



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 186

27th OCTOBER 2023

GREETINGS:

Another week in this African Wonderland... scorching conditions predicted in Gauteng heatwave – but snow in Lesotho and southern Drakensberg as cold front moves in... Four people die in Mtubatuba KZN and five in the Eastern Cape as big storms wreak havoc; flooding on Garden Route... SA Policemen a target for criminals and gangsters... exponential spike in vehicle hijacking and theft and power surge damage claims due loadshedding... “Eskom appeals to users to reduce off-peak use of electricity” (for crying in a bucket!!)... Eastern Cape lawyer looting of client funds is turning Fidelity Fund into an 'insurance disaster'... “Criminals are winning the war in South Africa”... new push for coal mine on KNP boundary... Mashatile declares R37m Waterfall mansion owned by his son and son-in-law to Parliament as his own... ANC calls for closure of Israeli embassy... Malema wants to arm Hamas (go figure.)... Israeli-Hamas conflict causes deep divisions in SA... Pandor's epiphany: “Hamas started the war with Israel by attacking civilians”... Gold One mine 'hostage' drama: 3 days of underground hell, hunger, fear (and EFF meddling)... SA CEOs - what's behind their sudden departures?... Uproar as Orlando Pirates field player convicted of Assault GBH on girlfriend (Up yours, the Buccs!)... Uber's South African collapse continues... Alleged food poisoning strikes Roodepoort school... Proteas thump England and others... Springboks “do it for the fans” - through to the RWC final... Mbonambi cited for alleged “racial slur”, acquitted...anticipation building for final against All Blacks – another big weekend...

Storm Babet: floods and gales bring flooding, chaos to UK, Six killed... Unloved by party or country, Rishi longs for his old hedge fund life in California... From tropical storm to Category 5 hurricane in 12 hours: Otis makes landfall... another mass shooting - 16 reported dead in Lewiston, Maine USA... Colleagues appalled by top doctor's comments on Hamas... McDonald's become a new flashpoint in the Israel-Hamas war... the cruel, dead-eyed calculus of Hamas... Israel is preparing a 'crushing' ground invasion to doom Hamas... Gazans are “seeking a path away from Hamas”... Gaza short of everything – except rockets... Tehran's “complicity” in Hamas's massacre of 1,400 people in Israel... Inability to condemn brutal massacre of civilians by Hamas betrays inhumanity of Left... 'Sliver of hope' as Hamas releases hostages... “Extremists exploiting Britain's tolerance to plot our destruction”... Gaza diverts attention from Ukraine... Russia simulates strike after opting out of treaty... BBC plaque celebrating the “first black Briton” has been removed... Sir Bobby Charlton: 'Mr

Manchester United' dies at 82... crazy prices of 2023 Rugby World Cup final tickets... How on earth are you supposed to review a parking space? (True story)

FIRST PROTECTOR ARRIVES AT RAF WADDINGTON:



The first of 16 Protector aircraft, the RAF's latest Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS), has arrived at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire.

Equipped with a suite of surveillance equipment, Protector brings a critical global surveillance capability for the RAF. Remotely piloted from RAF Waddington, it can operate at heights up to 40,000 feet and has an endurance of over 30 hours. Arriving last month, 31 Squadron have assembled the aircraft and are preparing it for ground and air testing ahead of its anticipated In-Service date later in 2024. The first phase of Protector testing at RAF Waddington will involve ground testing of the satellite links and taxi procedures as well as take-off and landing procedures which will incorporate a circuit above RAF Waddington. The arrival of 15 further aircraft into the UK will be a phased delivery... In addition to accepting the operational roles currently undertaken by Reaper, which has provided exceptional service on operations around the clock for over 15 years, Protector will be certified to stringent NATO safety and certification standards allowing to operate in the UK and European civilian airspace. "The arrival of the UK's first Protector to the Royal Air Force is the culmination of years of work by many personnel across the whole of the MOD. The ISR Capability Team will be working with 56 Squadron, our test and evaluation experts, will put the aircraft through its paces to ensure it is ready for operational service next year, whilst the newly reformed 31 Squadron will focus on preparing to operate the aircraft in service. This is an important milestone for the Programme, Air Force and wider defence and I am delighted to see Protector at RAF Waddington." Air Commodore Alex Hicks, Senior Responsible Officer, Protector Programme. "The arrival of the UK's first Protector to the Royal Air Force is the culmination of years of work by many personnel across the whole of the MOD. The ISR Capability Team will be working with 56 Squadron, our test and evaluation experts, will put the aircraft through its paces to ensure RAF Waddington." Air Commodore Alex Hicks, Senior Responsible Officer, Protector Programme. (RAF News)

XI(FIGHTER) SQUADRON RETURN TO MALAYSIA AFTER 78 YEARS:



XI(Fighter) Squadron returned to Malaysia as part of a tri-service deployment for a major multinational exercise, 78 years after the Squadron's first visit to the country in 1945



