



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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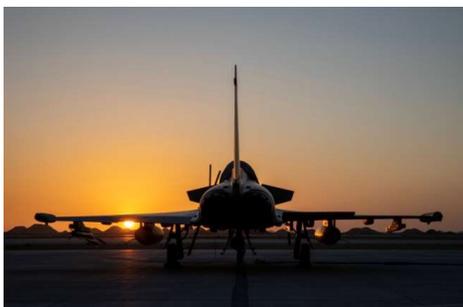
RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 152 3rd MARCH 2023

GREETINGS:

SA is "greylisted" (I wonder why?)... Fallout from de Ruyter's resignation continues... Andre de Ruyter kicks the beehive - hysterical response from ANC - seeking scapegoats for their own failures... Eskom Centenary – nothing to celebrate – from darling to disaster in 25 years... CFO has greatness thrust upon him... what's next for the collapsing power utility?... Fuel levies raise R90 Billion of tax revenue... another price hike... State-controlled power utilities frustrate free market philosophy... North West's RDP housing misery and danger... Vaal River floods – hundreds displaced... Cabinet reshuffle takes shape – sort of – political paralysis... Bafana Bafana's consistent ineptitude matched only by that of the ANC in consistently scoring own goals...

Record low temperatures in California... Ukrainians mastering Leopard II tanks... Sweden will also supply Leopard tanks... Russian General performs striptease in leaked video... Putin secretly living in golden palace with gymnast lover... US Congress denounces SA's Naval Exercises with Russia and China... will US ban Tik-Tok?... Woke washing of children's literature – "Racist", "Sizeist" Billy Bunter and Noddy books were also re-written... after Dahl, who's next?... Dilbert cartoons dropped due to YouTube "rant" by Scott Adams... Megan Markle "crying on the floor"... Justin Trudeau, Canada's Clown Prince, is the future of the woke West... Greta Thunberg detained at protest over wind farm (How's that again?)... Clarkson's farm hold mirror up to "can't-do" Britain...

MAGIC MOMENTS IN OMAN:



The RAF and Royal Air Force Oman have strengthened their relationship by completing the annual bilateral air combat training exercise in Oman, known as Exercise MAGIC CARPET.

Typhoons FGR4 aircraft from RAF Coningsby; a RAF Voyager air-to-air refuelling aircraft from RAF Brize Norton and over 300 personnel from across the RAF have completed the two-week exercise with Omani Typhoons and F-16s at Thumrait in southern Oman. The scenario-based exercise was designed to ensure both air forces maintain the ability to operate alongside each other in response to any external threat. It included a series of missions against ground targets. The length of the missions were extended by the RAF Voyager, which provided air-to-air refuelling to the UK and Omani aircraft. The RAF regularly practices deploying to new locations and operating with a range of international partners. Integration with the Omani Air Force is a key component to maintaining bilateral relations and maintaining security in the wider Gulf region. "The purpose of being here is to conduct defence engagement with the Omanis and to deliver high quality training opportunities for our people. It has been a full team effort; from the logisticians who have moved tonnes of essential equipment to the chefs who have cooked nearly 1000 meals a day, which in this heat that takes some doing! We are working together very much as equal partners in the relationship. We plan alongside each other; we brief alongside each other, and we fly alongside each other. The exercise strengthens the RAF's role as a key partner for Oman and demonstrates our ability to deploy world class capabilities to the region". Wing Commander Wright, Detachment Commander. *(RAF News)*

OPERATION INTERFLEX:

Personnel from the RAF Regiment reflect on the role they have played training the Ukrainian Armed Forces as part of Operation INTERFLEX, as the first anniversary of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine approaches. It is a measure of the global high regard in which our Armed Forces are viewed that Ukraine has looked to the UK to upskill their warfighters to repel Putin's aggressors. Flying Officer Iqbal, from 51 Squadron RAF Regiment, was deployed on Operation INTERFLEX from June 22 to October 22 as a Training Team Commander. His team led the training of up to 70 Ukrainian students at a time. "It fills me with pride knowing what all our nation is doing to support the Ukrainian people. It is important for us to appreciate what we have and give as much as we can in these extremely difficult times. The training we are delivering has and further will, prepare these brave individuals in their battle for freedom. We should remember that this conflict has had an impact on the lives of our Ukrainian friends since 2014. Russia has caused significant pain and suffering. The 24 Feb should be a time of remembrance for all who have lost their lives and those currently fighting for their inherent freedoms – Slava Ukraini."

