



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 173

28th JULY 2023

GREETINGS:

There is (was) a happy land, far, far away... political murders, taxi violence, road carnage and gang violence continue unabated... Decaying infrastructure and failing service delivery... SANDF "unsustainable" - SA defenceless if attacked... Bree Street blast bamboozles Joburg Metro... ANC circus rolls on in Boksburg this weekend under Ringmaster Fikile Mbalula...BRICS gender dividend?... Court of fools... Wagner expands operations in Africa – the modern Goths and Vandals... plant based food products targeted by DWAF... blackouts hammer steel sector... Game Reserves struggle as visitor numbers decline... Massive semigration wave to Cape... Ramaphosa to participate in second BRICS/Africa summit... VIP cop charged with assault "traumatised"... claims VW Polo tried to bump Mashatile's vehicle... sparks fly at new Meyiwa trial... witnesses in Zandile Gumede trial fear for their lives... Alexandra gripped by rampant armed robberies... Freight rail plan off tracks, says Gordhan before Mbalula's outburst... Mbabula U-turns... unrepentant Mbalula guns for Derek Hanekom... Hanekom slams Mbalula... #handsoffmashatile - ANC desperate attempts to rebrand Mashatile... UCT uproar - Professor Lumumba slags LBGTQI... Miss SA World VP accused of racism... BA A380 makes emergency landing at ORT... more Russian aircraft at AFB Waterkloof... Grootvlei power station on fire... AWOL soldier takes rifle with him... new Limpopo alcohol curfew... Hammanskraal cholera due to e-coli in tap water... Boks' kragmeting with Argentina on Saturday... Beast spills the beans on Rassie... Boks ready for Argentina (We hope)...

The Beano hits 85th Anniversary... BRICS African leaders report to Summit in St Petersburg to receive further orders... Ukraine commits reinforced forces to the counteroffensive against Russian invaders... reports of Russian retreats... Russian missile offensive continues... UK heatwave "sign of things to come"... record heatwave across USA... Wildfire season in Mediterranean continues in Italy, Portugal, Croatia, Greek Islands and now Algeria... Yemen – what Islam does for its children... Niger's President held in Palace by Presidential Guard... Sunak calls for clampdown on "corrupt immigration lawyers"... Sky's woke assault on British Police continues – row over alleged strip searches by Manchester Police... Tottenham Hotspur owner Joe Lewis charged with insider trading – surrenders to USA authorities in Manhattan – USD 300 million bail... Kevin Spacey found not guilty on multiple sexual assault charges... NatWest CEO Dame Alison Rose falls on her sword, over disclosures on Farage account closure... Chinese Foreign Secretary Qin Gang "disappears"

due to bonking the hired hep - replacement announced... Paris Olympics – Seine cleaned up for Olympics Official Opening... Mbappe mulls Muslim record offer... Princess Kate sends clear message to Meghan to back off... Australian creature from hell finally identified... cat castrated on dining room table – “butchered by bogus Vet”

HM THE KING MEETS WW II VETERANS and BBMF TEAM:



His Majesty the King visited RAF Coningsby yesterday, meeting Royal Air Force veterans from the Second World War and their modern-day counterparts currently serving as part of the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Eighteen veterans, aged 98 to 102, met with His Majesty at the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight hangar, along with BBMF aircrew and ground staff as well as Typhoon pilots and ground crew from 29 Squadron. One of the veterans, Flight Lieutenant Russell 'Rusty' Waughman DFC AFC, was a heavy bomber pilot who survived the Nuremburg Raid as well as on separate occasions a mid-air collision and his aircraft being upturned by wind. As a result, he was awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Force Cross. Other veterans included Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC AE who as a Mosquito pilot flew 50 bombing raids, Warrant Officer Eddie Humes who was the sole-survivor of a transport aircraft crash only to be captured and imprisoned, and Iris McClements who worked in the Royal Observer Corps to plot aircraft movements. The visit was hosted by the RAF's Combat Air Force Commander; Air Commodore Howard Edwards. The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight welcomed His Majesty and distinguished guests to their hangar with a backdrop of World War II Spitfires, Hurricanes and a Lancaster bomber. His Majesty also took great interest in a Chipmunk positioned in the hangar – the same aircraft that the then Prince Charles learned to fly in during his time at Cambridge University in 1968. (RAFNews)

