



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	bookings@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	Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish	Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Web Master:	Hanke Fourie	Tel: Cell: 082 553 0210
Almoner:	Rob Tannahill	Cell: 082 806 6779
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch	Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 168

23rd JUNE 2023

GREETINGS:

Oh no! A right royal stitch-up: It's the NHI... NHI will be the ultimate looting frenzy... more monkey business... "NHI train smash designed to further socialist revolution"... Joburg Mayor Gwamanda doesn't have a matric – and a Ponzi artist to boot... SA is gatvol - 26 demonstrations/protests every day – Diepsloot protests turn violent... the people are speaking, Mr President... Five of Durban's most wanted suspects killed in KZN shootout... "Plane" incompetence in Poland: Ramaphosa's "shambolic" multi-million Rand Travelling Circus: Presidential visit to Ukraine comes to comical grief - SAA aircraft impounded, security entourage detained, sent home in disgrace... chartered aircraft no-show... 3 African leaders also late... Groot Baas tells Ramaphosa to take his bike and his five bob and b**ger off... SAA's mysterious R500 million profit – where is it?... DIRCO and ANC terribly upset that Alan Winde is in the US talking about AGOA... Digital Vibes: DG Popo Maja charged with corruption... Marcus Jooste now a wanted man, Steinhoff bulletted by Dutch Court... exceptional rains and widespread flooding in Western Cape... SAAF called to help... die "Liefing van Loftus": Former Bok Derick Hougaard fighting 'greatest battle'

Hope fading for Titanic submersible (now gone)... Cyclone Biparjoy not All Joy to India and Pakistan... Greek tragedy – hundreds of Pakistani illegal migrants missing at sea... Blinken goes to Beijing to ping Xi JinPing – no cigar... Biden calls Xi a dictator... Taiwan trembles... Communist China major source of Mexican drugs – "Opium Wars" continue... Cuban based spy activity resurgent... Great start to the UK week with Trooping the Colour... "What do you know, Boris Johnson lied. But the 'carnival of crazy' has just begun"... BoJo deliberately misled parliament over Partygate, damning report finds... a cyclone of condemnation, calumny and support in UK media... Britons urged not to visit popular French tourist sites... Ukranian pilots being trained to fly F-16 jets, says NATO... HIMARS strike kills dozens of Russian soldiers... Western firms snub "totally toxic" 'Russian Davos' as its prestige evaporates... Putin is retreating into dangerous fantasies... vast fossil fuel and farming subsidies causing 'havoc'... fossil fuel lobbyists will have to identify themselves when registering for conference... exotic bee-eater returns to UK for second summer in a row... England face the ultimate Ashes test against greatest rivals... triumph for LGBTQ: Queen Camilla names first ever mare to lead Household Cavalry in Birthday Parade...

“Those who say cockroaches are the only things that will survive a nuclear holocaust are wrong. On the evidence available so far - Woke - that virus of the mind which has turned Westerners into mindless, unicorn-chasing simpletons – will probably survive as well”. (See opinion piece at end of these Ramblings)

FIT FOR A KING: TROOPING THE COLOUR:



The Sovereign's birthday is officially celebrated by the ceremony.

In 2023, this impressive display of pageantry took place on Saturday 17th June by Regiments of the Household Division, on Horse Guards Parade, with His Majesty the King attending and taking the salute. His Majesty King Charles III holds the appointment of Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiments of Household Division. Each Regiment has a Colonel who is normally either a member of the Royal Family or a senior officer. The parade began at Buckingham Palace and travelled along The Mall to Horse Guards Parade. There, the monarch carried out an inspection of the troops, before leading the Guards in a parade back to Buckingham Palace. Once at the Palace, the monarch took the salute and 41-gun Salutes were fired in Green Park and at the Tower of London. Finally, they joined other members of the Royal Family on the palace balcony to watch the Royal Air Force

fly-past at 1pm. The Trooping of the Colour has marked the official birthday of the British Sovereign for over 260 years. 2023 marks His Majesty King Charles III's first Trooping of the Colour as Sovereign. Over 1,400 parading soldiers, 200 horses and 400 musicians came together in a great display of military precision, horsemanship and fanfare to mark The King's official birthday. The parade moved from Buckingham Palace and down The Mall to Horse Guard's Parade, alongside Members of the Royal Family on horseback and in carriages. The display closed with an RAF fly-past of 70 aircraft, watched by Members of the Royal Family from Buckingham Palace balcony. After existing in various forms since the 17th century, the Trooping the Colour ceremony has been held every year in London to mark the sovereign's official birthday since the accession of King George IV in 1820, except during the world wars and a national strike in 1955. Monarchs are traditionally given a second birthday if they were not born in the summer, in case the British weather is unsuitable for an outdoor event!



King Charles Trooping the Colour parade: The Princess of Wales and Prince Louis

The event culminated in a spectacular show of red, white and blue from the pilots of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, who were joined by the RAF's newest aircraft, the Envoy.