Acting Sergeant Jones from RAF Regiment delivered a training package over a 6-month period, training up to 1000 Ukrainian partner forces. Our role is integral for our Ukrainian brothers and sisters as we gave them the vital skills required to survive, fight and win against the illegal Russian invasion. Giving them the essential weapons and munitions to counter Russian attacks will save lives and homes. It is a time to reflect on what we achieved as a force, but it is also a reminder that a lot of people have lost their lives and many more will until the invasion is stopped. Our support is more crucial than ever once the winter is over, and offences begin again we need to equip the Ukrainians as best we can. *(RAF News)*

DEFENCE SLEUTH SAVES TRIBUTE TO LOST AIRMAN:



Sqn Ldr Ashfold RAF



Westland Lysander 417

A MEMORIAL to a wartime hero killed in a flying accident, destined to be discarded after a church closure has been presented to his family 80 years after his death. Sqn Ldr Kenneth Lewis Ashfold died in September 1941 when his Lysander 417 aircraft flew into a wall at Medicine Hat live firing range in Canada. He and Fg Off David Francis Landmack of the Royal Canadian Air Force were buried in Beechwood Cemetery, Ottawa, and a brass plaque was erected in Sqn Ldr Ashfold's memory in a church near his UK base at Porton Down. Boscombe Down Station Adjutant Fg Off Gaz McColl said: "When the church closed, 10 years ago, it was believed the plaque was discarded. Our unit historian, Norman Hall, shall we say acquired it and brought it back to Boscombe Down on a temporary basis until the most suitable location was agreed. "The choice was either the Imperial War Museum, or possibly a blood relative." Encouraged by the distinctive name of Ashfold, Abbey Wood security information manager Alan Stuart then decided to turn detective and try to track down any surviving family. And 80 years after the tragedy, following the discovery that Sqn Ldr Ashfold left a widow and baby at the time of his death, his son Malcolm was finally contacted, and formal handover was arranged. But the presentation was delayed for a further two years by the Covid 19 pandemic. Mr Ashfold said: "Our entire family were so pleased to be invited to this Commemoration presentation, when we received my father's plaque. Thank you for making our day so special. We shall look back and appreciate this day forever."

CORONATION CHAIR:

The Royal and Ancient Coronation throne has shrunk and needs reinforcing to take the combined weight of the Stone of Scone and the King when he is crowned at Westminster Abbey. The oak chair, also known as St Edward's chair is considered to be one of the most valuable pieces of furniture in the world. It has featured in Coronation ceremonies since 1308.

OBITUARY:



Boz Robinson walking out to his Jungmann.

AIR VICE-MARSHAL BRIAN LEWIS ROBINSON, always known as 'Boz', who has died aged 86, had a passion for speed. A Cold War fighter pilot and an RAF bobsleigh champion, he was still flying the Hunter on the air display scene 45 years after first taking the helm of the iconic fighter.