The Squadron first deployed to the Malay Peninsula in September 1945, immediately after World War II. Their Spitfire aircraft were transported to Malaysia from Sri Lanka onboard HMS Trumpeter. Although the Squadron now flies a far more technologically advanced aircraft, their objective for this deployment remains similar; to develop international partnerships and help maintain security in the region. The Squadron's Typhoons flew nearly 7000 miles from the UK to Malaysia for the 3-week exercise with support from a Voyager aircraft which provided air-to-air refuelling and transported the support team. The four Typhoons were based at Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth, alongside Royal Australian Air Force F/A-18s and a C-27, whilst the Voyager was based in Singapore. The aircraft are working together in an air defence scenario with partners from Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. These nations form the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FPDA), which is a consultative military agreement to help maintain security in the region. As part of the exercise scenario, the Typhoons conducted a broad range of training missions, including air combat training against dissimilar aircraft such as F/A-18 Super Hornets and Russian designed SU30 MKM Flankers. This was a rare opportunity to train with these aircraft, and the Typhoons utilised their advanced suite of capabilities well, against a simulated peer threat. The exercise was coordinated by the multinational Joint Force Headquarters in Kuantan, which included a team of UK personnel who used their experience to help the exercise run smoothly and coordinate all the UK elements across Malaysia and Singapore. A platoon from the Coldstream Guards supported the land element of the exercise. They conducted a week of training with the Malaysian Army where they developed their jungle warfare skills including practical demonstrations of the threat posed by venomous snakes. They then formed a joint infantry company with Malaysian, Singaporean, Australian and New Zealander units to conduct a series of missions in the dense Malaysian jungle. A team of Royal Marines and Royal Navy personnel from 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery deployed on the exercise to conduct boat insertion training and direct naval gunfire support alongside Australian and Malaysian forces. Their boats were launched from HMNZS Aotearoa and transited to the Malaysian island of Pulau Aur to conduct a tactical beach landing. They established an observation post and at sunrise, coordinated naval gunfire support from 5 different ships. They also conducted a variety of boat transfer training, man overboard drills, beach landings and night time manoeuvres alongside partner forces. Operating fighter jets in extreme heat and humidity so far from their home base, presented challenges for the equipment and personnel, particularly those who worked outside for long periods. Furthermore, careful military planning and a slick logistics chain are essential to ensure spare parts are available to maintain the equipment. Whilst RAF pilots are used to flying in the poor weather experienced in UK winters, the tropical weather conditions in Southeast Asia present different challenges. Towering thunder clouds, unpredictable monsoons, and very hazy conditions provide a new operating challenge and valuable training. "The UK support to this exercise demonstrates our commitment to the Five Powers Defence Arrangements, which is an important defensive military arrangement aimed at maintaining security in Southeast Asia. All UK elements have successfully integrated with our Malaysian, Singaporean,

Australian and New Zealander colleagues to ensure the exercise has been a great success.”
Wing Commander Robertson, RAF Detachment Commander.

BOEING MQ-28 GHOST BAT:



In case this is the first time you have heard about the Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat, it is an uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV) built by Boeing Australia in collaboration with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The advanced drone is designed to operate alongside human-crewed aircraft and will provide vital early warning, reconnaissance, and surveillance using artificial intelligence (AI). The plan is to use the UAV to safeguard and support Australia's most vital combat aircraft like the Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet and the EA-18G Growler, an electronic warfare aircraft based on the Super Hornet. The Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat has a modular mission package system encased in its nose that can quickly be removed and swapped out for different missions, including armaments for combat and electronic warfare. Powered by a jet engine, the Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat has fighter-like maneuverability and can fly alongside human-crewed fighter aircraft. Controlled by a crewed parent aircraft, the UAV has a 2,000-mile range and a 900-mile combat radius and can be tasked with scouting and absorbing enemy fire. Developed to be a part of the Loyal Wingman uncrewed aircraft program, Boeing built a new manufacturing facility for the UAV at Wellcamp Airport (WTB) in Toowoomba, Queensland. The MQ-28 Ghost Bat is the American aerospace company's most significant investment in a new unmanned aircraft program outside the United States. Employing over 100 highly skilled workers, it has helped boost Queensland's economy after the collapse of tourism following the COVID-19 pandemic. Boeing first unveiled a full-scale prototype of the MQ-28 Ghost Bat UAV in 2019 at the Australian International Airshow at Avalon Airport (AVV), halfway between Melbourne and Geelong in Victoria. Since it was revealed, three prototypes have been built and are currently undergoing testing. The Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat made its maiden flight at RAAF Base Woomera north of Adelaide on February 27, 2021. The official naming ceremony was held southwest of Brisbane at RAAF Base Amberley on March 21, 2022. Its name comes from a native Australian bat living in the continent's northern part. It is known for hunting with other bats in a pack to detect and kill prey. The RAAF chose the Ghost Bat as it will play a similar role when deployed on missions. As of 2022, the RAAF planned to buy ten Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bats to be operational by 2025. The future of the Boeing MQ-28 Ghost Bat UAV and its success could lie with an order from the United States Air Force. The United States Navy is also heavily invested in uncrewed vehicles and envisages a future where most of its air fleet will be UAVs. (*SimpleFlying*)

WHY THE RAF RETIRED THE LOCKHEED HERCULES:



- *The Lockheed C-130 Hercules retired from the UK RAF, making way for the Airbus A400M Atlas.*
- *The C-130 Hercules had a long and successful service with the RAF, used in various operational roles and humanitarian missions.*
- *The A400M offers greater capabilities, though some unique functions of the Hercules will be lost.*

