



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 165

2nd JUNE 2023

GREETINGS:

SA Today... Water, water everywhere – maar daar's ievers 'n drol in die drinkwater... Cholera Death toll rises to 25... you ANC nothing yet... desperate to avoid root cause analysis... sick state of SA's public healthcare: Watchdog blasts Gauteng's 'Mickey Mouse-led' health dept... unconscionably long, paid suspensions of Tembisa suspects... ANC has rammed through a 'special directive' ordering Transnet to find harbour space for three Turkish Karpowerships for the next 20 years!... South Africa may have no choice but to arrest Putin... ANC assets to be seized by Sherriff... Tshwane mayor points finger at 'network of corruption' as cholera death toll rises... Tshwane EFF demands answers from Edwin Sodi over R295m tender in Hammanskraal... Thabo Bester: Dr Nandipha Magudumana's claims disputed before Court... Minister Modise wants SIU to probe corruption at Defence Department... Denel bailouts total R9 billion over four years... Concourt orders SARS to give access to Jacob Zuma's tax records... Rwandan genocide fugitive arrested at Paarl... Durban link to Brazilian drug cartels – bodies piling up... 70 murders a day in 2023: Mad Hatter "has more hats than brain cells"... Tendele mining near Mtubatuba... mining in Zambezi National Park... drunk leads police to illegal gold refinery... Ekurhuleni EMPD seize police vehicles being used in School run... Two courier vehicle robbery suspects killed, in shoot-out with police in Durban... Tshwane Metro Police Department allegedly employ 200 plus officers with criminal records... cable sabotage blacks out large areas of NMB... most South Africans want Eskom privatized – wonder why?... Yellow Level 3 Warning: heavy rains in Cape Town... social media sites a hotbed for fraudulent scams... N3 blocked (again) by protestors at Van Reenen... Eusebius MacKaizer shuffles off this mortal coil... Ace Magashule pilloried by ANC for not apologising to President, given 7 days to give written reasons why he should not be expelled from the ANC... El Popo pops in Mexico... US dodges debt default bullet – or do they?... Joe Biden sexual assault accuser asks Putin for citizenship... Seoul wakes to erroneous 'wartime alert' in North Korea rocket scare... says first spy satellite crashed into sea, "Rocket Man" promises to send up another... Downing Street gatecrasher... BoJo hands over Covid WhatsApp's and notes to Cabinet Office... Rishi Sunak warned price caps will create food shortages... UK poised for recession; Moody's warns... Airbnb hosts face 20 year tax probe in HMRC crackdown... TikTok videos show illegal

Albanian immigrants having electronic ankle tags cut off... UK universities are becoming 'propaganda machines'... trans activists disrupt speech at Oxford Union... pansy protests over 'gender critical' academic... Corruption, pollution and exploitation: the fallout from China's push into Africa... Kosovo brewing: Djokovic rebuked over Kosovo statement... Kyiv air defense repels overnight drone attack... Wagner begins pulling out of Bakhmut... Moscow and Minsk agree to store Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus... Putin is terrified of Ukraine's counteroffensive... large-scale drone attack hits Moscow for first time in Ukraine war... not planning to declare martial law after drone attacks, says Kremlin... Macron: negotiating with Putin may have to take priority over war crimes trial says French president... Ca va... Star of Lenin coming up... UK Police drag 'Just Stop Oil' activists along road – really?... Duke and Duchess of Sussex 'shocked by reaction to car chase'... Prince Harry's drug admissions lead to court case over his visa... Jane Fonda: 'You have to stay flexible if you want to continue having sex over 50'... why sex at 07h30 will take your stress away...

TRIBUTE TO WORLD WAR II VETERAN:



Royal Air Force personnel have joined family, friends, neighbours and dignitaries to pay tribute to the passing of former RAF Flight Sergeant Peter Brown, a WWII veteran who travelled as a teenager from Jamaica to the UK to enlist in the RAF.

