



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 176

18th AUGUST 2023

GREETINGS:

Once in a Blue Moon – “Moonshot Pact” – last chance for a democratic South Africa?... SA recalls Ambassador to US (foolish move)... Eight days of mayhem in Cape Town – enough already!... This government is “not to be taken seriously on electricity” (or much else)... All cuffed up... Partners in crime Bester and Magudumana steal moments in court appearance... Senzo Meyiwa trial: An unsecured crime scene, Kelly’s cop uncle and MaKhumalo with ‘that hat’... Mad hatter Cele finally says something about N1 assault... What SA’s dirty water does to your health... Mbalula: “We gave you taps, so what if there is no water?”... What SA’s dirty cadres do to the SA’ taxpayers... BEE battle over Karpowerships billions – when thieves fall out... 67 Pakistani illegal immigrants enter SA at ORT “via fire hydrants”, says Deputy Minister... SA begins overhaul of immigration laws – electoral gimmick?... Senior SANParks Manager killed by hippo in KNP – there may be more to this story... Umlazi mass shooting... Joburg Councillors suspect digital spying activities (there’s a spook under every bed – put it up on bricks - *not the bank group*)... Bree Street deserted - hawkers struggle for customers... armed robber nets victim’s cellphone, ID, bank cards and a Bible... “Fury of the silent majority” is driving a global Right-wing counter-revolution (Let’s hope so)...

Hawaii wildfires - Death toll rises to 100+ as residents return to assess damage... fires “deadliest in 100 years”... North claims AWOL US soldier was ‘disillusioned by society’ (poor chap!)... The true aim behind Hong Kong’s pursuit of overseas dissidents – gangster tactics... Chinese airbase being built on disputed island near Vietnam... Ukraine desperate for help with mine-clearing... modifies British Challenger 2 tanks to protect them from Russian drones... Zelenskiy sacks military recruitment heads over frontline bribes scandal... Britain “plotting to assassinate pro-Russian leaders in Africa”, says Moscow... US mayor reels in cocaine worth \$1.1 million on fishing trip... US Air Force WW2 photos of England available to public for first time (a bit late, surely?)... UK illegal migrant crisis continues... UK exam results crisis – “Grade deflation”... Bank holiday travel chaos as RMT announces more strike dates.... British Museum’s priceless artefacts stolen in ‘inside job’... There is no green ‘transition’ to renewable energy. China and India are playing us for fools... England’s Lionesses roar into Women’s World Cup Final, beat Australia - England coach Wiegman stunned... Why this lament for a burnt-out pub? Is it because Britain seems a bit of a Crooked House these days?... All buildings must provide single-sex lavatories...

FALCONS FLY:



The RAF Parachute Display Team, the Falcons, have carried out the first display jump from an RAF C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft.

The display was carried out by eight members of the RAF Falcons jumping over Witney, Oxfordshire. The jump from the C-17 Globemaster of RAF Brize Norton based 99 Sqn, was primarily a proof-of-concept activity, which now allows the Falcons to use this aircraft for future displays and gives the team a much greater range. The sortie also provided important training for 99 Sqn aircrew to gain the currency needed for this activity. The opportunity was also taken to provide an opening display for the annual dinner of the Canopy Club, the Association for serving and former Parachute Jump Instructors of the RAF. The dinner was held at the Witney Lakes Resort complex which served as the landing zone for the Falcons. As is tradition for displays by the Falcons – after landing, the Team formed up to salute a Reviewing Officer, in this case the President of the Canopy Club Association, Group Captain (Retired) Mike Milburn RAF, a former commander of the Parachute Training School. He said: “It was so good to see the RAF Falcons exiting the C17. The run-in over the drop zone was, in itself, a spectacle of air power and gravitas, and the Falcons thrilled the crowd with their precision and team cohesion as they landed safely into the arena. Those ex-Falcons of us watching were impressed with the professionalism of the team as they then interacted well with the crowd, talking mainly to the children about parachuting and the RAF in general. On behalf of the Canopy Club, which next year celebrates its 80th anniversary, it was a privilege to witness the current RAF Falcons parachuting from the C17.” The Falcons are now planning to jump from an RAF C-17 at the ZigAirMeet airshow at Mollis, Switzerland on the 19 and 20 August 2023.