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules retired from the UK RAF in June 2023 after 56 years in service. It was a highly capable and much-liked aircraft that performed a wide range of roles over the years. Its retirement and replacement by the Airbus A400M Atlas aircraft enables the RAF to focus on a more consolidated fleet with similar capabilities. The C-130 has been a very successful military transport development from Lockheed-Martin. It was introduced in 1956, following requests from the US military for an upgrade to existing transport aircraft – larger and with a rear loading ramp. For the UK RAF, it replaced the Handley Page Hastings and Blackburn Beverley aircraft in tactical roles. It was nicknamed Hercules after the Roman mythological character known for extraordinary strength. The C-130 Hercules has seen extensive use with many militaries worldwide; over 2,500 have been delivered by Lockheed. In 1999, it was updated as the C-130J Super Hercules variant with upgraded engines, avionics, and flight deck. The C-130 saw comprehensive service with the RAF. It was based initially with four squadrons in the UK (at RAF Lyneham and RAF Fairford) and overseas in Singapore and Cyprus. Use and deployment expanded over the years, with the RAF operating 66 Hercules in total (according to data from ATDB.aero). The Hercules saw several major operational roles, including in the Falkland Islands and during the Gulf War. It has also been used for many logistic operations and humanitarian functions. With so many aircraft over the years, the Hercules' retirement has been a long time coming. The retirement of the C-130 fleet was decided mainly to help consolidate the RAF cargo fleet. The RAF has grown its newer Airbus A400M Atlas and Boeing C-17 Globemaster aircraft fleet. The RAF generally views the A400M as a more capable aircraft to take forward. Not only is it a newer design, but it also offers a higher capacity and longer range. Nevertheless, specific niche capabilities of the Hercules will be lost, such as performing boat drops for the Royal Marines. The decision, though, was made to take the risk of losing such capabilities and switch operations to the A400M. Speaking about the retirement and the capabilities of the A400M, the then UK Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said: "I have heard these tired arguments that what we really need to do is keep the Hercules and get rid of the A400. The A400 outperforms the Hercules on most types - it has got a longer range, bigger capacity, it can land in the same area, in fact it can land in shorter distances." The RAF withdrew the last of its original

variant Hercules aircraft in 2013. The C-130J Super Hercules remained in service after this (by 2021, down to a fleet of just 14 aircraft), with the type finally fully retired in June 2023. The final retirement in the UK was marked with an impressive Farewell Tour. On June 14th, 2023, three C-130J Super Hercules aircraft flew an all-day route from RAF Brize Norton, covering a large part of the UK.

SAAF IN CRISIS:

For those of us who served in or with the SAAF, these are sad days indeed as we watch the unravelling of what was once a proud Air Force, with a superb record in war and peace... The continued emasculation of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) was vividly brought to the fore by Defence and Military Veterans Minister Thandi Modise when answering a Parliamentary question. Her undated response to Kobus Marais, the Democratic Alliance (DA) shadow minister for her portfolio, is specific to the SA Air Force (SAAF) and reveals crisis level rates of serviceability. As Marais notes in his response yesterday (18 October), "most concerning" is that "a staggering 85% of the SAAF's aircraft fleet is currently out of action, leaving the nation vulnerable to security threats." The majority of the SAAF fleet is grounded due to "a lack of spares or budget constraints to conduct the necessary repairs." Modise's reply also informs him unavailability of aircraft implies SAAF defence readiness is "compromised" with aircrew having to regain currency and "the lack of aircraft availability poses a challenge." She goes further stating: "The challenge is the severe unavailability of funds to place contracts and it's not as a result of non-performance by Armscor or SAAF. Armscor had to engage with contractors within limited available funds and, in numerous instances, has not yielded positive results." Marais' reaction to Modise's reply is scathing, pointing the finger at government mismanagement and "lack of political will and neglect" as severely compromising SANDF capabilities. He goes as far as calling it "a national crisis" with the "diminishing strength" of South Africa's military capability posing "a severe risk". That South Africa's air defence capability, vested in Lieutenant General Wiseman Mbambo's SAAF, cannot put more than half its aircraft into the air leaves the country "exposed and vulnerable." R1 billion has been made available from National Treasury to get the C-130BZ fleet airworthy, but there are no maintenance contracts in place for the C-47TP, Cessna Caravan or King Air, although Armscor is in the process of appointing a King Air maintenance contractor. Defence expert Dean Wingrin pointed out that no air force has a 100% serviceability rate, but around 15% for the SAAF "is shocking." The major cause, he said, is an insufficient defence budget, ineffectual and inefficient procurement process and a lack of political will and support. "I suppose the lack of understanding by Treasury of the unique defence environment does not help either," he added. (*DefenceWeb*)



AKBAR AL BAKER DEPARTS QATAR:



(Every picture tells a story...) Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker is leaving his role after 27 years in post.