2ND LT WILLIAM WALLACE HUTTON RFC:



A SOUTH African Royal Flying Corps pilot shot down in World War I has been remembered after investigators identified an unmarked headstone of a Commonwealth war grave. 2nd Lt William Wallace Hutton, from Cape Town, was 24 when he was killed in October 1917 on a bombing raid to Saint Denjis Westrem in Belgium. 2nd Lt Hutton was flying as a crew member on Handley Page 3122 when he went missing on 28 October 1917. The Admiralty notified the War Office that, according to German sources, Hutton had been killed in the crash, and the two other crew members taken prisoner. As an Officer with previous service in a different regiment when he joined the Royal Flying Corps, he was permitted to wear his earlier uniform along with a Royal Flying Corps insignia. This explains why those who originally tried to identify his remains thought he was with 7th London Regiment but could not link that to a name. More than a century after his death RAF personnel took part in a ceremony at Commonwealth War Graves Commission Larch Wood (Railway Cutting) Cemetery. Lossiemouth Chaplain Rev (Flt Lt) Robert Hadfield, who led the service, said: "It's an enormous privilege for me to have played a part in this rededication ceremony for William, whose name is at last etched into stone as an ongoing testament to the ultimate sacrifice he made."

PILOT OFFICER ROBERT ALAN WEST RAF:



A CEREMONY has been held for an RAF pilot 83 years after he was killed in action over the beaches of Northern France. Pilot Officer Robert Alan West, 20, from Clapham, London, was shot down on June 1, 1940 while flying a Hurricane on a patrol off Dunkirk. At the time his unidentified remains were laid to rest as an unknown airman. But the discovery of aircraft parts and personal effects in Zuydcoote led Air Historical Branch and RAF Museum investigators to confirm the grave as that of PO West. The MOD Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre's Tracey Bowers said: "This has been a case that combines both burial and rededication of a headstone. The assistance given by the Air Historical Branch (AHB) was vital to help solve this. We have now been able to hold a ceremony to rededicate the final resting place of this brave young pilot in the presence of his family."

The service at Dunkirk Town Cemetery was attended by 10 family members, including PO West's niece Shelia Davenport. She said: "The family knew little about Uncle Bob until we were contacted; we now know so much about him and his life. We are grateful for the closure this ceremony has given." The AHB examined 74 Hurricane casualty files from the 1940-42 period and managed to rule all but nine out. PO West's documents revealed that he took off from RAF Hawkinge with seven aircraft of No. 245 Sqn as part of a formation with 43 and 145 Sqns. He was in the rear of the formation when a German Me 215 attacked them. He was not seen to crash but was recorded as missing. DNA testing confirmed the additional remains recovered belonged to PO West. The service was led by Lossiemouth Chaplain Rev (Flt Lt) Robert Hadfield. Speaking after the ceremony he said: "The courage of those like PO Robert West, whose actions in support of the evacuation of Dunkirk allowed hundreds of thousands of lives to be saved, should forever be remembered. I am humbled to have been involved in this ceremony" to the Dunkirk Hurricane pilot (*RAF News PHOTO: DANIELLE ROUBOEKS*)

KING'S COLOUR SQUADRON AS KING'S GUARD:



The Royal Air Force's King's Colour Squadron has taken on the responsibility as the King's Guard at the London Palaces 80 years after first conducting the duty.

The ceremony to assume the prestigious duty, known as the Changing of the Guard, took place on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace and saw the King's Colour Squadron assume responsibility for the security of His Majesty's London residences – Buckingham Palace and St James' Palace. The day was made richer for the many spectators with music from the Central Band of the Royal Air Force. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the RAF Regiment's first King's Guard when in 1943 the Changing of the Guard, also referred to as the Mounting of the Guard or Guard Mounting, was conducted in front of King George VI. This most recent Guard Mounting is the first time the new King's Colour for the Royal Air Force has been paraded as part of the Changing of the Guard ceremony. The Colour, a light blue ensign made of silk, was presented by His Majesty in April this year having originally being presented in 1951 by the then Princess Elizabeth.



Air Specialist (Class 1) Ward is a gunner with the RAF Regiment, and this was his first involvement in public duties. He said: "Representing the RAF Regiment and the King's Colour Squadron on my first mount of the King's Guard, working alongside the Irish Guards, was a very special occasion. Under the eye of the public, I wanted to show my best in drill and ceremonial, and marching from Buckingham Palace to Friary Court was a moment I will never forget. I felt particularly proud after completing my first sentry." Flying Officer Symonds acted as Ensign for the King's Colour, carrying it throughout the parade and mounting ceremony. He said: "It was an honour, and I felt proud to represent the Royal Air Force Regiment and the King's Colour Squadron in this anniversary year."

NATIONAL FLAG RAISING FOR ARMED FORCES WEEK:



The national flag raising ceremony, officially marking the start of this year's Armed Forces Week, took place against the beautiful backdrop of Gyllyngvase beach in Falmouth, Cornwall.

