but the presence of a Russian underwater research ship, and the recent trio of underwater explosions that severed the Nordstream gas pipeline, make Moscow sabotage far more plausible. Few are aware just how dependent we are on a limited number of fibre-optic cables that form the internet's spine and electronically link our continents and islands. Currently 95% of international internet traffic is transmitted by undersea cables; satellites, in comparison, convey very little. There are still only about 200 cables around the world, each the size of a large hosepipe and capable of data transfers at about 200 terabytes per second. These cables - which carry an estimated \$10tn worth of financial transactions every day - come together at 10 or so international chokepoints, which are particularly vulnerable. As the Ukraine invasion is reminding us, all wars are economic. Our adversaries have realised that being able to threaten the sanctity of our information and financial systems is a huge strategic advantage. And as Vladimir Putin has long known, the single, physical point of failure in the system that can be overtly threatened is undersea cables. Holding these at risk is a guaranteed way of driving a wedge between Kyiv and the west. Initially Russian forces targeted energy supply, deploying drones and missiles against the Ukrainian

power grid, and turning off Nordstream's gas supply to Europe. When these measures were not immediately effective, the Kremlin upped the ante. Three unexplained explosions ripped apart Nordstream I's undersea pipeline off the coast of Denmark, and less than a month later, the Shetlands cable incidents occurred. It is almost certain that Russia blew the pipeline, but breaches of undersea cabling are much harder to attribute as they can be damaged accidentally by trawlers or earthquakes. Indeed, this ambiguity helps Putin: he has reminded the West that he has the capacity to cut pipes and cables should he choose, while challenging them to prove that Moscow was responsible. The problem for NATO and its allies is that the threat is not felt equally. Russia and China, the continental superpowers that are most hostile to the west, are more controlling of their territorial internet and are less reliant on cables linked across oceans, so are not as vulnerable. Even in the satellite age, geography matters. And so, Moscow has developed several naval capabilities to work at depths that NATO considered irrelevant or uneconomic. Russia's flotilla of quasi-military vessels includes specialist survey and support ships for unmanned submersibles and advanced bathyscaphes that can descend to even lower depths. One, the "Boris Petrov" scientific research ship, was tracked in the vicinity of the Shetland Isles cables when they were cut. Most impressive are the old nuclear submarines that have been revamped to act as mother ships to newer, smaller submarines. They are hard to detect and can place explosive charges on the ocean-floor ready for detonation months or years later. China too is exploiting network vulnerability by muscling into the undersea cable market and offering to lay cables at preferential rates. This has become the nautical arm of the Belt and Road Initiative. Australia and New Zealand have both passed legislation to prevent interfering with or loitering around undersea cable infrastructure. Canberra also took precautions by installing its own cable to the Solomon Islands. Western Europe, by contrast, has been less vigilant about who makes or installs its cables. One who spotted this vulnerability early was the then backbencher MP Rishi Sunak, who wrote a paper in 2017 on the growing sabotage threat. Now he is prime minister, and the risk has become a reality, will he invest in protective maritime and submarine capabilities as he recommended back then? (FT sent in by Rob Tannahill)

DALLAS DISASTER:



DALLAS - Two World War II-era airplanes collided in mid-air at an air show in Dallas on Saturday, the authorities said, turning the commemorative Veterans Day weekend event into a scene of horror. The planes - a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and a Bell P-63 Kingcobra - crashed at about 1:20 p.m. local time, the Federal Aviation Administration said: "The crash happened at the Wings Over Dallas air show at Dallas Executive Airport, which is about 10 miles south of downtown Dallas."