Mr Brown, who passed away in December aged 96, was believed to be one of the last surviving volunteers to journey in 1943 from the Caribbean to the UK to contribute to the war effort. He trained as a wireless operator and air gunner and flew several sorties on Lancaster bombers. The funeral service was led by Reverend (Group Captain) Ruth Hake, the RAF's Deputy Chaplain in Chief. She said: "The service today was incredibly moving. It was a real privilege to be with those who have travelled across the world to remember Peter and to meet friends and neighbours from Peter's local community." Peter joined the RAF on 19th September 1943 and flew on Lancaster Bombers as a wireless operator and air gunner and continued to serve after the war as a signaller and driver until 27th February 1950. He died at his home in Maida Vale 17th December 2022. Westminster City Council were unable to find family of the former Serviceman but were inundated by friends and local residents wanting to pay their respects. Significant efforts have managed to find distant relatives, some of which flew across the Atlantic to attend the funeral. The service took place at the Central Church of the Royal Air Force, St Clement Danes in Central London, before transferring to a private committal for family and friends to pay their respects. Peter's medals, awarded during his RAF service, were attached to the coffin, with a Union Flag draped and an RAF Service Dress Hat atop. RAF Regiment Gunners from the King's Colour Squadron formed a Bearer Party to carry the coffin past family, friends, neighbours, dignitaries and RAF personnel. The poignant service included music from the Choir of St Clement Danes, the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment and Maurillia Simpson – a former serviceperson herself. Westminster City Council collaborated with the RAF to arrange the funeral. The Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of Westminster said: "Mr Brown was one of

the last of the Caribbean RAF volunteers to fight for the UK at a time of its greatest need and played such a significant role in our nation's story. We owe Peter – and the many others like him – a huge debt of gratitude. As the first citizen of Westminster, it was an honour to represent its residents and communities, many of whom played a crucial role in ensuring Mr Brown's life was marked in a manner befitting his sacrifice." Councilor Patricia McAllister, The Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of Westminster.

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC 80TH ANNIVERSARY:



The role played by the RAF in the Battle of the Atlantic has been remembered at a commemorative event in Liverpool.

World War Two aircraft and a P8 Poseidon – the RAF's current anti-submarine platform – flew over the Pier Head area of the city to remember those who served in the Royal and Merchant navies in the face of the Atlantic blockade of 1939 to 1945. The event, one of a series held over the weekend, was attended by HRH The Princess Royal who unveiled a Battle of the Atlantic Memorial in a remembrance garden by the River Mersey, the shipping gateway for Great Britain's wartime supplies. Mid-May 1943 was the period when the combined efforts of the Royal Navy and the RAF's Coastal Command turned the tide against the U-boat menace of the German blockade. The battle was the Second World War's longest, claiming the lives of 72,000 Allied naval and merchant seaman, 6,000 RAF Coastal Command personnel and 30,000 sailors. En route to Liverpool, the Poseidon, from RAF Lossiemouth, flew over the site of the former RAF station at Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire, a former Coastal Command base. On its return to Scotland, it overflew the Arctic Convoy Memorial at the head of Loch Ewe, Ross and Cromarty. Earlier in the week it overflew the Isle of Man to pay tribute to the dependency's role during the war. "Although the Battle of the Atlantic was predominantly a Naval battle, the aircraft of the Royal Air Force's Coastal Command played a major role in defending convoys that were under attack from enemy submarines. The Royal Air Force was committed to protecting the nation's maritime assets then and still is now in the form of the P8 Poseidon, a highly capable anti-submarine warfare aircraft." Air Vice-Marshal Randal Munro, Senior RAF Officer at the commemoration

CAS

SPEAKS:



Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Wigston is nearing the end of his tenure as CAS. It's certainly been a full-on time with Operation Herrick, Operation Pitting, Operation Rescript, F-35 integration and support to Ukraine. A RAFOC delegation of Captain Scully Levin and your scribe were privileged to meet Sir Michael in 2019 at the HCAP Trophies and Awards Banquet in 2019 (BC) just after his appointment as CAS. We get the inside track on the successes, challenges and frustrations he's faced. Listen to this interview podcast:

<https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/articles/insideair-ep-65-chief-of-the-air-staff/>

NATO VISITS OPERATION AZOTIZE:



RECENTLY, Permanent Representatives to NATO from nations across the Alliance attended Amari Airbase to witness the ongoing work of the RAF's 140 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW) who are undertaking NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission.