HM Lord Lieutenant for Cornwall Colonel Edward Bolitho OBE, RAF Air Commodore Polly Perkins CBE, Cornwall Council leader Linda Taylor, Chairman of Cornwall Council Cllr Pauline Giles, the Mayor of Falmouth Kirstie Edwards, serving military from the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, as well as cadets and veterans, gathered for the official ceremony. The ceremony included a flypast by 2 F-35B Lightning aircraft from 207 Sqn, the Joint Royal Navy & RAF Lightning Operational Conversion Unit at RAF Marham, along the coastline of Falmouth to entertain gathered crowds. Falmouth is the host town for this year's National Armed Forces Day celebration, which takes place on Saturday, 24th June. The event is now in its fifteenth year. Flags are also being

raised on public buildings across Cornwall, including town halls, Cornwall Council's New County Hall and Cornwall's military bases HMS Raleigh, RAF St Mawgan and RNAS Culdrose, as a mark of respect and thanks to service personnel past and present.

NATO EXERCISE AIR DEFENDER:



RAF Typhoons currently deployed to Estonia and Cyprus have joined around 250 aircraft from 25 nations to take part in NATO's largest air exercise of the year, Exercise Air Defender in Germany.

The RAF Typhoons come from 140 Expeditionary Air Wing, currently carrying out the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission in Estonia, and from 903 EAW based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, that are carrying out operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and Black Sea regions. In Germany the two detachments are operating from Hohn Air Base. During the exercise they will be joined by 617 Squadron F-35B Lightnings, operating from RAF Marham and also supported by a RAF Brize Norton based Voyager to conduct Air to Air refuelling. The exercise, being hosted and organised by the German Air Force, will also see the largest forward deployment of the US Air National Guard since the end of the Cold War, thereby making it the largest NATO exercise of its type since then. Air Marshal Harv Smyth, the RAF's Air & Space Commander talked of how the RAF is demonstrating its agility and flexibility to deploy personnel and air assets, including Lightning F35B, Voyager and Typhoon FGR4, from various UK and deployed locations. The main aim of the exercise is to test NATO's collective aerial response to an attack on a member state. The exercise is being conducted from multiple locations inside and outside of Germany. In addition to the deployment phase of the exercise, participants will undergo realistic live-flying opportunities that are designed to improve interoperability and cooperation amongst participating nations. The RAF Typhoons from 903 EAW will at the conclusion of their training sorties return to Cyprus as part of Operation Shader. Meanwhile, the Typhoons deployed from 140 EAW, will return to Estonia, where 140 EAW will hand over to the Spanish Air Force in August, the NATO mission. "The exercise is the ultimate demonstration of the RAF's ability to take part in large-scale warfighting scenarios by deploying assets forward from several units, including from already deployed locations. This deployment of air assets is a clear message of the credible defence that our combined air power can present to any potential adversary. Our efforts to ensure the availability of our aircraft is testament to the skill and commitment of all the personnel involved in the preparation, execution, and sustainment phases of this exercise." *Squadron Leader Edward Owen, Officer Commanding 140 EAW Detachment.*

OH, DEAR, DIRCO!! PANDORMONIUM...



President Cyril Ramaphosa's advance team meant to provide critical security in Kyiv, Ukraine, remained stuck on their plane in Poland last Thursday night because of aviation regulations and bureaucracy. While President Cyril Ramaphosa rubbed shoulders with his Polish counterpart, President Andrzej Duda, his security detail and a media contingent were stranded at Warsaw Chopin Airport. Ramaphosa, who was accompanied by international relations minister Naledi Pandor and special adviser Bajani Chauke, paid a courtesy call to Duda ahead of his peace initiative to bring an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine. The “road to peace” journey has been marred by challenges including technical, red tape and extreme logistical issues even before the flight left SA. The journalists covering the mission travelled abroad with specialised police officers including the presidential protection services and the army, among others, were not allowed to disembark in Poland. The flight with more than 120 people on board, left SA around 1.30am on Thursday, and experienced problems two hours before arriving in Warsaw. The flight was flagged in Mediterranean waters after it failed to get clearance to fly over Italian airspace. The plane flew around in circles about six times before it resumed its flight on the route to Warsaw. The flight eventually landed at the Warsaw Chopin Airport in Poland about 1.18pm and while on the flight, the Presidency tweeted that Ramaphosa had arrived for his working visit to Poland and Ukraine. The journalists on board were told there were “issues” with the plane that was meant to transport them to Rzeszów as the “chartered flight had not arrived.” An hour into the wait, they were told that Ramaphosa had departed in his SAAF VVIP jet, named Nkwazi, to Rzeszów to make his way to Kyiv, Ukraine. Members of the special forces were still in the plane when Ramaphosa started his journey to Kyiv. At this stage it was not clear if his counterparts from Egypt, Senegal, Uganda, Zambia and Congo Brazzaville had (eventually) arrived. During the wait, cargo was offloaded while the media and special forces contingents waited for clearance. Ramaphosa's security people left the flight. A source told TimesLIVE that the chartered flight had not arrived and the embassy had been roped in to assist. “The United Nations cannot get the 2 nations to cease the war, so here, the people of RSA are suffering daily, & Mr Billionaire & his chommas wanna solve the problems, but they cannot attend to the problems in our own country. I do not see, or hear of any other leaders from Africa, zooming to meet Put In, & Zelensky, so is RSA the new United Nations?” “10 crates of weapons and 100 plus SANDF personnel plus 11 journalists on the SAA A340 which did not even have flight clearance to enter EU airspace. This is laughable but a serious diplomatic incident that makes SA look like a