Videos posted online appeared to show a fast and agile airplane slamming into a larger aircraft as horrified onlookers watched. Leah Block, the vice president of marketing for the Commemorative Air Force (CAF), the group behind the air show, could not confirm how many people were involved in the crash or casualties, but said the Kingcobra was a one-seater and that the Flying Fortress may have had four or five people on board. The Commemorative Air Force restores and preserves World War II-era combat aircraft, according to its website. Hank Coates, the president of the Commemorative Air Force, said at a news conference that the group's pilots were well-trained and licensed volunteers, typically former airline, or military pilots. He said a mid-air collision at an air show like this was "extremely rare." Paul Martin, a member of the AAFHA Heritage Association, said that the Flying Fortress was a lumbering bomber that was like a "tractor-trailer truck," big enough to

carry a crew of 10 or 11 people, while the Kingcobra was a single-pilot fighter plane. To have either aircraft in flying condition was a rare occurrence, he said. He said he was aware of only about nine B-17's in flying condition and only one P-63 Kingcobra - before Saturday's crash. "It's heart-breaking for me to hear this, both on a human level and a historical level," he said. The F.A.A. and the National Transportation Safety Board will investigate the crash, the F.A.A. said. Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson said on Saturday that there were no reports of injuries to spectators or those on the ground. He said that much about the crash remained unknown or unconfirmed.

TAKATSO TROUBLES:

A severe clash has erupted between SAA's chosen new partners, with little hope of reconciliation. In June 2021, Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan announced that the Takatso consortium would take a 51% stake in SAA. In return, they would invest R3 billion in the airline over two years. The consortium consists of Global Airways, a full-service leasing company which owns start-up airline LIFT, and an airline management company founded by Gidon Novick, a former co-CEO of Kulula and co-founder of LIFT. Novick resigned as a director on Monday citing lack of information and transparency, particularly in the funding arrangements. SAA's troubles are not over...

CREECY ON COP27:

South Africa environment minister Barbara Creecy called for immediate financial aid for developing countries hit by climate disasters, laying the bill at the door of the US and Europe's richest nations. Wealthy countries should provide aid through a so-called loss and damage mechanism, and multilateral development banks should be recapitalised to provide more finance to tackle global warming, she said on the side-lines of the COP27 international climate summit in Egypt. China and India - the world's biggest and third-biggest emitters of greenhouse gases respectively - should be excluded from paying compensation as they are still developing economies, Creecy added. (China emits 11.47 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent annually, while India produces 2.71 billion tons, according to Carbon Atlas. The US emits 5 billion tons, and Russia lies in fourth place at 1.76 billion tons.) The minister's comments, which came after she met with other African ministers to align their positions, highlight the global rift on climate matters. Officials from the developing world have long said that wealthy nations, which have benefited from the industrialisation that's warmed the planet for two centuries, are liable for compensation. "From the perspective of the African Group of Negotiators we do need to see immediate support for loss and damage on the continent," Creecy said. "Of course," we want money right now, she added. While the agreement to discuss loss and damage was a breakthrough, anything involving compensation and liability "is just not happening," said John Kerry, the US special envoy for climate change. Other developed nations also called for India and China to contribute. (*BusinessTech*)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

This year has flown by, and Christmas is in sight... The Great South African Travelling Circus rolls on... Last weekend saw Armistice Day/Remembrance Day Services and functions around the country. Our Members lunch on Armistice Day, last Friday 11 November took place in pouring rain... which meant we laid wreaths at the Wall of Remembrance after lunch once the rain had stopped... Our speaker was Vice-Chairman Jon Adams who made a very good illustrated presentation on the history and significance of the Poppy, the Unknown Soldier and Armistice Day. This was well received by the good turnout of members and guests present. The presentation is available at www.rafoc.org/newsletters

Our next lunch, and last for this year, will be the Ladies' Christmas lunch on Friday 2 December. Our speaker will be Prof Anne Samson, noted author and historian.

We will hold the price at 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. Use your name and "December Lunch" as reference, please...

This lunch is likely to be fully subscribed, so please book early! We look forward to seeing a "full house"...

The Centenary of the SAAF's first fatal accident was celebrated recently with a Memorial Service at Irene Estate – see the article at the end of these Ramblings.

TAILPIECE:

"Black Friday cometh soon, and I should be worried. Sadly, I'm such a sucker for a "bargain," especially when it comes to weird tech gadgets that I don't need. Last year's bluetooth, App-controlled toothbrush has been used exactly twice and that's the sort of thing I can sell 2nd hand on Gumtree. This year I will be ruled by discipline, or maybe I should get a matching bluetooth toothbrush instead."