On February 1, 2023, it was finally over. Qatar and Airbus Industrie announced an Amicable settlement of their unprecedented legal dispute. The airline had sued the manufacturer over surface degradation issues on many of the carrier's Airbus A350s. Similar issues had been seen by other airlines and were dealt with quietly. Not in this case: Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker, known for rejecting aircraft deliveries over tiny cabin imperfections, would not have it. Airbus was going to fix this or pay dearly. He stopped taking more A350s and brought the case in front of a London court while the Qatari Civil Aviation Authority grounded the affected aircraft. More escalation? Impossible... As it turned out, the dispute was the last public drama of an exciting career spanning 27 years as CEO at the airline. Eight months later, the airline announced, "the appointment of a new group chief executive," frankly, someone even insiders did not know: Badr Mohammed Al Meer, so far chief operating officer of Doha's Hamad International Airport. In other words: Akbar will be gone very soon. The change will become effective on Nov. 5, though industry sources say the leadership transition will continue until the beginning of next year. Al Baker, 62, is the longest-lasting current CEO of a major airline. It was also him who made Qatar Airways into a major airline in the first place, having taken it over with only a few aircraft in its fleet. Al Baker turned Qatar into a second Emirates—similar, but different. The airline is operating a large hub connecting long-haul services to long-haul. Unlike Emirates, it also has a narrowbody fleet and is a member of one of the global alliances, Oneworld, and has stakes in several carriers abroad—among them Cathay Pacific, China Southern Airlines, International Airlines Group and LATAM Airlines. Qatar Airways' status of one of the most important buyers of aircraft, connected with its shareholdings, made Al Baker one of the most powerful figures in the industry. His departure likely marks the beginning of fundamental change for the airline. According to industry sources, Al Baker did not leave voluntarily at this time. People who know him well say he would have liked to continue for longer and would have been very interested in becoming chairman of the airline. But his superiors, mainly Chairman Saad Sherida Al Kaabi - a powerful figure who is also Qatar's energy minister - thought otherwise. To this day, Al Baker micromanaged essentially everything of relevance at Qatar Airways. When his airline hosted the IATA annual general assembly in 2014, he would personally drive CEOs of other airlines around in a golf cart through the airport terminal, making sure they arrived at their gates comfortably in the middle of the night. A few days before, he had broken his arm in a car accident. But he simply would not delegate anything. (*Aviation Week*)

GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECK FOUND AFTER 128 YEARS:



A team of documentary filmmakers discovered a long-lost shipwreck — all thanks to thousands of invasive mussels.

Husband and wife-team, Yvonne Drebert and Zack Melnick, who specialise in underwater videography, were filming a feature-length documentary when they made the discovery. They found the vessel, named “The Africa”, about 275 feet down on the bed of Lake Huron near the Saugeen-Bruce Peninsula in June. The sight of a mass of quagga mussels were what caught their attention. “We received a tip that scientists doing an offshore fish survey had noticed an anomaly on their sonar readout, basically an unusual bump on an otherwise flat lakebed,” Mr Melnick said in a statement. Ms Drebert didn’t expect to find anything special but thought it would at least be “a fun Saturday boat ride.” “We honestly expected to find a pile of rocks,” she said.



The film-maker spoke to *The Independent* about the discovery. “We spend a lot of time on the water, looking around with our ROV. We’ve come across some pretty amazing underwater landscape and aquatic life, but honestly - nothing can really prepare you for coming upon a shipwreck that no one has laid eyes on in 128 years,” she said. “we began to understand that we’d really stumbled on something extraordinary.” They used a remotely-operated vehicle (ROV), which carries a high-resolution camera system. “We were down for only a few minutes when a huge structure loomed up from the depths – it was a shipwreck,” said Mr Melnick. “We couldn’t believe it.” Yet while the invasive mussels were the trail to the ship’s discovery they are also the reason that the wreck will eventually be destroyed. The mussels have been attaching themselves to every single wreck in the Great Lakes - an issue that the couple’s documentary, titled *All Too Clear*, was focused on - the mussels burrow into the wood and build on top of each other until they eventually crush shipwrecks. They also produce acid, which can corrode steel and iron on the ships. (*Independent, Telegraph*)

UNION SPIRIT:



A taste of nostalgia...

"As far as I can remember it was made in the 60s from the waste pulp of sugar cane. I can remember my late father showing us the hand operated pumps in Scottburgh, they had two glass "bottles" that took a gallon each with a dial in the middle that counted the bottles. A hand operated lever was used to pump the fuel from the tanks to each bottle and when this was full the pump changed over to the empty bottle and the full one drained in to the tank of the vehicle. Apparently the car did not run so well with this lot and the Oubaas only put in two gallons for the fun of it." "Those pumps were used for petrol as well, probably something similar to the two tall pumps in the pic. - *(Matjiesfontein)* I am still trying to find a pump like this. But alas, nobody that has one, wants to sell his." "I remember my father using Union spirit in the 50's. We lived on the East Rand. There was one garage in Jhb that sold it. Whenever we made a trip to Jhb my father would stop at this garage and fill his Ford V8 - smelt good - even to an 8 year old . And dad claimed the car ran smoother." We use to buy all petrol from these pumps (or in 1 gallon tins - Atlantic). Each tube was exactly 1 gallon. So you could not fill up the tank but had to buy, say 4 gallons. When starting to pump *(by hand)* one tube would fill up first and while that was released into the tank the other tube was filling up. The problem was one of judgement - you could not buy half a gallon, so if the tank was full before the last tube was empty it was waste." "Union Spirits: In the late 60's being a student at Stellenbosch I used to, only sometimes, add 1 gallon to my Fiat Sable's tank. We were told that it was of a higher octane. It definitely increased performance, burning the exhaust white and in the same time wrecked spark plugs".