banana republic, Oh wait, we actually are. Wally Rhoode in charge, the famous dollars in the couch frontman.” 🤔🤔🤔 “Aah FFS we have more lives lost here in SA daily at the hands of our abundant murderers than the lives lost daily in the Ukraine war, why does our clown president not stay at home and first show the world what he had achieved in peace here, then he can go sort out the world’s problems. These guys just love the BS fanfare and free lunches.” Warsaw Chopin airport spokesman Piotr Rudzki told the BBC the South African security guards did not have the necessary permits for their weapons. "We cannot let passengers with illegal firearms into the EU," he said. Mr Rudzki added that they were told they could disembark if they left their weapons on the plane, but they refused. "The firearms were not going to be confiscated as some reports in South Africa have said," he added. *(Some of the blizzard of comments on the web)*

CITRUSDAL CUT OFF BY FLOODS:



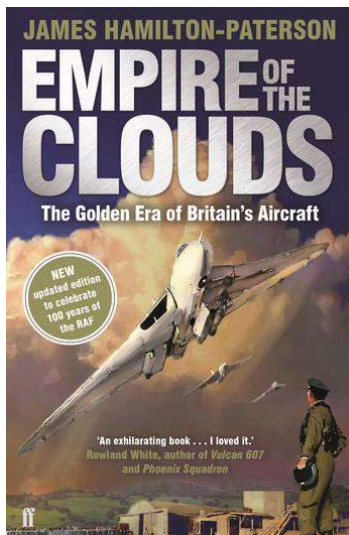
Citrusdal residents have been isolated in their town since Wednesday evening after heavy flooding cut off access to the Cederberg town. Some residents are stranded outside with no way to return to their homes.. The main access road off the N7 highway, the R393, collapsed on Wednesday evening during heavy downpours. The rapid flowing Olifants River has blocked access to the town. Residents were standing on each side of the collapsed road when GroundUp arrived on Friday morning. Someone was attempting to cross the river. They eventually made it safely to the other side. Cars and trucks lined the road to Citrusdal. Stranded drivers have been sleeping in their trucks and bakkies. Citrusdal resident Adrian Fortuin has been sleeping in his truck since Wednesday evening. He transports citrus for a living. “You are looking at the disaster I came across on Wednesday evening,” said Fortuin. “Thursday morning we came to look; it was the same. This morning, the same. There are no alternatives. We’ve just had to sleep in our trucks.” Fortuin said he wanted to get to his home. He has a wife and a kid in town. “They are safe and I am stranded,” he said. According to a recent municipality statement, about 120 people are being temporarily housed in the Oranjeville Sports Hall after being evacuated from an informal settlement in Citrusdal. Damage to power cables has left many towns in the Cederberg without or partly without electricity, including Citrusdal, Clanwilliam, and Wupperthal. The municipality said yesterday that “Citrusdal water infrastructure is under severe pressure and is currently running on a single borehole” and “people must use water sparingly.” Cederberg Municipality spokesperson Anthony Mlata said that a joint operation between the municipality, the provincial government, and the West Coast District Municipality is currently underway. He said technical teams are trying to access Citrusdal along uncommon routes, either from Clanwilliam, possibly through farms, or from Algeria on gravel roads. Mlata said that they’ve also appointed a contractor to fix the collapsed road but “have to wait for the weather conditions and the water to subside for them to start”. However, more heavy rain is expected to fall on Saturday. Mlata said that once they’ve gained access to the town, they will come up with

a workable plan. He said if the situation worsens, they will “escalate” it. “We’re not there yet,” he said. The services of a SAAF helicopter have been requested.



Olifants River in Flood above Citrusdal

EMPIRE OF THE CLOUDS:



In 1945 Britain was the world's leading designer and builder of aircraft - a world-class achievement that was not mere rhetoric. And what aircraft they were. The sleek Comet, the first jet airliner. The awesome delta-winged Vulcan, an intercontinental bomber that could be thrown about the sky like a fighter. The Hawker Hunter, the most beautiful fighter-jet ever built and the Lightning, which could zoom ten miles above the clouds in a couple of minutes and whose pilots rated flying it as better than sex. Sadly by the late 1960s, the designers, the pilots and the legendary companies they worked for were gone. How did Britain so lose the plot that today there is not a single aircraft manufacturer of any significance in the country? What became of the great industry of de Havilland or Handley Page? And what was it like to be alive in that marvelous post-war moment when innovative new British aircraft made their debut, and pilots were the rock stars of the age?