For those of you who are placing Christmas lights / decorations in your garden, can you please avoid anything that has Red or Blue flashing lights together? Every time I come around the corner, I think it's the police and I have a panic attack. I have to brake hard, toss my vodka out the window, fasten my seat belt, throw my phone on the floor, turn my radio down, and push the gun under the seat, all while trying to drive. It's just too much drama, even for Christmas. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding...

SHEEPDOG SHENANIGAN

A Kiwi bloke washed up on a beach after a shipwreck. The only other survivors were a sheep and a sheep dog. They were stranded on a deserted island. After being there a while, the Kiwi got into the habit of taking his two animal companions to the beach every evening to watch the sunset. One particular evening, the sky was a fiery red with beautiful cirrus clouds. The breeze was warm and gentle - a perfect night for romance. As they sat there, the sheep started looking better and better to the lonely man. Soon he leaned over to the sheep and put his arm around it. The sheep dog, ever protective of the sheep, growled fiercely until the man took his arm from around the sheep. After that, the three of them continued to enjoy the sunsets together, but there was no more cuddling. A few weeks passed-by and, lo and behold, there was another shipwreck. The only survivor was Jacqui Lambie. That evening, the man brought Jacqui to the beach to watch the sunset. It was another beautiful evening - red sky, cirrus clouds, a warm and gentle breeze - perfect for a night of romance. Pretty soon, the man started to get those feelings again. He fought the urges as long as he could, but he finally gave in and leaned over to Jacqui and told her he hadn't had sex for months. Jacqui batted her eyelashes and asked if there was anything she could do for him? He said, "Can you take the dog for a walk?"

MATT

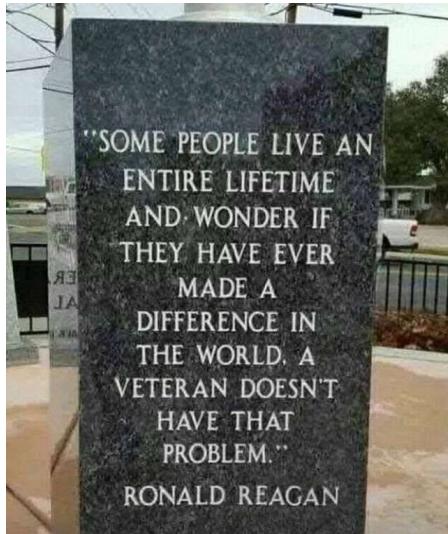


*I'm worried about a World Cup without alcohol.
I hope I don't discover that I actually hate football'*

MATT



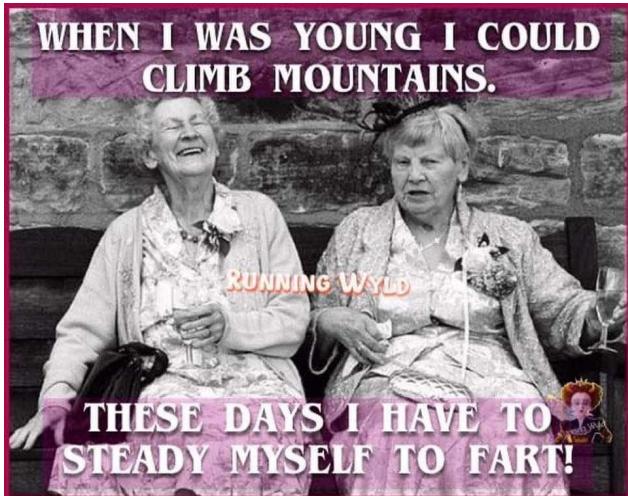
'The public think the John Lewis Christmas ad is a tear-jerker. Wait till they see the Autumn Statement'



A married man's honest confession :



"I always read my wife's horoscope to see what kind of day I am going to have..."



You drop something when you were younger, you just pick it up.

When you're older and you drop something, you stare at it for a bit contemplating if you actually need it anymore.

IS IT TIME TO GO?

'Is it time to go sir?'

'It is son.'

'But who will miss me sir?'