RESERVIST'S SKILLS DELIVER FOR RAF:



It is the ability to do something in support of your nation and to be part of something bigger that often brings Reservists and Regulars into the Armed Forces. Additionally, the opportunity to develop oneself and face new challenges is an additional pull for many. Both drivers are abundantly clear when talking to Olly Warren, who has recently returned to the RAF as a Part Time Volunteer Reservist. He has joined the RAF Digital Reserves, a new capability which formed earlier this year. Its aim is to provide a highly flexible, effective and diverse talent pool which gives cost-effective support to the organisation. For Olly, whose day job is Chief Operating Officer at North-East based software development company Excelpoint, it is a return to where he began his working life with four years as an RAF Regular Policeman.

Olly has had great support from his current company, which is a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant. Through its Employer Recognition Scheme, Excelpoint and other companies are also recognised for their exceptional support to the armed forces community and going above and beyond their covenant pledges. During Covid, Olly was sat at home like many members of the public and became frustrated that he could not do more to help: "The timing had never been quite right to join the Reserves but in 2021 I believed I could make the commitment work." Digital might not seem the obvious choice for an ex-RAF Policeman but in the intervening years Olly has taken a new career path in the technology sector. He takes up the story: "I left the RAF to support my family's expanding business, quickly realising that scaling up our use of IT was key to future business growth. IT had to be an enabler to our development, not a blocker, and that premise has stayed with me since those early days of working in my family firm. After a decade working in various organisations and in roles including project management, system design, software development and digital innovation, I am now back working in a small organisation which also has plans for rapid growth. We work with clients of all sizes who need to be able to move more adeptly in the digital space. Our offer is based on a no code technology platform. All that means is that we provide bespoke business systems without having to write custom code. We go through the consultation process of understanding the business process, its pain points, and desired outcomes and then we design and implement a new system very, very quickly." It is that focus on client service and technical knowledge that is now benefiting the RAF. As an Air Specialist Class 1, Olly has worked closely with the RAF's Talent Concepts and Development Team to revolutionise their existing RAF Project Hub, a tool linking project leaders with volunteers from across the RAF who want to develop skills outside of their primary role. Wing Commander Webber, Head of RAF Talent Concepts and Developments, said "It has been a fantastic experience working with Olly. He quickly understood our brief and then developed the concept further, re-designing the Project Hub to create a professional, easy to use Power app that will revolutionise the user experience."

BLUE MOON RISING:



The biggest and brightest moon of the year snuggles up to Saturn.

Moonwatchers get an extra treat this month with a Blue Moon. A Blue Moon is typically defined as the third full moon in a season that has four full moons, although the term is sometimes also used to refer to a second full moon in a single month. The Blue Moon will rise on the night of 30 August at 21h35 EDT, according to the U.S. Naval Observatory, and will both be a "Blue Moon" and a "supermoon" – not only is it the second full moon in a month, but the Earth is as close to the Moon as

it gets and thus appears slightly larger and brighter than normal. On the same day the moon will make a close approach to the planet Saturn. Blue Moons occur about every two and a half years. "Blue moon," like "Supermoon" is not really an astronomical term. A Blue Moon refers to one of two things: A second Blue Moon in a month (called a calendrical Blue Moon) or a fourth full moon in a season (a seasonal Blue Moon). A season is the period between solstices and equinoxes (so for example the Summer season starts on June 21 - the summer solstice - and ends on Sept. 23, the autumn equinox). Ordinarily one would expect three full moons in a season, but occasionally we see four. In this case there are still three full moons between June 21 and Sept. 23, but we get two full moons in August because the month has 31 days. So, this August Blue Moon is a calendrical one, not a seasonal one.

AZORES GLIDER: AIR TRANSAT FLIGHT 236:



C-GITS, an Airbus A330-200



Lajes in the Azores

In August 2001, an Air Transat flight from Toronto to Lisbon made an unscheduled stop in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. This occurred after fuel exhaustion forced the jet operating the flight to glide for over 120 km (65 NM) to make an emergency landing in the Azores. Let's take a look back at how exactly the incident unfolded. Air Transat flight TS236 was a busy service that originated at Toronto Pearson Airport (YYZ) in Ontario, Canada. Its destination was on the other side of the North Atlantic Ocean, namely Humberto Delgado Airport (LIS) in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon. Although Air Transat still flies between Toronto and Lisbon, it no longer uses flight number TS236 for these services. Indeed, data from RadarBox.com shows that the airline last used this designation in July 2018 on a flight from Toronto to Roatan Island. Instead, Air Transat's present Toronto-Lisbon services use the flight number TS480 and are operated by Airbus A321LR jets. This route also previously served Porto as part of a triangle route. This summer, the carrier deployed a Hi Fly Airbus A330 to meet higher demand. On August 23rd, 2001, Air Transat flight TS236 took to the skies in Toronto at 20:52 local time. Operated by C-GITS, an Airbus A330-200, the overnight flight had 293 passengers and 13 crew members onboard. At the time, the twin-engine widebody was just over two years old, according to data made available by ATDB.aero. Just under four hours into the aircraft's journey across the Atlantic, at 04:38 UTC, it began to develop a fuel leak. This occurred in a fuel line to its number 2 engine, where a fracture had arisen. An investigation later found that the cause of this was an incorrectly installed component that didn't leave sufficient clearance between the fuel and hydraulic lines. This lack of space caused the lines to chafe. As a result of this, the fuel line eventually ruptured, thus causing the leak. 25 minutes later, the pilots noticed low oil temperature and high oil pressure readings for the affected engine, and informed the airline's control centre that they would monitor the situation. According to the Aviation Safety Network, a fuel imbalance warning then arose at 05:36 UTC, and the crew swiftly took action in response. The action taken saw them transfer fuel from the left to the right tank to help address the imbalance. However,

this was only lost through the ruptured line, worsening the leak to a gallon per second. This prompted them to decide to divert to Lajes in the Azores. This came at 05:45 UTC, followed by the declaration of a fuel emergency at 05:48. The situation would soon become even more perilous. Indeed, while the stricken jet was en route to Lajes, both of its engines flamed out within 13 minutes of each other due to fuel starvation. This occurred at 06:26 UTC, with the aircraft still 121 km (65 NM) from Lajes. What followed turned out to be the longest unpowered glide of a passenger aircraft. With engine power gone, the ram air turbine was used to power the twinjet's instruments and hydraulics. Despite the various challenges, the plane eventually touched down in Lajes at 06:54 UTC. It had needed to make several winding turns to lose altitude en route, with minimal hydraulic power. Despite injuries to 18 occupants in the hard landing and evacuation of the plane, all 306 occupants survived the incident. C-GITS continued to fly for Air Transat until being placed into storage in March 2020. As it happens, there have been several other incidents throughout aviation history where widebody aircraft have had to glide without engine power for a given period. Perhaps the most famous of these involved the 'Gallungung Glider', a British Airways Boeing 747 whose engines stopped after flying through a cloud of volcanic ash. Meanwhile, the 'Gimli Glider' was an Air Canada Boeing 767 that lost power due to fuel exhaustion after a conversion error when topping up its tanks.

BOURNEMOUTH AIR FESTIVAL:

Britain's biggest free air and land festival by the sea this summer takes place from 31 August to 3 September 2023. The Bournemouth Air Festival will feature an incredible four days of aerobatics including the RAF Red Arrows, Typhoon and Battle of Britain planes, with more announcements expected soon. The award-winning family friendly event includes dazzling dusk performances and entertainment on land. After a historic Platinum Jubilee last year, marking 70 years of service by Queen Elizabeth II to the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, we are really excited to bring you this year's festival in the year of the King's Coronation. One of the visitors expected is the preserved 1949 vintage Norwegian Air Force DH Vampire FB 52, operated by the Norwegian Air Force Historical Squadron.

(For South African and Rhodesian Vampire Veterans, note that the FB 52 is fitted with an ejector seat – the Face Blind handle and top of the seat is visible behind the pilot's head ...)



*De Havilland Vampire FB.52
Export version of the Mk 6, 101 built.
36 to Norway and in use from 1949 to 1957.*



*De Havilland Vampire T.55
Export version of the T11 Trainer, 216 built.
6 exported to Norway and in use 1952 to 1955*

AIR TAXI CRASH:



A flying taxi owned by UK born billionaire and Ovo Energy chief Stephen Fitzpatrick has crashed during a test run in the Cotswolds, according to reports. Mr Fitzpatrick's US-listed flying taxi firm Vertical Aerospace confirmed that a prototype version of the product crashed while testing the "aircraft's manoeuvrability" on Wednesday. The Bristol-based startup is building a five-seater flying taxi that can reach speeds of up to 200mph.