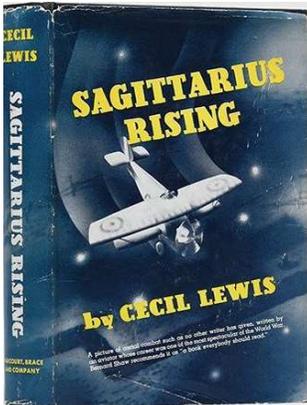
He joined the RAF in September 1954 and trained as a National Service pilot, first at RAF Feltwell before continuing on the Vampire at Swinderby. He joined No 18 Hunter Course at Chivenor in June 1956 before joining 74 Squadron at Horsham St Faith, near Norwich. Like many fighter pilots at the time, he fell victim to the Sandys Defence White Paper of 1957, which saw the disbandment of fighter squadrons and pilots assigned to different duties. Robinson completed the flying instructor's course at CFS before training pilots on Oxford University Air Squadron. In 1962 he returned to the frontline after converting to the Canberra, before joining 73 Squadron at Akrotiri. He qualified as a Pilot Attack Instructor and, with his fighter background, was determined to develop ground attack tactics more akin to the fighter philosophy than the more traditional bomber approach. Some of the hierarchy were not convinced, but Robinson pressed on with his ideas. He later served in the Strike Wing at Akrotiri before returning to MOD to join the flight safety department. After attending Staff College, he left for No 4 FTS at Valley, the first of a series of appointments at the base and where he was first introduced to the Gnat jet trainer. He left to join the directing staff of the Canadian Forces Staff College in Toronto in August 1974 and, two years later, returned to Valley as the chief instructor, where he oversaw the introduction of the Hawk as replacement for the Gnat. After promotion to Gp Capt he was appointed the Station Commander in August 1978. During his tours at Valley, he was able to renew his acquaintance, and love affair, with the Hunter, which was used in addition to the Gnat and then the Hawk for advanced pilot training. After serving at NATO, he studied Russian before travelling to Moscow to take up the post of British Defence and Air Attaché in December 1983. He travelled widely in the Soviet Union but was always conscious of the ever-present 'company' his visits attracted. Throughout his two-year tenure, the Cold War was at its height and Robinson faced many difficulties and sensitive situations, and not always as a result of Russian obstruction and intransigence, but also tetchy dealings with the Foreign Office in London. He always maintained that two years under constant surveillance was quite sufficient and was pleased to return to Britain and a 'normal life.' He returned to MOD in September 1986 as the Director of Quartering before serving as Air Officer Administration at HQ Strike Command. He retired from the RAF in July 1991. During his service in the RAF, he was three times the RAF bobsleigh champion. Robinson's love of flying never left him. In retirement he flew both the Hunter and the Gnat at air displays. At the 2001 International Air Tattoo, he won the best display prize, the King Hussein Memorial Sword, when he reflected that he probably held a record for the longest time period between his first public Hunter display in 1958 and the last. He commented: "Not bad for an old fighter pilot – well over 40 years of good fun." He particularly enjoyed flying a Gnat down the straight at the Silverstone motor racing circuit many years after he had driven a Formula Junior along the same straight in the 1950s. He delivered a Hunter to South Africa via Egypt and flew many hours instructing private pilots at home and abroad. In June 2006, with a retired RAF colleague (who had been his first student at Oxford UAS in 1959), he delivered a refurbished 1930s-era Bücker Jungmann biplane from Duxford to a German flying group at Hamm. In later life he moved to live in Thailand, where he died in December.

DETERMINING THE OUTCOME:

In the year since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of neighbouring Ukraine both sides have defied expectations about how they would perform. From the outset, Russian forces – purportedly from the second most powerful military globally – failed to achieve their goals, mired in a morass of poor planning, inept leadership, equipment failure and at times drunkenness. Ukrainian forces meanwhile mounted a heroic defence against what initially seemed like insurmountable odds, revealing in the process how far a NATO-backed reform programme had upgraded a military that just eight years earlier had been in ruins. **Campbell MacDiarmid** writes that from the beginning, one factor stood out as having the power to determine the outcome of the war – foreign military assistance

to Ukraine. Fighting a better armed enemy with massive stockpiles, a well-developed defence industry, and virtually inexhaustible manpower, Ukraine needed support from its allies to survive. Recognition of this has led Kyiv's allies to commit ever greater quantities of heavier and more complex weapons, a flow that now reaches billions of dollars every month. While Western weapons like NLAWs and HIMARS kept Ukraine in the fight, Russian weapons have proved the old adage attributed to Stalin that "quantity has a quality all its own." Today, Poland delivered the first Leopard II battle tanks to Ukraine – you can follow the latest news on the Telegraph live blog. Meanwhile, the King has said it is "heartening" that the UK is doing all it can to support Ukraine. In a personal statement released to mark the first anniversary of the conflict, the King hailed the "global outpouring of support" and said the West stands "united" against the "unnecessary suffering" inflicted by Russia. Over the last year, many Britons have aided Ukrainians in their hour of need - in a remarkable story, one Russian Telegraph reader offered her home to the Ukrainians after they saved her husband's life...