CRANWELL WALL OF HONOUR:

A SOLDIER who called in a Coalition air strike on his own position to save the lives of his platoon in Afghanistan is the latest hero to sign on at Cranwell's Wall of Honour. Former Lance Bombardier Gary Prout won the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for directing two A-10 Warthogs to target his own coordinates to protect comrades pinned down by insurgents. Aircrew Survival, Evasion and Resistance (SERE) Training Centre Instructor Mark Fairhead said: "He is one of the most humble, courageous and inspiring men I have had the honour to meet." LBDR Prout was on a rooftop in a settlement south of Musa Qua'leh as 9 Platoon C Company 2 Royal Welsh set out to take back a village from the Taliban. The enemy included battle-hardened Chechen mercenaries equipped with heavy weapons and RPGs. Gary jumped from his rooftop position when a British soldier triggered an IED. As he closed in on the casualty, he realised it was his best friend, C/Cpl Chris Hackett. Braving heavy fire Gary battled in vain to give lifesaving first aid as his pal died in his arms. After dragging the body of his dead comrade back into cover with the help of his Sergeant, Gary called in air and artillery support. Realising that the enemy was all around him, he instructed a pair of A-10 Warthogs to target his own position to save the lives of his platoon. Mr Fairhead added: "Both A-10s dropped their payloads and miraculously Gary, still alive, called in fire and air support for the next two hours, repeatedly exposing himself to hostile fire to save his colleagues and preventing further loss of life. "Gary spoke to 23 aircrew destined to fly jets and helicopters, who sat in awe, spellbound by his energetic, humbling and candid recount of his experiences both during and after that day." LBDR Prout, who is from a fourth-generation military family, continued to serve with the Army until a severe injury left him with continuous complex and severe pain and he was medically boarded. (RAF News)

LONGEST ATLAS FLIGHT RECORD:



Atlas aircrew have completed the longest-ever flight by an Atlas A400M for an exercise in the Pacific. The transporter flew non-stop for 22 hours from Brize Norton to Guam and on the way came the closest it has ever been to the North Pole. The shortest distance between the Oxfordshire airbase

and the US island in Micronesia is 7,500 miles and the aircraft was refuelled three times on its journey. An RAF Voyager flying from the UK topped up the Atlas over the Atlantic while another tanker flew out of the USAF Eielson Airbase to refuel it over Alaska and the Pacific Ocean. Air Mobility Force Commander Air Cdre Anthony Lyle said: "Exercise Mobility Guardian is an outstanding training opportunity; it allows us to demonstrate the speed, reach and utility of the RAF, and reinforces our ability to rapidly conduct global Air Operations. "The non-stop flight to Guam is a great example of our ability to project air power, allowing us to get aircraft, crews and vital equipment to the other side of the world and for them to be able to operate immediately." In Guam, the Atlas and Voyager, with Tactical Medical Wing and other supporting personnel, will join Exercise Mobility Guardian 23 with aircraft from the US, Australia, Canada, France, Japan and New Zealand taking part. The training area stretches from Northern Australia to Japan and then across the Pacific to Hawaii to give crews experience of operating at long distances. Some sorties are planned to fly to and from Japan to mark the recently signed Hiroshima Accord defence agreement with the UK. (RAF News)

TRANSNET OFF TRACK:

Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan said the Transnet freight rail turnaround strategy was anchored on partnerships with the private sector in dealing with the challenges associated with infrastructure investment, addressing security and the vandalism of infrastructure. This was in response to parliamentary questions about Transnet's freight rail plan – two days before ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula suggested that he would be moved if he did not speedily address the freight rail challenges at Transnet – only for the ANC to backtrack on his statement. (*the tail wagging the dog*)

CHEERS:

Your Scribe is penning these Ramblings in the vast landscapes of the Tankwa Karoo. Yesterday was a bright diamond of a day, with glittering sunshine and the veld smiling in great swathes of wildflowers amongst the Karoo bossies... Today has been a day of changing skylines as another weather system sweeps up from the Antarctic – we had wind, rain, hail and thunderstorms since the early hours, and a max temperature of 11degrees C – great to have a comfortable chalet with open fireplace and panoramic views. Our onward walkabout from Hermanus took us via friends in Hout Bay for a long weekend during which we visited numerous other friends and family around the Peninsula - with a cream tea at Rhodes Cottage in Muizenburg and a screening of "Fiddler on the Roof" in the historic residence, well maintained as a memorial by the Rhodes Foundation... catching up with old mates and comrades in arms has been the highlight – including one who joined the RRAF with me 55 years ago this year...