Nobody was injured during the incident as the crashed aircraft was being remotely piloted, The Daily Telegraph reported. Vertical Aerospace was founded by Mr Fitzpatrick, 45, the green energy billionaire, in 2016 to build small, battery-powered, vertical takeoff aircraft. It went public in New York 16 months ago via a "blank-cheque" merger that valued it at \$2.2 billion, shortly before the market soured. It is valued now at about \$330 million. Auditors raised concerns over Vertical Aerospace's finances earlier this year. They warned that there was a "material uncertainty" it could continue and said it had to raise additional funds to secure its long-term future. Mr Fitzpatrick, a serial entrepreneur who once owned a Formula 1 team, founded Ovo in 2009. He bought Kensington Roof Gardens, once owned by Richard Branson, in 2020 and is lavishing millions of pounds on a luxury makeover. Vertical Aerospace has been contacted for comment.

TRENCHARD BRATS APPEAL:

AN APPEAL to raise £100,000 for a new memorial to the 'Trenchard Brats,' who passed through Halton's RAF Apprentices' scheme has been launched. The project is a tribute to the boys aged 15 to 18 from the UK and Commonwealth who trained at the Buckinghamshire base between 1922 and 1993. RAF Apprentices' Association chairman Frank Denton-Powell who is leading the campaign said: "By the time the scheme ceased some 45,000 boys had been trained at Halton; of these, more than 100 attained Air Rank and 30 per cent were commissioned. Worldwide, the exploits and achievements of Trenchard's Brats are widely recognised. Perhaps the most famous is the inventor of the jet engine, Sir Frank Whittle. Ex-Halton apprentices took part in the Dambusters raid, and others were executed for their part in the Great Escape." A bronze sculpture by military artist Tim Potts to mark their achievements dubbed 'Trenchard's Legacy', is being planned for the existing Halton Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire opened 25 years ago. The current Viscount Trenchard and Honorary Air Cdre 600 (City of London) Sqn said: "Trenchard's Brats made an outstanding contribution to the Second World War, sadly at a great cost of life." Currently there are more than 2,000 association members and the appeal committee aims to raise donations from ex-Apprentices, their families and aerospace companies worldwide who employed ex-Brats. There are more than 40 ex-Apprentices still serving in the RAF. *For more details see: www.oldhaltonians.co.uk*

EIGHT DAYS OF MAYHEM:

It's been eight days of mayhem for people who live in Cape Town and surrounds. Five precious lives lost. People fleeing in terror and fear as buses were stoned and torched. On Thursday this week, 60% of learners in the province were deprived of school, just as matrics are getting ready for