The UK's Permanent Representative (PermRep) to NATO, David Quarrey CMG, discussed various current affairs matters with the EAW command team, including the current intelligence picture across NATO's Eastern Flank and the upcoming NATO Summit at Vilnius. He also witnessed a training scramble involving IX (B) Sqn Typhoon FGR4, showcasing the speed at which the RAF can respond to any potential threat. The RAF is deployed on Operation AZOTIZE as part of NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission. Typhoons from RAF Lossiemouth deployed at the end of February as part of 140 EAW and were employed in the Air Policing role as an integrated force alongside German Air Force Eurofighters of the 71st 'Richtofen' Wing. At the start of May, the RAF took over Air Policing duties in Estonia as the sole nation. Whilst conducting their primary mission on Operation AZOTIZE, RAF personnel have been participating in various high-end exercises designed to replicate a multitude of air-to-air and air-to-ground scenarios. As the operation timeline progresses, personnel will begin to participate in a greater number of exercises designed to test the RAF's ability to forward deploy from an already deployed location. This is known as the Agile Combat Employment (ACE) model and will provide the UK MOD with greater flexibility, choice and resilience during future operations and periods of crisis. The deployment is also providing the RAF with opportunities to work alongside NATO air and ground-based assets that would not be regularly based in the UK. The RAF will fulfil NATO's Air Policing Mission in Estonia until August when 140 EAW will hand over the task to the Spanish Air Force. "This was an excellent opportunity to showcase the work that we have already achieved here and the brilliant training opportunities that we have planned in the near future. I believe our discussions with Mr Quarrey regarding upcoming ACE exercises have given him an insight into the art of the possible within the wider NATO construct and how the Alliance can effectively deter, disperse and defend against any potential adversary." Wg Cdr MacColl, CO 140 EAW.

RUSSIAN “KILLJOY” KHINZAL “DAGGER”



In March of 2022, American President Joe Biden confirmed that Russia used hypersonic missiles in Ukraine. "It's almost impossible to stop it," he said: "There's a reason they're using it." The Kh-47M2 Kinzhal (in the Russian language: X-47M2 Кинжал, "Khanjali", NATO reporting name Killjoy) is a Russian hypersonic weapon, an Air-launched ballistic missile. It's claimed to have a range of 2,000 km (1,200 mi) and Mach 10 speed. It can carry either conventional or nuclear warheads and can be launched by TupolevM22 Bombers bombers or Mikoyan MIG 31 interceptors. It has been deployed at airbases in Russia's Southern and Western Military Districts. The Kinzhal entered service in December 2017 and was one of the five new "Russian Super Weapons" unveiled by Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2018. The overall design of the missile is shared with the older ground-launched "9K720 Iskander" missile, adapted for air launching with a modified guidance section for the Kinzhal. It can reportedly hit both static targets and mobile ones such as aircraft carriers. The high speed of the Kinzhal gives it better target penetration than lighter, slower cruise missiles. The missile is designed to be able to hit NATO warships posing a threat to strategic missile systems in European Russia and to destroy NATO missile defense system, ballistic missile defense ships and land objects close to the Russian borders. In the Russian media the "hypersonic" feature has been highlighted as a unique feature to create an impression it is a new and advanced design ("Boost Jet" and "Scramjet") although the Kinzhal actually uses a standard Ballistic Missile technology at greater speeds. The "hypersonic" feature is shared with many older designs and does not represent any particular technological breakthrough. During the Russo-Ukrainian War, the Russian military claimed to have used Kinzhal missiles to destroy an alleged underground weapons depot of the Ukrainian armed forces in Deliatyn on March 18, 2022, followed by a fuel depot in Konstantinovka the next day. When asked about the use of these missiles, U.S President Joe Biden noted that it was a significant weapon, but ultimately had the same warhead as any other missile, which is difficult to defend against. Subsequent reports suggest that the Kinzhal missiles were used again on April 11, while on May 9, Russian Tupolev Tu-22M aircraft launched three Kinzhal-type missiles at targets in the port city of Odesa. In another development, three MiG-31K fighter aircraft equipped with Kinzhal hypersonic missiles were redeployed to the Chkalovsky Air Base in the Kaliningrad Region on August 18, 2022. According to unconfirmed reports a Russian MiG-31 carrying a Kinzhal missile crashed on take-off from an airbase in Belbek, Crimea, on October 1, 2022. While the navigator was able to eject, the pilot was killed. On 26 January 2023, the Ukrainian Air Force reported that 55 missiles, including a Kh-47 Kinzhal hypersonic missile, and 24 HESA Shahed 136 drones had been fired at targets in Ukraine. The Ukrainian Air Force claimed that they were able to shoot down all of the drones and 47 of the missiles. However, one person