"Can remember Union Spirits, made from sugar cane and had a higher octane rating than petrol and was a bit cheaper, used to mix it with petrol to avoid having to adjust the timing on the car at the coast *(those days only one octane rating available)*" "Used to be popular in the townships and was often used in skokiaan *(Zulu witblits)*" "We are moving into history, so if I am mistaken please excuse me. Union Spirits was sold at filling station (then called Garages) and as far i can remember it was more or less the same price as petrol, because petrol was petrol - no octanes etc. The problem was that using it without mixing in low percentage would ruin your engine in no time. The price of petrol was something like R0.32 per gallon, that is 7 cents per litre. I used to drive from Stellenbosch to Outjo, Namibia, for under R30.00" Them were the days. *PS: AND A BLACK LABEL SOLD FOR 11 CENT and R2000 was more than enough for a year at Varsity including everything, girls, booze etc.*" "Yeah, I can remember Union. I also think you had to mix it with petrol otherwise the engine would not last long. My dad used it sometimes in his Hudson Terraplane and bought it at Galgut's Garage in Voortrekkerweg Pretoria."

“Used to go to the Christmas party at the one in Rietondale for years with my Dad.” “Regarding that old handpumps. My neighbour has got one standing in his workshop. It is still fully functional and came from the Shell petrol station in Springbok. When they upgraded, he got it somehow.” “Windsor Motors in Parow used to sell Union Spirits here in the Cape. Often mixed it with petrol and it really made my Zephyr 6 MK3 fly. Or so I liked to believe.” “There was a garage in Jeppe (Jhb) corner Marshall and John Page drive where in 1978/9 one could still get Union Spirits. I used to fill the Alfa up there regularly in those days and ran it on neat Union Spirits often. It had no ill effect and it cost about 10% more per litre than what the price of premium was. It did make a difference, my robot to robot times down Commissioner Street confirmed it. You had to retard the ignition timing to get the car to start if you ran on Union Spirits, else the car just would not start.” I once had to syphon petrol out to help a buddy who ran out of fuel, and for hours afterwards I had a sweet taste on my lips from the Union Spirits. It was made from sugar cane waste down in Natal South Coast and trucked up to Jhb. In the late seventies that was the only place I knew of that used to stock it. It was sold from a red pump that was stationed on the one end of the filling station, near the tyre stripping machine, the name "Union" painted in yellow at 45 degrees across the front of the pump. I cannot however remember the octane rating of the fuel. “I remember "Union" fuel sold at the red pump at the petrol station close to our house in Moore Road. It was apparently a by-product of Molasses. Used in petrol cars at the ratio of 2 parts petrol to 1 part Union.” If you want to follow this thread it's at: <https://www.4x4community.co.za/forum/showthread.php/78871-Union-Motor-Spirit>

E-TOLLS ARE HISTORY” – But you’ll have to keep paying... MASHONISHAS – SA LOAN SHARKS:

South Africans are governed in a way that implies they should seek permission rather than assuming that anything that is not violent is allowed. There are so many regulations on what we can do in our everyday lives that before doing something, we are learning to ask permission first. This is most apparent in business and is most acute in the financial services sector, an example being the business of providing credit.

To be a credit provider in South Africa, one is required to register with the National Credit Regulator (NCR), a body created under the National Credit Act. This applies to everyone regardless of how small their business is, even if it's just an individual offering credit, a micro- lending business or a bank with billions in revenue. When you go to the NCR's website, it's not very clear what exactly is required to register as a credit provider, only that it is required. Frequent mention is made of the Act and the regulations. How likely is it that an ordinary pensioner can navigate these requirements? The requirements themselves are unrealistic. Credit providers are required to submit financial statements that are verified by auditors and to submit compliance reports on a regular basis to the NCR. They are required to determine whether their customers can afford the loan before giving it to them. They are also required to charge regulated interest rates and fees for the loan, as per the regulations. All of these requirements, and many more, support the existence of the black-market credit industry, the so-called Mashonisas. Mashonisas do not have all these compliance burdens; they can simply respond to the market instead of government requirements. According to one study conducted by Wonga in Khayelitsha in 2018, there were as many as one Mashonisa per 100 households. The more the government restricts the availability of credit through formal/legal means, the more lucrative being a Mashonisa will be. In addition to the NCR requirements, credit providers have to comply with FICA requirements and register with SARS. SARS registration in particular is a common motivator for staying in the informal sector for many people. If compliance is onerous, then compliance will just become impossible for some people, and black markets will be the result. The tragedy is that according to the Wonga study, Mashonisas charge much higher interest rates than

the regulations allow. Rates of 30-50% are common. This is typically within one month, so we're talking about annual rates of more than 360 -600%. If the government wants to address this, more legislation and regulations are not the answer, Mashonisas need competition from the legal markets, since they only charge such high interest rates in response to the risks they face from lending out unsecured funds to people who can't get the credit from cheaper, formal options.