TRAINING THE CHINESE:



THE RECENT furore in the press concerning ex-military pilots helping to train the Chinese Air Force has an interesting historical background. In his book *Sagittarius Rising*, first published in 1936, Cecil Lewis describes teaching the Chinese to fly. In spring 1915, as a 6ft 3in, 16-year-old at Oundle School, he wrote to the War Office asking to join the RFC and was interviewed by Lord Hugh Cecil. Lewis was accepted and flying training at Brooklands followed in a Morris Farman Longhorn biplane. Commissioned in December 1915, he was posted to 9 Squadron at Amiens and, with only 20 hours airtime in his logbook, started flying photographic patrols in a BE2C across the German lines.

He flew six hours most days, and was overhead Boisselle on July 7, 1916 when my grandfather, a Private in the Lincolnshire Regiment, was killed at Marnett Wood. Lewis was awarded a Military Cross at 18, was a Flight Commander Instructor at 19 and was demobbed shortly after the Armistice at the age of 20. A civilian job with Vickers Aviation followed and he test flew the Vickers Vimy. When Lewis was 21 the Peking representative of Vickers Ltd negotiated an aviation deal with the central government in Peking for the supply of 50 Avros and 40 commercial Vimys with the necessary spares to form a training school for Chinese pilots. Lewis, a fellow pilot and eight mechanics travelled to Venice by train and then shipped out to Shanghai and finally onto Peking. Eventually trainee pilots clad in silk coats from shoulder to ankle, hands hidden in their sleeves, appeared. There was a long delay before the British aircraft arrived in Peking. A year after his last flight in the UK the crates containing the Avro aircraft arrived and the machines were erected by the British mechanics and flight tested. Lewis was allocated eight pupils. All instructions were conducted via an interpreter whose understanding of geometry, science and English was rudimentary. In the Chinese winter, 10 degrees below freezing, the instructors tried to teach flying skills to men with sluggish reactions. Six months later some pupils had gone solo. His best pupil died when the Vimy he was flying burst into flames in mid-air. The Vickers team had an ambition to inaugurate a commercial service covering the 800 miles between Peking and Shanghai in four hops. However, the Chinese method of management and bribes and flooded airfields made for interminable delays before a small bag of mail was flown on the first cross country leg. Overnight a violent thunderstorm resulted in a fast-flowing torrent separating Lewis from his aeroplane. It was two days before the aircraft could be flown back to Peking. That was the end of the 1921 Peking-Shanghai air service. Lewis resigned his

post, returned to London and, aged 24, took a job at the fledgling BBC as Deputy Head of Programmes. He became friends with Bernard Shaw, won an Oscar for his 1938 adaption of Pygmalion, and retired to Corfu in 1960, where he died in 1997 aged 98. *FD Skidmore, London SE3*

MEMBERS WRITE:

Philip Weyers writes from the land “down under” - here’s an extract:

“I have continued my photo-diary, essentially a personal photo record of things that have made an impression in some or other way. If this is of interest, great...

Driving: Something that I come across daily and which makes an impression on every occasion is how the Aussies drive their vehicles. We Saffers are better drivers than the Aussies are, no doubt about that at all. Not in terms of adhering to the rules which few of my countrymen seem to do, but rather in the ability to drive competently. The Aussies tend to ‘poer-poer’ on the road without any idea of where they’re heading, how to get there and even less idea of how to operate the machine they’re sitting in. Parallel parking is one of life’s great mysteries as is reverse parking with 4 or 5 attempts being the norm while all those waiting sit patiently watching as the exercise unfolds, usually very slowly. It seems that these good folk have no idea at all about where their cars begin and end or how much space they have at either end when parking. I have had to learn to be patient, very patient. These observations are of course generalisations, though often encountered.