was killed, and two others were injured when an apartment block in the Holosiivskyi District was hit during the attack. On 9 March 2023, Ukrainian cities were hit with a barrage of 84 missiles, including six Kinzhals - the largest use of these missiles to date. On 4 May 2023 at about 2:40 AM over Kyiv, one Kh-47M2 missile was claimed to be shot down by the Ukrainian air defense forces using a Patriot missile defence system. According to CNN, the Patriot system's ability to stop an air-launched hypersonic missile was considered to be only theoretical before the claimed interception. On 9 May 2023, Patrick Ryder, a Pentagon spokesman, confirmed that Ukraine downed the hypersonic missile. On 10 May 2023, Vitali Klitschko showed fragments of the alleged downed Kinzhal missile for Bild journalists in Kyiv. Russian media alleged that the fragments closely resembled the concrete-piercing BETAB-500 ShP aerial bomb.

DRONE ATTACKS:

Russian forces carried out overnight drone attacks on Kyiv, officials said on Thursday, continuing a monthlong campaign of air strikes against the Ukrainian capital. Military chiefs said Kyiv's air defenses destroyed all 36 drones during the three-hour air attack, the 12th this month. Serhiy Popko, head of the city's military administration, said in a message on Telegram that Russia "again attacked Kyiv from the air." "The attack was massive," the statement added. "The enemy continues to use attack tactics in several waves, with intervals between groups of attacking drones." He added that "all detected air targets moving in the direction of Kyiv were destroyed" by Ukrainian air defense systems. The attacks were carried out using Iranian-made Shahed drones, the statement added, citing preliminary information. In his nightly video address on Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Iranians to reconsider the supply of deadly drones to Russia in order to stop their slide into "the dark side of history." "The simple question is this: what is your interest in being an accomplice to Russian terror?" Zelenskyy said in his address. "What is the benefit to Iran of such cynical killing? By Russian hands, but with your weapons," he added. "Your Shaheds, which terrorize Ukraine every night, mean only that the people of Iran are being driven deeper and deeper into the dark side of history."

HEALTH OMBUD SPEAKS:

The story: The outgoing health ombud has painted a grim picture of the state of the country's public healthcare.

What was said: "You have your best province run by Mickey Mouse," Professor Malegapuru Makgoba said about Gauteng, which made up the bulk of the complaints his office dealt with.

What's more: He said there is disorder in the Free State, and described the Eastern Cape as dysfunctional and an embarrassment.

MEMBERS WRITE:

Derrick Page from W Cape:

My apologies presented for this Friday's Lunch. Certainly, chilling days here. One morning 8° but felt like 2°. The Melkbosstrand average rainfall for May is 44mm. We received 105mm, the most being since 25 May. However, we are well stocked with firewood, wine, sherry, soups and stews. Heather is an excellent home chef. Other than grandchildren patrols we are house bound in front of the fire, glass filled with medicinal muti in hand, currently watching Chelsea Flower Show, Morse on Britbox and French Open tennis. It is hard work being retired. However, I do miss the camaraderie, the banter, the sustenance of RAFOC JNB. My very best wishes to you all. Kind Regards, Derrick.

Everyone else seems to have gone into hibernation, except for **Gordon Dyne**, now in UK for D Day commemorations, who writes: Now, nicely ensconced in my son's lovely home in Surrey with our two grandsons, who are delightful albeit boisterous!! Weather still distinctly chilly...

CHEERS FOR NOW:

Another unpredictable week in Africa, SA struck by cholera outbreaks and fatalities and the intriguing prospect of a visit by Vladimir Putin to SA in defiance of UN sanctions looms nearer... SA and other African States are attempting to intercede in the Ukrainian conflict, (having already received instructions from the Russian aggressor). Watch this space... will African Unity stick together long enough to get to the scene? The mind boggles... The mystery "RussianGate" ship sails on with F*k*I on board... shades of the "Flying Dutchman"... in stark contrast to the RAF, the SAAF is, sadly, virtually non-operational. Another missed opportunity for SA, below.