MEMBERS WRITE:

Dave Evans in Connecticut USA writes:

Thanks for this, gents - a great read, as always. The following isn't exactly earth shattering news, but feel free to use any of it if you wish: Very little news from here. Have I mentioned that we finally bought a house a couple of months ago, after a year- long hunt for something we liked that we could afford? (With rands at 18 or 19 to the dollar...) We're settling in now and still happy that our choice was good. We get a fair bit of 'GA' over, as there's a small airfield nearby, and the occasional Embraer, 737 or A320 on its way to the Hartford airport - Bradley. Also very occasional military stuff; Chinooks, a Blackhawk a couple of days ago, and last week, a 'Jolly Green Giant' (CH53) which circled our area for some reason about five times over the space of 30 minutes. Our grandson also claims to have seen a Grumman Hawkeye a couple of weeks ago; his aircraft recognition is good, and it's a very distinctive aircraft, of course, so we're inclined to believe him, although what it was doing here, I can't imagine - we are a very long way from any US naval presence. Aren't they all in the Eastern Mediterranean now, anyway? Our two sons are both in the aero industry, as you will know. Simon, with Pratt & Whitney, is just back from a visit to Munich and Bristol, and was in Greece a couple of weeks earlier. Tony, who is with Airbus in San Francisco, was in Spain last week - they have a much more interesting life than we do... The other pastime here is watching the insanity in American politics. I've been of the view for many years that the system here was designed as a wreck, and current events are accentuating my opinion. Trump is still the hero of the right, despite facing dozens of criminal charges - he may well be in jail when the elections come round in a year's time. His latest ploy was that he can't be prosecuted for those, because he has 'presidential immunity' - the courts seem to have just thrown that out... The Republicans have a small majority in the lower house, and have just thrown out their own speaker, and then failed to get enough votes from their own party to elect either of the two they put forward as replacements. If I made this up, you wouldn't believe me...

2023 15TH FAI WORLD ADVANCED AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS:



Even as we wish the Springboks success against the All Blacks in the Rugby World Cup Final, Let's not forget our other Springboks "Going for Gold" in the 2023 FAI World Advanced Aerobatic Championships at Jean Field in Nevada, Las Vegas. Father and son Barry and Tristan Eeles and Elton Bondi, seen here flying the flag in their Green Jackets, are competing now, 24th October to 4th November 2023. They can be found regularly training with the Sport Aerobatic Club at Vereeniging Airfield. Fly Safe, and give it horns, Boys!

CHEERS FOR NOW:

While here on the Highveld we are enjoying the Spring weather, our countrymen on the Cape S Coast and E Cape have been enduring some severe weather, downpours and flooding... we are to enjoy a heat wave this weekend, while a cold front brings more rain, cold and snow to the South-western and Eastern Cape, We wish our 'Boks every success in the final of the Rugby World Cup and in the Aerobatic Championships, and the Proteas in the Cricket World Cup. Enjoy the nostalgia of Union Spirit, Flying Flatbed, Flying Boats, the unique "Kandahar" Railway gun at Simonstown, and straw bales on London's Millennium Bridge.

Our next **Ladies Lunch** will be **next Friday 10 November, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers...** we will lay wreaths at the Wall of Remembrance just before lunch, as has been our practice. Price remains R250 per head and we request you to pay by EFT to our account - Nedbank - Melrose Arch - Br: 19 66 05 - Account 19 66 278 063. Use your name and "November Lunch" as reference, please... Please also note that we are committed to pay for the number of meals booked.

We were looking forward to having the incoming UK Defence Adviser, Colonel Conor, as our guest and speaker, however, the "exigencies of the Service" prevail and he will be elsewhere on the day. We look forward to meeting him at a future lunch. Bring your Ladies and guests along to mark Remembrance Day in convivial company. Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible...

TAILPIECE:

Goblins terrorise Beitbridge teachers...

SIX Tshabili Primary School female teachers in Beitbridge East have fled their workplace after they were allegedly sexually abused by goblins. The teachers claimed they were sexually violated at night. Some of the victims have reportedly refused to return to the school, located about 60km east of the border town, until the school has been spiritually cleansed. Beitbridge district development co-ordinator Sikhangezile Mafu-Moyo confirmed that she was aware of the gory developments but referred further questions to the Primary and Secondary Education ministry. "I understand a meeting is on tomorrow (today) between my office, education officials, the school staff and the community. I am in Bulawayo on a different assignment but I have been informed of the issue," she said. District education officer Freedom Muleya said he could not give details but confirmed that a meeting was to be convened over the issue. "Officials from our office will attend the meeting. This is not an issue our office can solve, it's something to do with the community, traditional leadership and the local authority. These reports were made as early as January," he said. It is reported that the victims on Thursday reported at the district education offices, the local district council offices and Mafu-Moyo's office sharing their misery on the abusive goblins. In June 2022, Majili Primary School in Bubi district, Matabeleland North province, was shut following a similar incident.