'You will be missed dearly son.'

'My mother sir, will she miss me?'

'Yes, she will son.'

'My father sir, will he miss me?'

'Yes, he will son.'

'My darling Irene, my little Rosie, will she ever know me?'

'She will, son. She will see you in the rising and the setting of the sun. She will see you in the rain and through the tears of those who love and have loved you.'

Hear that bugle son?

That's for you, every year you will be missed but loved forever.'

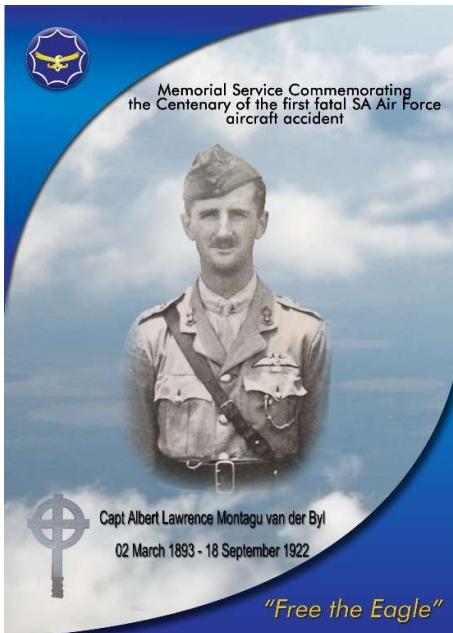
'But I'm afraid sir.'

'Come now lad, it's time to go, no need for fear.'

Take my hand, let's walk together through this sea of red and onward, don't look back now, onward lad, onward'

#lestweforget #neverforget

THE SAAF'S FIRST FATAL ACCIDENT:



AVRO 504k (Shuttleworth Collection)

The Avro 504 was a World War 1 biplane made by the A V Roe & Co, "Avro" and under licence by many others. Production during the war totalled 8,970 and continued for almost 20 years, making it the most-produced aircraft of any kind that served in any military capacity during the First World War. More than 10,000 were built from 1913 until production ended in 1932. First flown from Brooklands by F. P. Raynham on 18 September 1913, powered by an 80 hp (60 kW) Gnome Lambda seven-cylinder rotary engine, the Avro 504 was a development of the earlier Avro 500, designed for training and private flying. It was an all-wooden biplane with a square-section fuselage. The 504 was the first British aeroplane to strafe troops on the ground as well as the first British aircraft to make a bombing raid over Germany. It was also the first Allied aeroplane to be downed by enemy Anti-Aircraft fire and was the first aircraft flown by many future aces, including Billy Bishop. 1 Squadron SAAF's Training Flight (No 2 Flight) was operating Avro 504K's and was engaged in the refresher training of reserve flying officers. On the strength of the squadron was Avro 504K H9699. Like all the other Avro's in the SAAF it had been built as part of a batch of 300 aircraft built by the Grahame-White Aviation Co in England.

It had been passed by the Aeronautical Inspection Dept in England on 24 April 1919, dismantled, packed, and stored at RAF Shrewsbury on 13 June 1919. H9699 was despatched from RAF Ascot on 5 August 1919, where it was taken over by the SAAF team in the UK on 9 August. It left by rail on the first stage of its journey to SA on 15 August, arriving at the Depot in about January 1920. The aircraft was unpacked on 18 March 1921 and inspected by F/Sgt WJ Parker under F/Sgt Hutchison. Parker noticed that the starboard main plane was covered with a greenish mould. It was condemned and another one was drawn from stores to replace it. However, as no bolts and fittings were fitted to the new main plane. The ones from the condemned main plane were removed, cleaned up and fitted. The Aircraft was inspected and found satisfactory upon completion on 11 July 1921. It was then transferred to ZAS where after the usual test flying. It was issued to 1 Flight where it flew a total of 94 hours and 23 minutes until 17 June 1922.

It then underwent a complete overhaul which was completed, and the aircraft tested and passed on 19 July 1922. A further 25 hours and 20 minutes were flown by H9699 until 18 September. When on the first flight of the day, Lt H Daniel and A/Cpl Ward flew for 20 Minutes followed by Lt Gray with Major Porteous (MO) as passenger, flew for 10 minutes. The next pilot to fly the aircraft was Lt ALM van der Byl.