Remember that the next lunch is on Friday 4th August at the Wanderers Club, and we will revert to a normal members occasion. More in the coming week about arrangements. Please book by responding to bookings@rafoc.org with your proof-of-payment for R250 per person.

OBITUARY

AIR MARSHAL SIR DAVID WALKER KCVO CBE AFC RAF: "HARRIER MASTER TECHNICIAN"



AIR MARSHAL David Walker, who has died aged 66, was a veteran Harrier pilot who saw active service in Bosnia and northern Iraq and later filled operational staff appointments during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. He joined the RAF in December 1978 and was flying the Harrier with No 4 Squadron at Gütersloh in July 1981. After qualifying as a weapons instructor, he transferred to No 3 Squadron. Both squadrons were held at high readiness and routinely tested by multi-national NATO evaluation teams when operating from remote off-base sites. After six years in Germany, he was awarded the AFC. In April 1988, he left for a two-year exchange appointment at the US Naval Air Weapons Station at China Lake, California, where he flew the advanced F-18 Hornet fighter and the AV8-B, the US version of the Harrier.

He brought a British voice to an establishment where the most advanced trials on fighters were conducted. His expertise was much admired by his American colleagues. After serving as the Harrier expert at the Central Trials and Tactics Organisation (CTTO), he took command of No 1 Squadron at Wittering in April 1994. The squadron was developing techniques for night operations in its Harrier aircraft. Not only did he lead on devising and developing fighter tactics, but he also endeavoured to raise his Force's perspectives on the wider issues of fighting air campaigns with multiple units and allies. This laid the ground for the squadron's involvement in the complex air campaigns in Iraq and the Balkans. Op Provide Comfort In early 1995, his squadron deployed to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey as part of the US-led Operation Provide Comfort, tasked with protecting the Kurdish peoples of northern Iraq from Iraqi aggression. The squadron flew armed reconnaissance missions monitoring Iraqi movements near the Kurdish safe areas. On February 2, 1995 Walker took off to carry out a patrol into Iraqi territory. Flying close to the ground, endeavouring to gain high resolution imagery of certain targets whilst avoiding modern surface-to-air missiles in the area, a bullet from a Kalashnikov rifle shattered the canopy of his aircraft and momentarily stopped the single engine of his Harrier. Perspex fragments had struck him in the face and neck. He made an emergency radio call, climbed to 15,000 feet and, when asked by the American airborne controller what he needed, he replied 'a jumper'. He was escorted by his wingman to the nearest airfield in Turkey, where he landed after flying for an hour without the protection of a canopy. Later in the year, the squadron deployed to an airbase in southern Italy to fly operations over Bosnia. The task was to fly photographic reconnaissance missions and provide close air support to United Nations ground forces. Support was also provided for the extraction at night of specialist ground forces in the UN enclave at Gorazda. Described as 'an inspirational leader', Walker was at the forefront of these operations. In March 1996, after almost 19 years spent associated with flying operations, Walker was appointed as the military assistant to the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Honourable Nicholas Soames, followed by Dr John Reid. He was co-opted to work on the forthcoming defence review. Identified as a 'high flyer', he was selected in 1999 to attend the Higher Command and Staff Course.