Southern Eye: ©Hanyani News Online

MATT

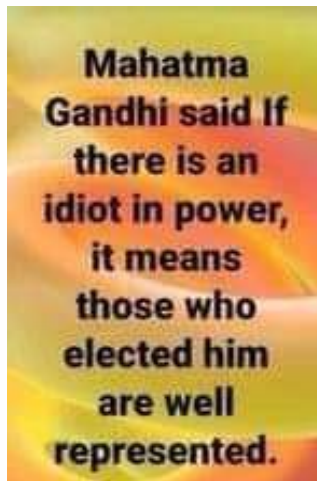


'Don't bother, they're blowing themselves up'

MATT

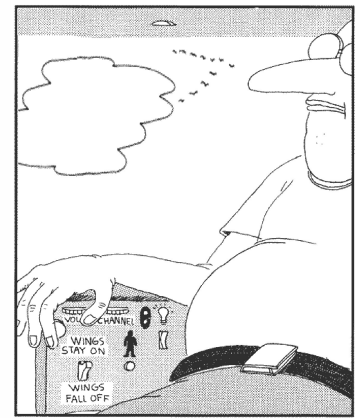


'It's an up and coming area. There's an Italian deli, a Spanish tapas bar and a vibrant community of French bed bugs'





Harry and Meghan are shown living a hard life of lying by the pool.



Fumbling for his sequence card, Tom unwittingly instigates a minor disaster....

FLYING FLATBED

In 1980, a small team of engineers from Lockheed explored a bizarre concept, the likes of which had never been studied before. The group recognized that the transport aircraft category traditionally comprised three separate subcategories—passenger, cargo, and outsized cargo. It then created a concept that would combine all three. Aptly called the “Flatbed,” the concept aircraft would utilize an open platform and various modules to carry a wide variety of loads ranging from military equipment to passengers.



Figure 5b Flatbed With Outsize Civil Vehicles

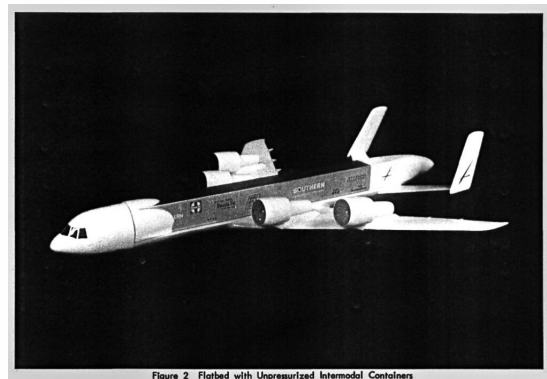


Figure 2 Flatbed with Unpressurized Intermodal Containers

By utilizing a swing-away nose, removable fairing, and retractable ramps, heavy equipment could be driven onto and off the cargo platform. [Credit: Lockheed]

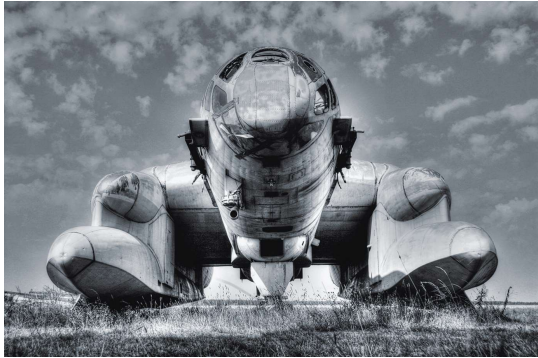
The most unconventional aspect of the Flatbed was the proposal that large pieces of military equipment be carried out in the open, completely unsheltered from the wind and elements. The team selected two sample military vehicles for the initial study, an XM-1 tank and an M60 bridge launcher, weighing 115,000 and 120,000 pounds, respectively. The big question was could this sort of outsized cargo effectively be carried out in the open at hundreds of miles per hour? The group got to work on the drawing board and in the wind tunnel to answer that and explore how the Flatbed might serve as a multifunctional, “do-it-all” transport solution. The baseline Flatbed aircraft was a low-wing, turbofan-powered aircraft approximately the same size and weight as an Airbus A300. It utilized four CFM-56 engines, as found on the Airbus A320, Boeing 737, and Boeing KC-135R Stratotanker, and was optimized for a 2,600 nm range. Recognizing that carrying outsized cargo such as tanks out in the open would present serious drag and fuel-burn penalties, the team did not hedge its bets on this configuration alone. Instead, it designed the Flatbed to accept a variety of pressurized and unpressurized containers as well as a passenger module. The entire nose section of the aircraft was hinged, capable of being swung to the side to enable modules and vehicles to be quickly and