In 1922 Lt van der Byl had joined the SAAF as an experienced reserved officer and underwent a refresher course at 1 Squadron. There, he received instruction from Lt John Holthouse, who was Adjutant Pilot in the Squadron. It had been customary to give flights to officers from other units and

regiments in the permanent force, so it was nothing unusual that van der Bly invited Lt EA Stuart of the 1st SA Mounted Rifles to fly with him on the morning of the 18 September. Van der Byl installed Stuart in the front cockpit assisted by F/Sgt John Blamire. After running up the engine, he taxied out and took off in a steep climbing turn about ten feet from the ground, passing Lt John Holthouse in another aircraft stationary in the middle of the aerodrome.

The Crash

They headed out towards Irene where they commenced an aerobatic sequence, referred to in those days as "stunting"). During the sequence a loud crack was heard, following which the Avro fell to earth, killing both occupants and destroying the aircraft, the SAAF's first fatal accident. The subsequent court of inquiry weighed heavily upon those who had been involved with the operation especially as it was decided that it was one of the fittings which had failed and not the aircraft's timber which was in good condition. The technical staff were exonerated despite the deficiencies in the system which the enquiry exposed, but the exact cause of the accident remained undetermined. Whether the aircraft had been over stressed previously or was over stressed during those last few manoeuvres perhaps deliberately or inadvertently, even by Lt Stuart who may have been flying at the time, will never be known.

The loss of two gallant officers was however a tragedy. The lesson to be learnt however was as valid as it is today. The underfunding and under staffing of a high technology organisation such as an air force can only lead to serious problems.

LT A L M van der BYL

Albert Lawrence Montagu "Lawrie" van der Byl was born on 2 March 1893 at Newlands, Cape Town in the Cape Colony; the son of Charles le Febre and Kate Amy (nee Eaton) van der Bijl. He was educated at the Diocesan College and then at Sherborne School in Dorset, England between May 1908, and July 1911. He continued his education at the South African College School between 1911 and 1912 before studying as a mining engineer at the South African College between 1913 and 1914.

He enlisted in the Union Defence Force's Cape Garrison Artillery and was commissioned as a Lieutenant for service in the German South West African campaign of 1915. He then left for England and enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery, serving on the western front, before transferring to the Royal Flying Corps in 1916 as an observer with 23 Squadron on F.E. 2b's. In 1917 he trained as a pilot and was awarded Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate number 4529 at the Beatty School of Flying at Hendon near London on 21 April 1917. He then served operationally with 49 Squadron flying de Havilland DH4's and then 65 Squadron on Sopwith Camels and returned to England with two known aerial victories. Thereafter he served as an assistant flying instructor until the end of the war and was briefly attached to the Royal Air Force in North Russia during 1919. He was demobilised in December 1919 with the rank of Captain and returned to South Africa, studying farming at the Elsenberg Agricultural Training College in Stellenbosch.

He was the 5th member of the newly established Aero Club of South Africa, which played a large part in the establishment of an independent Air Force and was one of the first ten officers appointed in February 1922. He occupied the position of Acting Adjutant at Zwartkop Air Station with the rank of Lieutenant and flew operationally during the Rand Revolt of March 1922.

He was killed on 18 September 1922 when the starboard wing of Avro 504K number H9699 suffered structural failure whilst performing aerobatics over the farm owned by his cousin Henry van der Byl at Irene, near Pretoria. The accident was tragically witnessed by his recently widowed mother. He was 29 years of age.

With him on board as passenger was Lt Edward Armstrong Stuart, aged 34, of the South African Mounted Rifles and a friend of his cousin. A younger brother, Sub Lieutenant Charles Philip Voltelyn van der Byl, who drowned at sea in October 1916 while serving with the Royal Navy as a submariner during the Great War.

Albert van der Byl was the newly fledged South African Air Force's first casualty in a flying accident and he lies buried at the family burial plot on the Irene Estate.

We will remember him!