Traffic Law Enforcement is extreme, over the top and rigorously applied. Waving to someone with the arm out of the window, \$375 (R4680). Having your cell-phone accessible in a shirt pocket, \$1000 (R12500). Likewise, not wearing a seatbelt correctly \$1000. A neighbour was travelling as a passenger recently and turned around to attend to her 8-month-old son in a baby car apparatus in the back, moving the shoulder strap under her arm to do so. A bridge mounted camera snapped a photo, and a \$1000 fine was in the post. Our national pastime in SA of running red traffic lights will cost \$575 (R7200) here. I’m sure that there’s also a law somewhere prohibiting passing wind in a confined area if you fart while driving”.

CHEERS FOR TODAY:

This week our AGM and Ordinary Lunch is on Friday, 3 March 2023, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. It is the AGM of the Club. Notice of the AGM has been published via bookings@rafoc.org. Traditionally we do not invite guests to this lunch.

Generally, the last lunch was better received than those we had before, and we will meet at Wanderers again with Protea Marriot banqueting doing the catering. However, there is also a “silent few” some of whom, it appears, were happy with the less formal arrangements in the Cigar Bar or Terrace – please make your voices heard as well. If you have any more suggestions, please feel free to send them to us so the Committee can investigate. Your Committee continues to look at other locations and we will report back at the AGM.

TAILPIECE:

MATT



'Gin and tonic. Ice and a slice of turnip?'

MATT



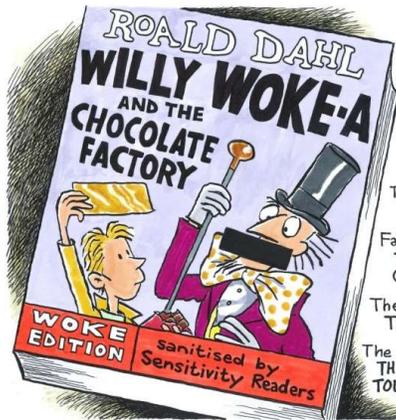
'Jeremy Hunt has asked a sensitivity reader to remove 'tax cuts' from all Treasury documents'



I find it helps to organize chores into categories: Things I won't do now; Things I won't do later; Things I'll Never Do...

shared by womenafters30.com

NOBODY IS PERFECT EXCEPT AN OLD MAN WHO IS ALSO AN AIR FORCE VETERAN



ZAPIRO DAILY MAVERICK 23-2-23 thanks Odette G

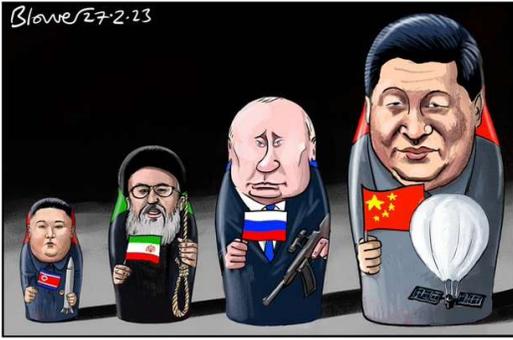
RE-WOKED Roald Dahl books coming soon:

- The Twits — THE RATHER CONFUSED PEOPLE
- Fantastic Mr Fox — THE NOT INTIMIDATINGLY OUTSTANDING MR/MS FOX
- The Witches — THE DE-STIGMATISED WICCANS
- The Big Friendly Giant — THE BIG FRIENDLY (THOUGH NOT TOUCHY FEELY) LARGE PERSON



The first woman in history to turn a prince into a frog.