prelims. Working-class residents were robbed, mugged, forced to walk as many as 45km to get between work and home. Taxi drivers, who are at the mercy of taxi bosses, were deprived of days of income. Shop shelves were bare as suppliers of fresh bread, dairy and eggs were prevented from delivering. Motorists were injured as their cars were stoned. A city under siege... Just as tourism numbers in the Western Cape have increased to pre-pandemic levels, creating much-needed jobs, the murder of British orthopedic surgeon Dr Kar Hao Teoh has led to travel warnings to all foreigners who might consider visiting our shores. Teoh had taken a wrong turn travelling from Cape Town International Airport. How did we get here? There are opposing views. Mandla Hermanus, the Western Cape leader of taxi association Santaco, says the strike was triggered by the City of Cape Town impounding more than 1,000 taxis for minor infractions not covered by national road traffic legislation. The culprit – a city bylaw passed in July that impounds: Vehicles with missing numberplates or plates not securely fixed; Unroadworthy vehicles, vehicles with defective lights and vehicles not up to standard as per the original SABS specifications and illegally modified; Unlicensed vehicles and unlicensed drivers; and failing to stop when ordered to do so, reckless and negligent driving, and driving under the influence. Rooting for the taxi owners were none other than ANC Minister of Transport Sindisiwe Chikunga and our cat in the hat, Minister of Police Bheki Cele. The Cabinet has backed these ministers, directing them to ensure that any taxi operating conditions contradicting the national law are removed from Cape Town's bylaws. The Mayor of the City, Geordin Hill-Lewis, and his swashbuckling, not-very-diplomatic DA strongman answer to the cat in the hat, JP Smith, insist that all impounded taxis had violated national laws, not the new bylaw. The Mayor, rightly, refused to be bullied by the taxi operators, who refused to be bullied by the Mayor's bully, Smith. At stake for the taxi owners, their livelihoods. At stake for the mayor and Smith and the two ANC ministers, their political careers. A stand-off that erupted into murder, looting and mayhem. Could it have been handled differently? Could there have been a better way to achieve a more favourable outcome for all the residents of the city? However appealing kragdadigheid might be to those of us who are gatvol of the many taxi drivers and owners with a couldn't-care-less attitude towards anyone but themselves, the mayhem of the past week or so is an indication that it might not be the most effective way to change their hearts and minds to be more careful on the road. I think the Western Cape government showed a far more effective method of improving public transport safety when it implemented its innovative Blue Dot taxi service pilot project, which ended because of a lack of funding. This incentive programme rewarded improved driver behaviour and service to passengers and worked towards formalising the industry. In fact, if Chikunga really cared about public transport, she would learn from the Western Cape Department of Mobility's project and get the national government and big business to look into how the Blue Dot project could be rolled out in every city in South Africa. That is, if commuter safety and efficient, reliable transport is the ultimate aim of her and her ministry. In this season of trying to win our votes for next year's elections, I guess it may be too much to expect that our politicians apply their minds for the common good. But, as always, a girl can dream. *(DM Editorial)*

BIBBY STOCKHOLM: BARGING AHEAD

Ministers will hire more barges to house asylum seekers and host thousands of migrants in student accommodation blocks, The Telegraph can reveal. The Government intends to go ahead despite the discovery of Legionella bacteria in the water supply that forced migrants to leave the Bibby Stockholm. The development comes as 6 migrants died and more than 50 were rescued from the Channel on Saturday, the worst loss of life in the Channel since November 2021.



VOLGA-DNEPR SEIZED AN-124:



RA-82078 at the Farnborough air show in 2018

Volga-Dnepr has reportedly threatened legal action against the Canadian government over its seizure of one of its Antonov An-124 freighter aircraft. According to Russia's *Interfax* news agency, the group sent a letter to Canadian authorities – including prime minister Justin Trudeau – asking for the dispute to be resolved amicably. However, the company threatened legal action if an agreement could not be found. "If the dispute is not resolved within six months of Canada's receipt of the notification, Volga-Dnepr Airlines will formally initiate arbitration proceedings. Volga-Dnepr remains open to negotiations with Canadian representatives to resolve the issue and return the aircraft," the carrier is quoted as stating. The airline also pointed out that the aircraft was carrying Covid test kits from China to Canada when a notice to airmen (NOTAM) was issued prohibiting Russian aircraft from using the country's airspace. As a result, the aircraft has been grounded at Toronto Pearson airport since 27 February last year. This year the An-124 was seized by the Canadian government as part of sanctions issued in response to the war in Ukraine. In June, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the aircraft has been illegally detained and said its seizure was cynical and shameless theft.

(FlightGlobal - This story originally appeared on Air Cargo News)

VJ DAY 15 AUGUST 1945:

The celebrations on V-E Day (Victory in Europe), May 8, 1945, were spontaneous and joyful, yet everyone knew that the end of the War in Europe gave the world only partial peace. The War in the Pacific raged on with increased savagery. On August 6th, 1945, facing the prospect of an invasion of the Japanese home islands, President Harry Truman ordered the dropping of the newly-developed atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. In a single flash, four square miles of the city were destroyed and 130,000 people were killed. Three days later a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki. This bomb killed between 65,000 and 75,000 people. On the same day, forces of the Soviet Union invaded Japanese-held Manchuria. On August 14th, 1945, facing armies and new weapons they could never hope to overcome, the Japanese government accepted defeat. The next day, August 15th, 1945, was proclaimed Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, although the signing of the official instrument of surrender was not to occur until September 2nd, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri, in Tokyo Bay. There, representatives of nine Allied nations were present to accept the Japanese surrender. Throughout the day of August 14th, anticipation mounted as people listened to the radio or called their local newspaper for the latest word. The New York Times announced that its revolving news sign in Times Square would remain on continuously during the wait. Many people lingered below the sign, knowing the biggest celebration of all would occur there. The waiting gave cities throughout the country time to announce their plans. Every town and city expected crowds larger than those for V-E Day. Back in Times Square expectant crowds gathered. Why was it taking so long? Was this another false alarm? All eyes darted nervously toward the Times Tower news sign. Then at 7:03 p.m. these words flashed: OFFICIAL - TRUMAN ANNOUNCES JAPANESE SURRENDER.