James Hamilton-Paterson captures that season of glory, celebrating the golden era of Britain's aircraft in a compelling book that fuses his own memories of being a schoolboy plane spotter with a ruefully realistic history of British decline - its loss of self-confidence and power. It is the story of great and charismatic machines and the men who flew them: heroes such as Bill Waterton, Neville Duke, John Derry, Bill Beaumont and Brian Trubshaw who took inconceivable risks, so that we could fly without a second thought. *Empire of the Clouds* is a brilliant, nostalgic and provocative look at the golden age of British aircraft, from the post-war jet age to the recent sad decline. The copy kindly loaned to me by a colleague is an updated edition to celebrate the centenary of the foundation of the Royal Air Force, in April 2018. *"An exhilarating book... I love it."* – Rowland White, author of *Vulcan 607*

Author: James Hamilton-Paterson is the author of the bestselling *Empire of the Clouds*, which was hailed as a classic account of the golden age of British aviation. He won a Whitbread Prize for his first novel, *Gerontius*, and among his many other celebrated books are *Seven-Tenths*, one of the

finest books written in recent times about the oceans, the satirical trilogy that began with *Cooking with Fernet Branca*, and the autobiographical *Playing With Water*. Born and educated in England, he has lived in the Philippines and Italy and now makes his home in Austria.

DOD DUCKING AND DIVING:



The way Minister Thandi Modise's Department of Defence (DoD) is handling a PAIA (Promotion of Access to Information Act) request concerning the arrival in South Africa of Russian hardware in the form of a cargo ship and a transport aircraft smacks of delays and "passing the buck". This was how Democratic Alliance (DA) shadow defence and military veterans minister Kobus Marais reacted to a second letter from the DoD on his PAIA application regarding the Lady R in Simon's Town and an Il-76 landing at Air Force Base Waterkloof to supposedly deliver mail for the Russian Federation Embassy in Pretoria.

Marais, the first public representative to make known the Lady R's arrival in the SA Navy (SAN) home port and fleet headquarters, sees the letter as part of a government cover-up. "Instead of providing the true facts, the DoD [in the form of its Acting Director: Promotion of Access to Information, RW Mdawwe] decided to pass the buck and delay the release of crucial information," he said in response to the letter stating "part" of his request is with Defence Legal Services. A tortured route is set out for the request to further go to SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Chief, General Rudzani Maphwanya, and then to the acting Secretary for Defence Thobekile Gamede before – if both approve – Marais will receive the information asked for. His PAIA request was submitted on 11 May. It sought details of the Lady R's manifest for both unloading and loading as well as export approvals and details of "goods" taken from the Il-76 at the Centurion base. Freedom Front Plus (FF+) leader Pieter Groenewald called the arrival of the Il-76 "out of the ordinary" notwithstanding Minister Thandi Modise's apparent permission being granted. He wants her to explain why a military base was used to deliver cargo, seemingly part of the diplomatic bag which exempts it from search, for the Russian Embassy. In support of Groenewald's claim, a number of aviation enthusiasts point out the regular arrival of a US Air Force (USAF) C-17 at Lanseria International, west of Pretoria, delivering supplies and equipment for the US Embassy. "If the DoD believes it can prolong the process in the hopes the findings of President Ramaphosa's panel inquiry will be classified, they have gravely miscalculated. DA Leader John Steenhuisen made it clear the party will seek legal advice to challenge Ramaphosa's plan to hide the report once complete," Marais said.

TFSA ON TIPPY-TOES...

The Test Flying Academy of South Africa (TFASA) has said it is disappointed that the United States has, without consultation, put it on a sanctions list for "activities contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the United States" as the TFASA trains Chinese fighter pilots. TFASA this week said it had taken note of the United States Department of Commerce inclusion of it to a list of entities subject to export administration regulations. "As a South African company, registered with the South African National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), and not reliant on US

exports, this change does not affect TFASA's day to day operations," it said. "Nevertheless, TFASA is disappointed that the United States Department of Commerce has taken this step without consultation." TFASA said it has operated with the full knowledge of NATO defence and security agencies for over a decade. "Recent communications between the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Air Force Office of Special Investigation and the Society of Experimental Test Pilots indicate that TFASA has broken no laws. In addition, following our UK lawyers' correspondence with the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD), the MoD confirmed that 'they do not believe that TFASA is engaged in activities which breach current UK law.'" TFASA said it will be contacting the United States Department of Commerce to clarify its position. The Academy added that it has strict protocols and a Code of Conduct in place that are designed to prevent any TFASA employee sharing any information or training that is, or might be considered to be, legally or operationally sensitive, or security classified. "All of TFASA's training materials are either open-source documents or provided directly by TFASA's clients. TFASA is, and always has been, in full compliance with the laws of South Africa, and every other jurisdiction in which it operates. TFASA highlights that the training it provides is also available from other civilian contractors including organisations based in the United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and European jurisdictions," the Academy concluded. The US said TFASA's relationship with China was a risk to American interests. In October, the UK issued a threat alert mentioning TFASA, which is one of a number of aviation companies around the world being added to the US sanctions list for "providing training to Chinese military pilots using Western and NATO sources", the US commerce department said. TFASA previously said it never recruited pilots directly from military service, and only used those already working as civilian contractors.(DefenceWeb)

BATTLE FOR BANGUI:



Colonel William Dixon honoured by former President Jacob Zuma in 2014 for his role in the Battle of Bangui.