Your scribe is reading the "**MIG Diaries**" about the air combat in Angola – gripping stuff. We will get author Lionel Reid (ex SAAF) to speak at a future lunch...

Our June lunch is a Ladies Lunch at 12h30 for 13h00 Friday 2 June at Wanderers Club, Illovo... We have over 50 booked for lunch. Price remains R250 per person, which includes wines at the table. As advised, regrettably, Rob Hersov will not be available to speak to us this month due to family matters in Cape Town. He will speak at a future lunch – date TBA. We will have a D Day Commemoration, as we swing into Plan B. Bookings are now closed. There are still several people who have booked or been booked by a member who are delinquent in the paying department. We will be charged for your place even if you don't show up, so you will be responsible for the payment. Meantime, enjoy the read, including the two pieces at the tail end, as the winter chills set in...

TAILPIECE:

IN THE TUNNEL

An Afrikaner guy, an Aussie, a beautiful girl and an old woman are sitting in a train. The train suddenly goes through a tunnel and it gets completely dark. Suddenly there is a kissing sound and then a slap! The train comes out of the tunnel. The old woman, beautiful girl and the Afrikaner guy are sitting there looking perplexed. The Aussie is bent over holding his face, which is red from an apparent slap. The old woman is thinking: 'That Aussie must have tried to kiss that girl and got slapped.' The Aussie is thinking: 'Damn it, that Afrikaner guy must have tried to kiss the beautiful girl. She thought it was me and slapped me instead.' The beautiful girl is thinking: 'That Aussie must have moved to kiss me but kissed the old lady instead and got slapped.' The Afrikaner guy is thinking: 'If this train goes through another tunnel, I could make another kissing sound and moer that Aussie again!

CLAUDE THE HYPNOTIST

It was entertainment night at the Senior Citizens' Center. After the community sing along led by Alice at the piano, it was time for the star of the show, Claude the Hypnotist! Claude explained that he was going to put the whole audience into a trance. "Yes, each and every one of you and all at the same time." said Claude. The excited chatter dropped to silence as Claude carefully withdrew from his waistcoat pocket, a beautiful antique gold pocket watch and chain. "I want you to keep your eyes on this watch" said Claude, holding the watch high for all to see. "It is a very special and valuable watch that has been in my family for six generations," said Claude. He began to swing the watch gently back and forth while quietly chanting - "Watch the watch --- Watch the watch ----Watch the watch." The audience became mesmerized as the watch swayed back and forth. The lights were

twinkling as they were reflected from its gleaming surfaces. A hundred and fifty pairs of eyes followed the movements of the gently swaying watch. They were hypnotized... And then, suddenly, the chain broke!!! The beautiful watch fell to the stage and burst apart on impact." "Oh sh*t" said Claude. It took them three days to clean up the Senior Citizens' Center. And Claude was never invited back again. (Sent in by Bruce Prescott)

MATT



'I wanted to crash into the Downing Street gates, but I couldn't afford the petrol, Ulez Charge and Congestion Charge'

MATT



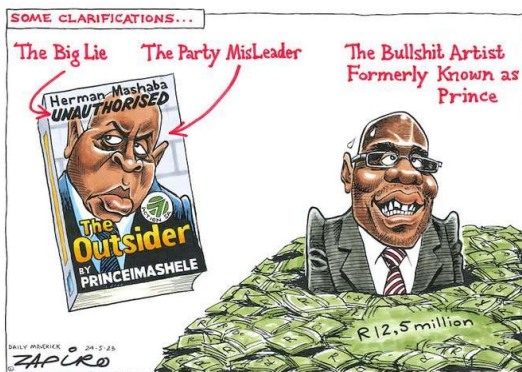
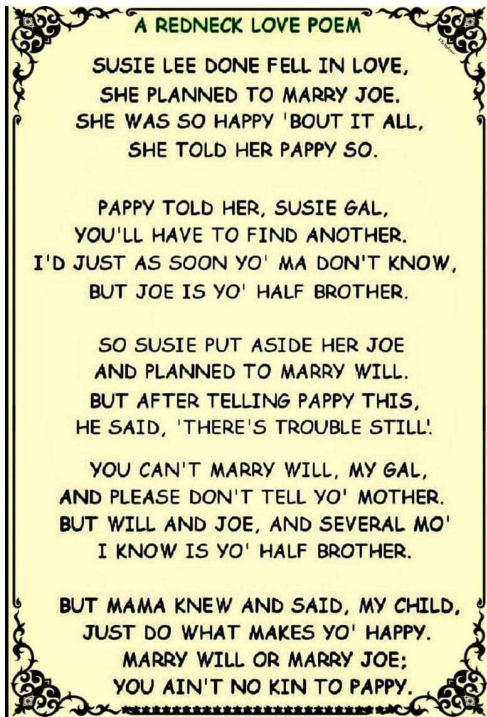
'We have a plan to slow down immigration. We're going to ask Border Staff to go on strike again'