AROUND THE WORLD EPIC 1942... PART 4



Trincomalee

The British, Ford decided, were a strange race. On the one hand, they had welcomed his crew to Trincomalee, a little, battered, corner of their Empire with open arms (luckily the Dutch, unlike the Aussies, had managed to phone ahead). On the other, they simply refused to believe that a civilian aeroplane could properly identify a submarine. It didn't matter that the California Clipper had flown right over the damn thing. Hell, Ford thought, it didn't matter that it had taken a shot at them. As far as the British were concerned, unless one of their own pilots had seen it, it didn't exist.

This particular element of Imperialist pigheadedness aside, however, Ford had to admit that they had been more than accommodating. His crew had been fed and billeted, and the California Clipper refuelled. In fact, practically the only person who hadn't rested was Ford himself. The British had insisted that Ford simply had to attend a dinner party that night. They wouldn't tell him who was hosting. They just politely insisted that their commander was hugely impressed with both Ford and his crew's achievements so far and that he really should attend. The British, Ford mused as they waited in the drawing room of the commander's residence, seem to do everything politely. They probably even apologised during invasions. Maybe that was how they'd got away with doing so many of them.

Ford was broken from his daydreaming by Rod Brown, standing next to him in the cleanest uniform he'd been able to muster. Rod was there because Ford had decided that if he was going to have to go to a dinner party, he was damn well not doing it alone. Sometimes rank had its advantages. "I think our host is coming" Rod muttered. She was indeed, sweeping into the room just as Rod finished speaking. "Captain Ford!" said the elegantly dressed woman with a smile. "So good of you to accept our invitation!" Before Ford and Brown could muster more than a basic greeting their hostess launched into an apology. She was Lady Caldecott, she explained, wife of the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Andrew Caldecott. The Governor had been fascinated by the California Clipper's quest and had been desperate to meet the men involved. Unfortunately, duty had called him away. To Ford's relief, although he tried to disguise it, the dinner party would be a far more low-key affair than originally planned. Lady Caldecott did have one request though — the Governor wasn't the only one who had been fascinated by their journey, their teenage son had too. Would Ford and Brown perhaps spend a few minutes talking to him about it? This was something Ford was more than happy to do. Ford and Brown spent an hour regaling the boy with stories of their adventures so far.

Christmas Eve 1941. Trincomalee. 13518 miles to go.

As Bob Ford pushed the throttles to maximum for takeoff the engines briefly stuttered, and Swede winced slightly. The good news was that the British had been able to top up their dwindling supply of 100 octane. The bad news was there was still some regular 90 octane in the tanks. To begin with, takeoff went as planned. Soon, however, the banging started again. Swede had hoped that the enrichment from the newly loaded 100 octane would counteract the poor qualities of the 90 but it seemed they'd still have to do some careful balancing. "We'll probably have to put up with that until the fuel flow purges all of that 90 out of our system" Swede shouted forward to Ford and Mack in the cockpit. "Okay Swede." Ford acknowledged, swinging the plane towards Karachi. Half an hour later they were on course and the banging seemed to have subsided. Ford was just about to switch out of the pilot's chair when suddenly a huge explosion rocked the plane, which lurched hard to the left and threw Ford clear out of his seat. "What the hell?!" shouted Johnny Mack, fighting to right the plane on his own. "Number three has lost oil pressure!" shouted Swede from his station. Mack lunged for the controls to shut it down. "Parrish!" Ford shouted, clawing his way back into his seat to help Mack. "Get up to the observation dome and see if you can make out what's happened!" John Parrish rushed to the rear and climbed the ladder to the observation dome through which Rod Brown had been taking astral measurements a few nights before. It didn't take long to work out that engine three was gone. Blown by the bad fuel mixture and now streaming oil. Thanking their lucky stars that they were only half an hour out from Trincomalee, the crew of the California Clipper turned their wounded plane around and limped back to Ceylon.

Christmas in Ceylon

Jack Poindexter smiled and laughed with the rest of the crew as the men of the RAF sang songs and raised toasts to absent friends and family. With the help of the RAF at Trincomalee, the crew had managed to strip down and repair the California Clipper's broken engine in near-record time. They were now ready to resume their flight in the morning, and in the meantime the RAF had insisted that the crew of the seaplane would celebrate Christmas with them — together they would all raise toasts to their families far, far away.