MEMBERS WRITE:

Gordon Dyne writes: "Many of the longer serving RAFOC members will remember Len Taylor. On Sunday 23 July, Susan and I visited Muriel Taylor, in her lovely home in Harveston Retirement Village in Roodepoort. Muriel is the widow of RAFOC stalwart and former RAF Pilot Len Taylor. Both Len and Muriel lived in their retirement home long before Len travelled to that big hangar in the sky some ten years ago. Len's nephew is the incredibly fearless SKY 'Hot Spots' reporter Stuart Ramsey. Len was a lovely old boy and for many years he and Muriel came as our guests to various Ladies' lunches. I am writing this mail on the 15th August, which is the date Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender in 1945. Coincidentally and for readers' interest, Muriel and her sister were living with their parents in Shanghai, China when the Japanese occupiers took them into 'custody' in March 1943. Muriel was eleven years of age. Muriel's father was with the British Police. In the main, the family and other prisoners were well treated, albeit a nuisance to their guards. They were housed in large schools and were only locked in at night. Muriel and her family were released by the Americans in late 1945. Muriel's father remained in China and served on the War Crimes' Commission. The remainder of the family returned by ship to England. I just wish Muriel had written a book on her experiences. It would have made a fascinating read. Len flew Douglas DC3s (C47s) practically every day between June 1948 and May 1949 as part of the Berlin Airlift to relieve the suffering of the German population. This was due to the Soviet Union's blockade of Berlin, and this was to be the first of the 'Cold War' crises. After Len's 'passing,' Muriel gave me a number of his treasured 'Berlin Airlift' memorabilia, which stand proudly on the bar in my Mancave at Brakpan Airport. Muriel's retirement home is quite delightful. Small, but quite adequate and manageable. Her health is reasonable for a nonagenarian. Her mind is still pretty, sharp, but she battles to walk. Muriel has a lovely little 'sausage' dog for company whom she addresses as her electric blanket! Muriel

also has an African carer who visits every day and handles the menial tasks that Muriel can no longer manage. Susan and I enjoyed coffee and cake and sat chatting for a couple of hours. Before we left, Muriel said to me:- “I wish to give you some more of Len’s possessions.” Amidst the emotion of her generosity, Muriel gave me a yellow metallic model of a 1930’s Fairey Swordfish and a seriously heavy steel model of a Bristol Britannia, otherwise known as the Whispering Giant. The former, Muriel told me, was the first aircraft which Len flew, and the latter was the last one! Despite my protests Muriel insisted I take them, I did! After some serious cleaning, to remove probably 50 years of grime and rust, they both look splendid on my mancave bookshelf. Muriel also gave me a framed limited-edition print of a Bristol Britannia. Number 9/250. A Royal Air Force Transport Command Aircraft. What makes this picture so unique is that it is signed by two RAF Air Chief Marshals. Namely Air Chief Marshal Sir Alastair Steedman (1922 – 1992) and Air Chief Marshal Sir Thomas Kennedy (1928-2013). This stunning print is not dated, but I would guess the original was painted around 1975 which was when the Britannia was retired from the RAF. This picture now adorns a wall in my mancave, as one would expect! So ended a lovely afternoon with a wonderful woman who once played golf off a handicap of six!! Some golfer! Some gal! Thank you Muriel for making Susan and me so welcome. (I am delighted to advise RAFOC members that Muriel, after much persuasion from my wife Susan, is coming to the RAFOC Battle of Britain Ladies’ lunch at the Wanderers on Friday 15 September. She is thrilled that she will be able to meet many old friends she has not seen for more than a decade. I have no doubt she will receive a very warm welcome from members and that Chairman Bruce Harrison will make special mention of her.)”

I do have Muriel’s cell number, should anybody care to contact her. She is still very lucid on the phone.