THE PASTOR'S TEETH

A pastor went to the dentist for a set of false teeth. The first Sunday after getting his teeth, he preached for only eight minutes. The second Sunday, he preached only 10 minutes. But the following Sunday, he preached nonstop for nearly three hours... until the congregation realized he couldn't quit, and finally helped him sit down. Concerned for his health, they asked, "Are you Okay? What happened?"

The pastor explained, "Well, the first Sunday with my new teeth, my gums were so sore I couldn't preach longer than 8 minutes. The second Sunday, I felt I could go a little longer to 10 minutes. But, today, I mistakenly put my wife's teeth in, and discovered I couldn't shut up."



196 2.4k comments • 5 shares



Like



Comment



Share



Alan Daft

Having to get my ball retriever regripped.

Like

Reply

561



Sir, Yes Sir!

I went back to an Army camp yesterday. Nothing much has changed since. The army is still the most confusing place:

The toilet for private soldiers is marked "For General Use."

However, the toilet for the Generals is marked "For Private Use."

I Very confused
It's a Major problem ..



SAAF: SIC TRANSIT GLORIA...

Pretoria - Air Force Base Swartkop, the oldest base in South Africa, has ceased to exist, the SA Air Force (SAAF) has said. The facility, which also held the status of being the oldest operational base in the world, has for years hosted the SAAF Museum Airshow. The last edition of the event took place early this month. A national heritage site, the land was donated to the country by the then-Queen of England 130 years ago. It will now be a "Mobile Deployment Wing". This was revealed by Director for Command and Control Systems at the SAAF, Brigadier-General Jacobus Eduard Crous, also the Officer Commanding of Swartkop. Narrating the history of the facility to Pretoria News at the SAAF Headquarters this week, Crous said the changes were necessary because the SAAF had gone through various stages which required adaptation. "The base was built on a portion of a farm called Swartkop. That is where the name comes from. In the late 1990s it was decided to close the air force base because we had Air Force Base Waterkloof and the amount of aircraft flying was reduced. "It's a costly affair to keep a base going with another one close by. There was no need for a second base at the time so it was a closed base but the facility still existed, the runway was still there, and a decision was made that it would host the SAAF museum mostly and maybe a small contingent of air force if need be," said Crous. He said just after the year 2000 there was an issue with water under the runway at Waterkloof and it had to be rebuilt which forced them to move operations to Swartkop which reopened. Activities returned to Waterkloof after the runway was rebuilt, but the helicopter squadron and the heritage flight remained, said Crous. "By 2010 we realised that there were some military activities still taking place and the decision was made to maybe fully reopen Swartkop. "We had to ask for permission to reopen Swartkop, which was problematic because we all knew we were supposed to downscale because of financial constraints. "While we were waiting for permission to open up the Air Force Base Swartkop again we would use the mobile deployment wing. The name Swartkop Air Force Base came up again. "All we had to do was to put the air force base more on the Swartkop side, under the control of the mobile deployment wing." After deciding to reverse the decision to reopen the base they put the wing under the base that already existed. "So therefore there is no air base Swartkop; there is only a mobile deployment wing," Crous explained. Crous insisted that the name Swartkop would be preserved, saying the geographical area is naturally called Swartkop. "But for historical purposes, you will see when you drive down old Joburg road that there is still a board there that is written "Swartkop" because that

area is known as Swartkop.” He added that even though the museum aircraft were still flying from there and Swartkop was maintained as a functional entity, the reasons for reverting to the mobile deployment wing was because there is a big requirement for it. “It’s an operational concept which is critical to the air force... It’s more under whose command it is... rather than a complete change. The mobile deployment wing’s responsibility is to deploy all the mobile equipment of the air force other than the aircraft like the mobile radars, mobile communication systems and mobile airbases.” Crous said it was emotional to the aviation community, historians and older air force enthusiasts to see the name go. “The aviation community is very passionate about the airbases and runway,” he said. *(Pretoria News)*