It's taken more than 10 years for South Africa to be officially told the soldiers killed in what has become known as the Battle for Bangui were not deployed to "protect any business interests." Current Defence and Military Veterans Minister Thandi Modise was the bearer of tidings which will, to many, clear confusion about exactly what South African paratroopers were doing in the Central African Republic (CAR) during early 2013.

She provided official information regarding the CAR deployment, under her predecessor Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula's leadership, in response to a question posed by Kobus Marais, the Democratic Alliance (DA) parliamentarian charged with oversight of Modise's portfolio. Thirteen paratroopers were killed when defending a position in the CAR capital Bangui from what, by all accounts, was an overwhelming Seleka rebel force. Two further paratroopers succumbed to wounds after a sustained firefight where the elite South African troops were more than a match for a much larger opposition force. The roughly 200 South African soldiers fought an estimated 3 000 rebels over more than a dozen hours. The rebels eventually came with a white flag and negotiated a ceasefire. Twenty-seven South African soldiers were wounded in the clashes with the rebels who captured the capital Bangui. In the wake of the battle, questions were raised about why South African soldiers were in the strife-torn country and under whose instruction they were deployed, among others. Marais specifically asked Modise, as part of a question responded to in writing on 21 April and signed off

by her on 2 June: “Whether any truth was established that the soldiers were allegedly deployed to protect the mining and/or other business interests of the Republic [of South Africa]?” She informed him: “The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) was deployed in terms of a bilateral agreement between the governments of South Africa and CAR on defence co-operation”. The bilateral made provision for South African military training to CAR armed forces (Forces Armées Centrafricaines, also known by the acronym FACA). “Therefore,” Modise wrote, “[the] SANDF was not deployed to protect any business interests.” The deployment was authorised by then South African president Jacob Zuma and “fulfilled all Constitutional requirements”. It was “duly authorised” by the then South African supremo who, according to Modise “informed both the National Assembly (NA) and National Council of Provinces (NCOP) by means of a Presidential Minute”. As far as investigating soldier deaths in the Bangui firefight is concerned, Marais was told a board of inquiry (BOI) was convened – date not given – with a recommendation that no one was “responsible / accountable” for the fatalities. (*DefenceWeb*)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

It was our June (not July) lunch in the Members’ Lounge at Wanderers that was well attended by 46 members, ladies and guests, on the 79th Anniversary of D Day... (your ED clearly indulging in in some form of astral travel due to the speed with which 2023 is passing Ministers Modise and Pandor could give BoJo lessons – not only Putin is suffering from fantasies...

Our next lunch is a **Ladies Lunch at 12h30 for 13h00 Friday 7 July at Wanderers Club, Illovo...** Price remains R250 per person, which includes wines at table. Hamilton Wende is scheduled to come and address us. If it changes, we will let you know but in communication with him it is in his planning. Please make your booking asap with bookings@rafoc.org - make your payment to the RAFOC Nedbank account and send proof of payment to confirm your booking. Meantime, enjoy this week’s read as the winter chills set in with a vengeance...

TAILPIECE:

MATT



*‘Take as long as you want.
I’m on my way to a
Keir Starmer speech
on energy policy’*

MATT

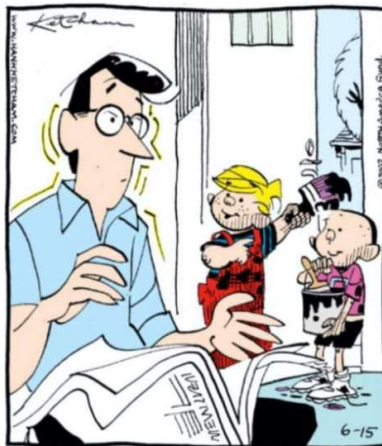


*‘I’ve decided to vote for
the privileges committee
report, but to tell Boris
that I didn’t’*



THINGS YOU SAY AFTER 40

1. Where the h*** is my phone?
2. How did I get this bruise?
3. That isn't my password either? WTH!?
4. How do they expect you to read this small print?
5. Where did I put my glasses?
6. I don't care if it doesn't look fashionable, it's comfortable!
7. Who the heck is calling at 9:30pm??
8. Does anyone say please and thank you anymore?
9. Geez, how do you throw your body out of whack just sleeping wrong?? WTH?
10. This scale can't be right!!
11. WTH is wrong with people nowadays??
12. Why did I come into this room?



"COME LOOK, DAD! FOR FATHER'S DAY, WE PAINTED THE CAR YOUR FAVORITE COLOR!"



'Hold the front page!'



'I promise to tell my truth, my whole truth and nothing but my truth.'