He then returned to the Harrier world, this time as Station Commander of RAF Cottesmore, the new home for the operational component of the Harrier force. He masterminded a significant transformation of the Harrier Force, within the developing concept of the Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW). Following the government's Strategic Defence review of 1998, a decision was taken to create Joint Force Harrier forming two RAF and two Royal Navy squadrons. His development of the EAW concept involved regular station-based Harrier Force development training and 'bare base' rehearsals to ensure a cohesive, effective and well-motivated team when deployments occurred. To maximise the contribution of the Harrier Force as a close air support asset for the Army, he was convinced of the value of 'staff rides' (battlefield tours). By walking the ground, he believed that pilots in particular, would get a better understanding of the challenges that ground troops faced. In 2000 Walker offered his airfield to host the annual world-renowned Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT). The organisation's traditional airfield at RAF Fairford was undergoing major refurbishment and an alternative venue was needed. After the success of the show in 2000, it returned to Cottesmore the following year. Despite the huge additional task to the already busy activities of his station, Walker saw the positive impact it had and the clear demonstration of his people's willingness to go the extra mile for such a worthy cause. He commented: "It demonstrated just how much could be done if people worked together and shared a common sense of delivery, hospitality and operational excellence." At the end of a demanding tour, he was appointed CBE. In August 2002, Walker took up the post of Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) at the Permanent Joint Headquarters with particular responsibility for the expeditionary air forces operating in the Iraq war (Operation Telic), and the early stages of UK involvement in the air operations over Afghanistan. A year later, on promotion to Air Vice-Marshal, he became the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (ACAS) in MOD. He was responsible for the implementation and handling of RAF policy, relations with NATO and other allies and responses to the changing events of the time. This included detailed studies to reconfigure the RAF's frontline stations as the Service was reduced to some 37,000 personnel following successive defence reviews. He was closely involved in the introduction into service of the Typhoon fighter. During this period, he once. Identified as a 'high flyer', he was selected in 1999 to attend the Higher Command and Staff Course. He then returned to the Harrier world, this time as Station Commander of RAF Cottesmore, the new home for the operational component of the Harrier force. He masterminded a significant transformation of the Harrier Force, within the developing concept of the Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW). Following the government's Strategic Defence review of 1998, a decision was taken to create Joint Force Harrier forming two RAF and two Royal Navy squadrons. His development of the EAW concept involved regular station-based Harrier Force development training and 'bare base' rehearsals to ensure a cohesive, effective and well-motivated team when deployments occurred. To maximise the contribution of the Harrier Force as a close air support asset for the Army, he was convinced of the value of 'staff rides' (battlefield tours). By walking the ground, he believed that pilots in particular would get a better understanding of the challenges that ground troops faced. In 2000 Walker offered his airfield to host the annual world-renowned Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT). The organisation's traditional airfield at RAF Fairford was undergoing major refurbishment and an alternative venue was needed. After the success of the show in 2000, it returned to Cottesmore the following year. Despite the huge additional task to the already busy activities of his station, Walker saw the positive impact it had and the clear demonstration of his people's willingness to go the extra mile for such a worthy cause. He commented: "It demonstrated just how much could be done if people worked together and shared a common sense of delivery, hospitality and operational excellence." At the end of a demanding tour, he was appointed CBE. In August 2002, Walker took up the post of Assistant Chief of Staff (Operations) at the Permanent Joint Headquarters with particular responsibility for the expeditionary air forces operating in the Iraq war

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THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL TRUST is bidding to install dogfighting simulators for visitors to experience the epic battles between Spitfires and Messerschmitt Bf 109s, to mark the 30th anniversary of the UK's tribute to The Few. Bosses at the clifftop site at Capel-le-Ferne have launched an appeal to raise £1m to upgrade the site and install the high-tech virtual-reality facility to put visitors in the cockpit. Trust President ACM Sir Stephen Dalton said: "The Trust wants to make the Memorial relevant to all generations and introduce new ways of helping younger people understand the challenges that faced The Few during the Battle. The aim is to add two high-tech simulators to give visitors an idea of what our fighter pilots had to do in 1940 when they scrambled to face the superior numbers of Luftwaffe fighters and bombers. The extension will also give us more

display space. We have been gifted a number of interesting and important Battle of Britain-related items and we need more space to tell the Battle of Britain story to this and future generations. “The Trust can only make this dream a reality with the help of supporters, and we are looking for public help to raise the £1m needed to make the Memorial an even more relevant, instructive and exciting place to visit.” The National Memorial to the Few was unveiled by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in 1993. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, unveiled the Trust’s modern visitor centre, The Wing, in 2015. (*RAF News*)