As the night grew darker, however, and the songs sadder and more wistful, Jack couldn't help but admit he was taking it harder than most. All he could think of was his wife and family back home. Whilst the rest of the crew had at least had time to prepare for an extended absence from their families — albeit not one quite this long — Poindexter had not had that luxury. Here he was, on the wrong side of the world, armed only with a couple of spare shirts and the memory of apologising to his wife for the fact that he was going to be late home for dinner.

Worse, wartime secrecy meant that he had not been able to talk to her since. Pan-American had at least made sure that she knew he was still alive, but as far as she, or indeed as far as any of their families knew, they were still trapped in Auckland. That night, as he spent Christmas Day in an RAF mess hall in Ceylon, Poindexter swore that one way or another he would make it home to her.

Karachi, India. Boxing Day 1941

After the drama of the last week, the flight to Karachi had been relatively easy. ‘Relatively’, of course, was the key word. Before Australia, the thought of flying for nine hours over land would have filled the entire crew with dread. By the time they had to do it in India, however, it seemed almost routine. The landing at Karachi went smoothly and soon the crew were taking advantage of their presence in a major city. Not least by finally each enjoying a decent bath. All of the crew reported to the California Clipper the next day feeling relatively refreshed. It soon became clear, however, that plane herself was beginning to show her own signs of strain. “Parrish and I were checking the engines earlier.” Swede explained to Ford. “During one of the routine prop checks we hit what looks like a stuck propeller pitch control piston. We’ll have to change it.” The Captain looked up at his command. The California had done well to get them this far, but there was still an awfully long way to go. She needed rest and repair as much as they did. She would get it today, Ford decided, “We depart tomorrow.”

Bahrain. 11027 miles to go.

“There’s no 100 octane again.” Swede’s news didn’t entirely surprise Ford. The flight to Bahrain had been straightforward, but on arrival it had been immediately clear that the British airfield in Bahrain was nowhere near as well stocked as those in India. As always, there seemed to be plenty of 90 octane available, but after practically losing an engine to inferior fuel at Trincomalee, Swede, Ford’s Chief Engineer, made it clear he was not overly keen to repeat the experience. “It’s either that,” Ford pointed out, “or sit here for the duration.” Swede sighed. “Yeah, I know. Well, we’ve nursed these mothers this far. I guess we can do it again.” The next morning the California Clipper was once again airborne. But this time on a mix of 100 and 90 octane fuel.

New Year’s Eve 1941. Khartoum. 9,647 miles to go Fourth Officer John Steers stood at the front of the boat as they carefully surveyed this particular stretch of the river Nile. They’d landed at the RAF facility here the day before and, once again the RAF had fallen over themselves to be helpful. Not only had they confirmed that they could supply the *California Clipper* with the 100 octane they so desperately needed, but they had also confirmed that they had maps and charts as far west as Leopoldville. Rod Brown had been delighted — the makeshift mix of atlases and charts he’d used since Auckland was no longer needed, for this part of the journey at least. If they could reach Leopoldville then the crew knew that they’d at least be back within company territory. They now knew for certain that the Congo Pan Am base Ford had heard talked about existed, but it was both small and very new — one that had barely been established by the outbreak of war. It was company territory nonetheless, and that meant fuel was guaranteed and — just as crucially — it would have all the route maps they could wish for.

To get there though meant getting out of Khartoum and that was easier said than done. Landing had been relatively easy — or at least as easy as landing a flying boat, without any charts, on the river Nile could be. Leopoldville was 1,800 miles from Khartoum, however, and that meant taking on a fair bit of fuel. Now masters of the unplanned landing and departure, Ford and his crew had quickly spotted that the additional weight required pushed the *California Clipper*’s takeoff distance beyond the length of the channel marked out in the Nile as cleared for seaplanes.

Fifth part to follow – the flight to Leopoldville.