LONG STORY SHORT, YOUTH DAY HAS LOST ITS MEANING:

The story ,

Today, 16 June, South Africa commemorates Youth Day to remember the youth uprising in 1976 in Soweto, which spread to places such as Cape Town. The mass protest was against the forced education of black South Africans in Afrikaans.

It's been almost 50 years. Does it still matter?

Youth Day matters not only because it reminds us about where we came from, but because it presents an opportunity to spotlight issues today's young people face. This year feels different though: young people are hamstrung by societal issues such as poverty, unemployment and the never-ending load shedding. 62% of young people in South Africa are unemployed and the situation is getting dire.

A PR gimic, dances and other parties that cost up to R250 per person to attend. For some events, young people need to use transport to get there and pay entry fees. And of course, there will be those tired "Youth are the Future" slogans and ill-fitting uniforms.

That's so cringe,

Don't worry, there are better ways to celebrate young people on Youth Day. In the midst of negativity around society and among young people, there are bright sparks. Like 18-year-old climate activist Ontsile Okadimeng, who recently made the audience sit up and listen at *Daily Maverick's* The Gathering: Earth Edition. There is Ukhukhanya Projects in Stellenbosch, which runs various initiatives in the area that were highlighted before President Cyril Ramaphosa during a Presidential Imbizo in Paarl. You can read more stories about South Africa's incredible young people at https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article_tag/youth-day/

DM's hot take,

Helping young people does not take a lot and is something everyone can do. It means mentoring, talking to a young person and even sharing job opportunities. Share jobs, share young people's businesses on social media, and always be a champion for youth development. *(By Suné Payne, in DM)*

BRICS LUTA CONTINUA:

For those offering their wisdom on why we should break with the West and favour BRICS as key strategic trade partners, let me help with some inconvenient facts.

1. The majority of our trade (business / jobs) come from the countries you want to break ties with.
2. You don't break what is fixed, to fix what is broken.
3. If you want to shift trade relations, it's a long term parallel process. You don't shoot yourself in both feet before beginning that race.
4. If we lose our existing trade relationships, and possibly face sanctions, the poverty, suffering and unemployment of our people will intensify.
5. The inequality gap will widen and whilst the poor will become poorer, many people who currently have jobs will find themselves unemployed and joining the poor.

If you don't see this as a problem then:

1. You are heartless
2. You are foolish
3. Both

The end. *(Mike Abel comment on Twitter)*

GAY RIGHTS...

GAY RIGHTS campaigners are demanding individual pay-outs of £100,000 to personnel forced out of the military before the ban on homosexuality was lifted. The calls for compensation are among a range of measures to help an estimated 5,000 people who suffered financial hardship and severe mental health problems as a result of the hard-line ruling, scrapped in 2000. A report released by the Fighting with Pride group and Northumbria University lays bare the treatment of gay members of the military. More than 80 per cent were subjected to intrusive investigations, often including intimate medical examinations, while more than 70 per cent say they were treated like criminals. All those forced out of the Services were stripped of their medals and pensions, leaving many destitute and struggling to find work. The first academic study of its kind, the survey involved interviews with more than 100 veterans dismissed from the Armed Forces because of their sexuality. Many say they are still living in poverty, have been made homeless and suffer from poor mental and physical health. Anne Myles, who served in the RAF for seven years, took part in the survey. She told researchers: "It took away my career, it took away my pension, it took away my future. It utterly destroyed it and took away a job I know I was good at... it just took away my home, my livelihood, my future, career, pension. It doesn't really get much worse than that, does it?"

Fighting with Pride is also calling for compensation for the loss of pensions, a formal apology from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the erasing of criminal records of those prosecuted by the MOD. FWP founder and ex-RAF officer Caroline Paige said: "The visceral hurt caused by the illegal and cruel ban is heartbreaking. "Our report has been two years in the making and shows that veterans continue to live with the devastating impact to this day, over 25 years later. It's wholly unacceptable – warm words aren't enough. Veterans have been left without a home or job, many robbed of family by being 'outed'. In the worst cases, those found to be gay were dismissed after harrowing investigations by the Military Police, some were even subjected to forced 'treatments' in military hospitals. It's essential the Independent Review is published without delay. It offers a unique opportunity to make right, in line with the Armed Forces Covenant. Proper compensation is a vital part of the remedy for lives and livelihoods lost when all people were doing was serving their country." (*RAF News*). (*Never thought I would live to see such a piece in an RAF journal. Ed...*)

WOKE WORLD (*James MacPherson, Spectator 27 February*).