MILITARY: SOUTH AFRICA DESTROYS ITSELF:

The demise of our defence industry has not only impacted negatively on our economy but also on the dwindling job market. It is said that a bad political system doesn’t appear wrong to those who benefit from it – especially when it affords them with huge, often corrupt, financial incentives. When that system purposefully erodes the security and economic structures of the state, it provides further financial benefits, usually illicit, and the beneficiaries will do everything they can to defend it, even if it is to the detriment of both the nation and the state. One of the greatest dangers any country can face is the appointment of incompetent, greedy and unqualified people and overpay them to oversee and direct the national, economic and security directions of the state.

Dysfunction

Dysfunctional becomes the operative word. South Africa, once a world-renowned innovator, manufacturer and supplier to the defence and security spaces, has destroyed itself through incompetence, short-sightedness, corruption, and insatiable greed. The demise of our defence industry has not only impacted negatively on our economy but also on the dwindling job market. Our defence and security capabilities have been degraded and emasculated. It has, additionally, resulted in the loss of scientific, technological, manufacturing, and training knowledge and skills which have been hurriedly scooped up by other nations – this was knowledge and know-how other nations were keen to acquire. Following the arrival of our much-heralded democracy, South Africa was viewed as a major defence developer and manufacturer. The continent waited expectantly for us to assist them with the equipping of their armed forces with African solutions for African problems. This presented South Africa with a huge window of opportunity to become a trusted defence manufacturer and supplier to Africa – and it could have contributed massively to our national economy.

Power

A powerful defence industry is, furthermore, an important criteria with which to negotiate. However, South Africa decided to discard this opportunity and instead, opted to abandon Africa’s defence and security needs and leave the door open to foreign defence manufacturers and suppliers. It shifted its focus from defence to the conceptualisation of human security. This was broadened by the government’s interpretation of security beyond the security forces to adopt the political, social and economic dimensions of the new security paradigm. The daily news reports of escalating and rampant criminality can argue that this approach has failed. Corrupt and unethical practices accelerated the decline of our defence industry as the government decided to kill our flourishing and innovative defence industry. Our vehicles, developed during our so-called bush war, were beyond world-class. We pioneered the development and manufacturing of mine-protected vehicles and incorporated many of the lessons learned in then Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). The ammunition the country produced – from small arms to large-calibre artillery ammunition – was internationally sought after. Our artillery systems and anti-tank missiles were world-class and the desire of many nations.

Our technical skills to upgrade and maintain our aircraft were highly sought after. Our locally developed and manufactured attack helicopter evoked huge international interest. There was substantial international interest in our drones before they made their dramatic appearance on recent battlefields. Our nuclear weapons programme was terminated. Despite increasing tensions on the continent, our armed forces were pushed into decline. Currently, we are unable to even build an infantry fighting vehicle as the much lauded and costly Badger programme has shown. After many years and billions of rands wasted, we are still stuck with the Ratel IFV.

Defence

Defence companies – or their developments – have been snapped up by foreign buyers, much to our disadvantage. Private defence companies and manufacturers have shown motions of no confidence in our government and relocated elsewhere. Others have put themselves up for sale. Those few companies who manage to win international contracts are stymied by a cumbersome National Conventional Arms Control Committee process to export their products and, as a result, often have their contracts cancelled. Whereas opting to rather be viewed as a mediator and negotiator – and not as a leading international defence manufacturer and supplier – is a noble thought, one cannot negotiate from a position of weakness. South Africa, once considered the powerhouse of Africa, has evolved into a shack with no power. Africa and the world have taken note of our countless failures. With an inability to project hard, smart, soft or sharp power, our conflicted politicians still cling to the false belief that they have power. But implementing power requires leaders who understand its application and who have credibility and integrity. In truth, they have none in the defence space as what there once was, no longer is. (*Eeben Barlow, Citizen*)