OUR LAND:



A drought-stricken landscape leading toward Kakamas, Northern Cape. (Photo: Ethan van Diemen)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

As this week sees the anniversary of VJ day we’ve included a piece at the end of these Ramblings on how Changi POWs experienced it.

Part 2 of the Battle of Britain piece will appear next week... back on the ranch, the great South African circus rolls on....

Our next lunch is the **Battle of Britain Ladies Lunch FRIDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 12h30 for 13h00** – *be sharp as the Flying Lions will be overhead at 13h00*. We will be able to view the fly-past from the back lawn. Bring your Ladies and guests for this special occasion. The traditional Fly-Past, performed by the Flying Lions, is always a spectacular show, and **“beautiful noise.”**

We will remind you closer to the time, but you can book from now at bookings@rafoc.org cost is still R250 pp. - EFT to confirm, using your name and “BoB Lunch” as reference.

Another event, the **Sailor Malan Documentary Premiere**, will take place this Saturday 19th August at Hyde Park Metro. Thank you to those who have booked. If you have booked, and transport is a problem, we will be able to sort something out for you. We suggest **Club ties are worn by the members** as a tribute to Sailor Malan.

Please also be reminded that the **Battle Of Britain Memorial Service** takes place at **St Margaret’s Church, Harper Road, Bedfordview the next Sunday, 17th September 2023, 11h00 for 11h30 - Invitation attached**. The Welsh Choir will be in attendance to lift the traditional Service on **“Wings of Song.”**

TAILPIECE:

"At every party there are two kinds of people - those who want to go home and those who don't. The trouble is... they are usually married to each other" (The legendary ANN LANDERS)

Everything keeps going right – Toyota!... The highest-mileage Toyota currently for sale in South Africa, that TopAuto could find, is a 2018 Hilux 2.4GD Single Cab that has a whopping 876,143km on the clock. The Hilux in question is listed at Black Impala Exclusive Auto in Pretoria North for R219 900, and surprisingly, it even has a full franchise service history despite racking up over 175,000 kilometres per year since it was first purchased. This particular Hilux was undoubtedly a workhorse in its previous life, with five dependable signs being its single-cab body, low ground clearance when compared to the Raider and Legend models, black front bumper, metal canopy with side doors, and exceptionally high mileage for its age. “A must see, this vehicle is in immaculate condition for the mileage,” states its sellers.

An avid golfer was involved in a terrible car crash and was rushed to the hospital. Just before he was put under, the surgeon popped in to see him.

"I have some good news and some bad news," says the surgeon.

"The bad news is that I have to remove your right arm!"

"Oh Lord no!" cries the man. "My golfing is over! Please Doc, what's the good news?"

"The good news is... I have another one to replace it with, but it's a woman's arm and I'll need your permission before I can go ahead with the transplant." "Go for it doc," says the man, "as long as I can play golf again."

The operation went well and a year later the man was out on the golf course when he bumped into the surgeon.

"Hi, how's the new arm?" asks the surgeon.

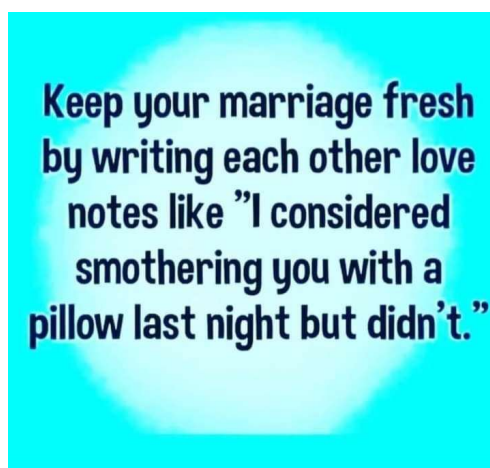
"Just great," says the golfer. "I'm playing the best golf of my life. My new arm has a much finer touch, and my putting has really improved."

"That's great," said the surgeon.

"Not only that," continued the golfer, "my handwriting has improved, I've learned how to sew my own clothes and I've even taken up painting landscapes in water-colours."

"That's unbelievable!" said the surgeon, "I'm so glad to hear the transplant was such a great success. Are you having any side effects?"

"Well, just two," said the golfer, "I have trouble parallel parking, and every time I get an erection I also get a headache".