Will the West's obsession with Woke survive war in Europe? Or will Putin's missiles finally explode the Never-Never Land of unreality in which we have been living? It's early days, of course, but so far, the West's mythical land of prancing unicorns looks bulletproof. Even as rockets rained down on Ukraine, Western elites worried about how the war would affect LGBTQ people, as if Putin might have developed queer-seeking missiles. Others voiced concern that grandparents huddled in bomb shelters beneath the pockmarked streets of Kiev might not be social distancing. The New York Times lamented that few of the Ukrainians fleeing for their lives were wearing masks. They probably weren't triple boosted either. And God forbid any of them were shot dead without first using a QR-code to check out. Meanwhile, former US Secretary of State John Kerry expressed dismay at what he called the 'emissions consequences' of war in Europe. He would presumably be far more comfortable with the Russian invasion had their tanks first met strict European emission standards. Kerry said he hoped Vladimir Putin would 'stay on track' with fighting climate change while fighting the Ukrainians. We can only hope the Russian army will sort the plastics from the metal bomb casings when they get around to removing corpses from the battlefield. And here in Australia, Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews lit up Melbourne in the Ukrainian colours as 'a show of support'. If that doesn't work, he will likely deploy a hashtag. And if China invades Taiwan, he will (of course) paint the town red. Those who say cockroaches are the only things that will survive a nuclear holocaust are wrong. On the evidence available so far, Woke – that virus of the mind which has turned Westerners into mindless, unicorn-chasing simpletons – will probably survive as well. The Russians may well destroy Europe, and China may well dominate the Pacific, but they will never kill our stupid! Nothing better illustrates the disconnect between the imaginary world of the West and the cold, hard reality that is right now marching toward Kiev than the fact that, just three weeks before the invasion, British troops were spending a day 'reflecting on inclusivity'. At the very moment Putin was surrounding Ukraine with rocket launchers, British soldiers were taking a break from tiresome military exercises to discuss 'unacceptable behaviours' such as bullying, sexual harassment, and racism. Doesn't Putin know we have the most diverse, equitable, tolerant and trans-inclusive militaries in the history of the world? And he's still messing with us? If all of Europe descends into war, the Brits might not win, but by God they will be the best-behaved losers in military history. If only Putin would challenge us to a 'Celebrate Diversity Day', we'd kick his ass. Western armies may well comprise the nicest soldiers you could ever meet on a battlefield. Just ask the Taliban. 'Oh, you'd like a Black Hawk helicopter, would you? Here, have 33! And would you like Humvees with that? Have 27.' Little wonder that, after watching American soldiers run away from a bunch of Afghani goat herders, Vladimir Putin decided to try his luck. It's not by accident that the

acronym for the West's favourite things – diversity, inclusion, and equity – is DIE. Putin wants to fight. So much toxic masculinity. If our military leaders want to discuss 'unacceptable behaviours', they might like to talk about their total unpreparedness for conflict. For decades now, we in the West have imagined we lived in a post-war world. Conflict was, like, so last century. With the loss of Christianity, we lost the doctrine of original sin; the idea that human beings – while made in the image of God – are fallen and so have a propensity toward evil. Instead of preparing for the inevitability of conflict, we embraced the illusion of the brotherhood of man and the perfectibility of mankind. Singing John Lennon's "Imagine" – as only a decadent culture would – we slashed defence spending so that we could focus instead on welfare and aged pensions and pet projects like wind turbines that, incidentally, would be a great defence if only Putin would invade using pigeons. What soldiers we did bother funding, we trained as peacekeepers to win hearts and minds rather than as warriors to kill the enemy. Violence is nasty, you see. And so unnecessary. We are the 'Defund the Police' generation, remember. We cannot imagine a problem that can't be solved by people holding hands in a circle and singing Kumbaya. Or by sitting down with a social worker who has a PhD in gender studies. And so, the German army has, in recent times, taken to conducting military exercises using broomsticks as guns. Why not? It's not like we'd ever need guns in our mythical world of love and rainbows. Germany's chief of land forces, Lieutenant General Alfons Mais wrote this week on his LinkedIn page, 'I would not have thought I would have had to experience war.' But while we have been busy beating our swords into broomsticks, Putin and Xi Jinping and the Mullahs and Kim Jong-un have rationed their population's pruning hooks in order to afford more spears. Western elites have allowed a situation in which wealthy countries rummage around in the broom cupboard for something with which to defend themselves while basket case nations have nuclear weapons. What did they think was going to happen? The Ukraine today. Taiwan tomorrow. And God only knows what comes after that. The West will impose sanctions (provided they don't cost us too much), but Putin has a war chest of billions. The West will light up monuments, but thanks to a scowling Swedish schoolgirl, Putin controls the West's energy supplies. The West will appeal to 'international law', but it can only be upheld by force. And we stopped believing in force years ago. The West will try to galvanise the much talked about 'international community', but no such community exists. Pakistan president Imran Khan, a supposed Western ally, visited Putin last week declaring it 'an exciting time'. And just watch the so-called international community rush to cut sweet deals with Xi Jinping if China succeeds in snatching Taiwan. The West will look to the European Union, but the bureaucrats in Brussels are committed to the elimination of nation-states. Meanwhile, Europe is an idea of elites that the man on the street is not prepared to die for. The West will appeal to the United Nations, but the UN Security Council was chaired by Russia at the very time Russia was invading Ukraine. The UN General Assembly's most likely response to Russia invading Ukraine is to agree on harsh sanctions against Israel. On and on it goes. We have lived in a world of illusion. And now reality is hitting us like a rocket. But will it be enough to make us finally realise that the real world is where the monsters are?