This is what irony means. You buy an electric car to save the planet and a tree kills it!



VJ-DAY AT CHANGI POW CAMP:



A prisoner of war at Changi jail using a home-made radio set. If caught by the Japanese, he faced the death penalty. © IWM.

VJ-Day by Group Captain John S. Owen

'Bud' had only one good leg. It was made of wood and secreted a radio. That was how we knew of VE-Day. Our hopes that VJ-Day would soon follow were not great – there had been too many false dawns. But when a Japanese guard let out 'One bomb fall Singapore, all men go Paradise' we realised the end, for better or worse, was not far off. The Hiroshima news came over the air in the middle of the night. I was in a hut full of Australians. Suddenly the air was full of shouts, missiles and flailing limbs as the Aussies went berserk. Being a little chap with little to contribute to the scrummage I feigned sleep. The guards did not interfere. In the morning they seemed subdued. By some means that I cannot recall we heard that the Japanese Commander-in-Chief had declared that he would never surrender, and that if Allied troops landed in Malaya, we POWs were all for the chop. That should have dampened our spirits, but I don't think it did. To exterminate thousands of prisoners inside the jail and billeted around its walls outside would not have been a simple operation; there were likely to be plenty of opportunities for escape. We kept alert, excited and waited. A couple of weeks later 'Dutch' and I were having an early morning stroll round the camp. The Japanese

guard hut was empty, the road leading down the slope and out of the camp was void of life and beckoning. We went through the open barrier breathing freedom for the first time in three and a half years, and wondering why we were the only ones to be doing so.



In 1942 the Japanese ordered the 20,100 POWs at Changi Jail to sign an undertaking not to escape. After refusing, they were crowded into a barracks which had accommodation for 120. They signed under duress on 4 September. This photograph shows the crowded barrack square, during what became known as the 'Selerang Incident'. © IWM.

In the distance, we saw a group of people coming towards us, a party of four, one a woman in a uniform new to us. When we came face to face, 'Dutch' said "Lady, don't go in there. [They] haven't seen a woman for years!" "I think I will be all right", she replied, "my husband is coming to take the place over." Not recognising her as Edwina Mountbatten [wife of the supreme allied commander for Southeast Asia], we assumed she was referring to an Allied Camp Commandant. We were shaven-headed, naked but for patched torn shorts and flip-flops on our feet, and we must have looked like a couple of tramps. Somehow (I don't know how) we got to the bar of Raffles Hotel where we were welcomed. But strangely, we had no inclination to drink. We felt that duty required us to report to our Service. We found the RAF (Kallang, I think) busy preparing their Mosquitos for war. No-one was interested in us. We were directed to the Airmen's Mess and fed. I must surely have enjoyed that first meal in years, but I have no recollection of it! Those with the brownest knees were on the first boat out of Singapore. Sirens hooted and horns blasted as we slid into the Straits. They sounded like a farewell salute to heroes. 'Dutch' and I did not feel like heroes – very far from it. We had spent the first half of the war bombing in the Middle East and three months of the second half doing the same in the Far East. Then, in Java, the Japanese had captured our airfield. When the sirens blared as we steamed into Liverpool, our thoughts were not of heroics, but of those whom the Japanese had starved and worked into jungle graves. Those were the heroes who we will remember on VJ-Day.



Former POWs from Changi cheer as trucks bring them to hospital ships that will take them on the first leg of their journey home from Singapore. © IWM



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INVITATION

The Chairman and Members of the Johannesburg Branch of

The Royal Air Forces Association

are pleased to invite you and your partner to the

83rd Battle of Britain Memorial Service

to be held on Sunday 17th September 2023 at

St Margaret of Scotland's Anglican Church

9 Harper Rd , Bedfordview at 11h30

(Please be seated by 11h15)

and afterwards to the Chairman's Reception to be held at

The Wanderers Club

21 North Street Illovo Johannesburg

A Finger Lunch will be provided

(Cash Bar)

(Directions from the Church to the Reception attached)

As this is a Memorial Service there will be no laying of wreaths

A collection will be made during the service for the

Royal Air Forces Association Welfare Fund

**Please reply to Jim Powell at [0825712856](tel:0825712856) or e-mail jimpowell@mweb.co.za
as soon as possible with the names of those attending to facilitate catering arrangements**

We shall be pleased to welcome you there.