easily loaded and unloaded using a variety of ramps, rollers, and latches. Raised engine pylons extending above the wing rather than below enabled shorter landing gear and a low, 7-foot cargo bed height. With the cargo and passenger modules, the Flatbed was shown to be “generally fuel efficient in comparison with reference airplanes,” burning approximately 11 percent more fuel than a conventional design and targeting a 0.82 Mach cruise speed in these configurations. The primary benefit was presented as efficiency with regard to loading and unloading, particularly in the passenger configuration. In this role, the team proposed an entire restructuring of point-to-point travel. By utilizing a large number of removable 180-seat modules, the passengers could board their module in a city center some distance away from their departure airport. Like multimodal containers, the module could be loaded onto a short-distance commuter train for transport to the airport, where it would be expeditiously loaded onto the waiting aircraft. The team proposed that this speedy loading and unloading of passengers would enable quick turns and high aircraft utilization. Similarly, it touted the ability of multimodal containers and even train cars to be quickly rolled onto and off the Flatbed. But from the perspective of aircraft design in general and aerodynamics in particular, the most intriguing aspect of the Flatbed concept was the carrying of outsize cargo out in the open. Using scale models of both the Flatbed and tank and bridge launcher, aerodynamicists studied drag figures and later translated the data into speed and fuel-burn figures. The resulting performance numbers indicated the concept was surprisingly plausible. Naturally, carrying external cargo was found to drastically increase drag compared to carrying the aerodynamically slick cargo and passenger modules. At higher altitudes, carrying the tank or bridge launcher would result in a 20 percent increase in fuel burn. At a lower 18,000 feet cruising altitude, this increased to approximately 55 percent. The external cargo also lowered the cruise speed to 0.5-0.6 Mach. The team proposed multiple solutions to address the increased fuel burn. At the time of the study, engine manufacturers were looking at unducted “propfan” engines to improve fuel efficiency, and the team suggested exploring these new engines for the Flatbed. It also explored the possibility of “vortex control,” a system that introduced suction at the forward end of the cargo bed to smooth the air flowing around the back of the cockpit section, thus reducing drag. Ice accumulation on external cargo was identified as one potential challenge worthy of additional study. Engineers did observe that in-flight icing “does not appear to present a major problem,” however, as ice formation occurs only on the front part of the aircraft components. By tucking in the external cargo behind the cockpit section, it appeared to be sufficiently shielded from ice. While the Flatbed concept would never materialize beyond static and wind-tunnel models, the team partnered with NASA to publish a detailed initial study that evaluated the feasibility of the unconventional concept. The study ultimately concluded that the concept was both technically and economically feasible. They reasoned that the smaller size and increased versatility of such an aircraft would make it inherently more efficient to operate compared to existing military cargo aircraft. Despite the overall finding that the Flatbed concept was worthy of additional examination, however, no such study ever occurred. The Lockheed Flatbed concept fizzled out after the publication of the NASA report. (*Flying, via Pilots Post and Bruce Prescott*)

FLYING BOATS

Seven years after the Wright Brothers’ controlled, powered flight in 1903, a Frenchman named Henri Fabre made the first successful flight in an airplane built to operate exclusively from the water, using a float on the fuselage and one on each wing. In 1914, Glenn Curtiss built the first flying boat, on which the fuselage and main float were one and the same, hoping to use it for the world’s first transatlantic flight - until the outbreak of World War I postponed that plan. During and after World War I, the flying boat came into vogue as the most efficient means of flying record loads of parcels or passengers, leading to a long line of commercial aircraft that spanned oceans. Eventually,

wheeled, jet-powered airplanes eclipsed them, but in their prime - in the 1920s and '30s - these elegant giants plied the airways, offering a luxurious means of swift travel to those who could afford the fare. Among the most successful were those bearing the names of Boeing, Sikorsky, Short Brothers, Saunders-Roe and Latecoere. Not all of them were successful, and the largest of them all only flew once because the times had passed it by, rendering it obsolescent before it flew. Here are a couple of near misses and outright belly flops, and successes. Aviation buffs will undoubtedly recall other favourite also-rans from the flying boat dustbin. (*HistoryNet*)



Gargantuan and bizarre, the Bartini-Beriev VVA-14 failed on many levels. Consolidated's rugged PBY set a standard for flying boats and amphibians.

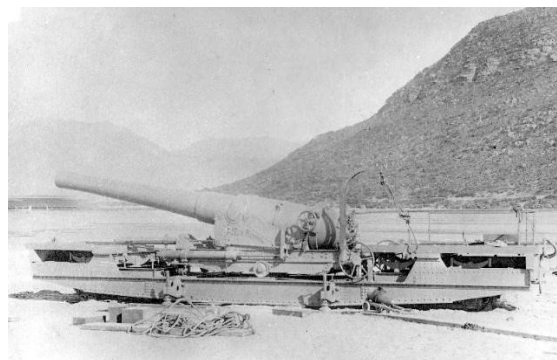


The Latécoère 631 may have been the ultimate flying boat airliner. The Mars JRM, a giant flying boat designed 70 years ago, still but its service record left a lot to be desired serves a vital role in the 21st century.

SIMONSTOWN SIDINGS



Test firing of the 9.2 inch gun in 1902



"Kandahar" on Glencairn Siding

When the railway from Cape Town reached Simon's Town in 1890 it resulted in major changes to life in the town - the journey now taking only a few hours instead of at least a whole day. It was a substantial benefit to the only major industry in the Southern Peninsula at that time, the Royal Naval Dockyard. There was a proposal to extend the line with a siding into the Dockyard itself but, unfortunately, this never materialised and all freight had to be unloaded into the goods store (now

offices of a dive school) and then transferred by road. It is probable that, as the siding would have to pass through the grounds of Admiralty House, it was not considered a viable option! At the opening ceremony in 1890 it was, however, suggested that the line would be extended the 7ks to Miller's Point – but this, too, did not materialise. Nevertheless, access to the railway enabled new industries to be established in the South Peninsula-including the Glencairn Quarry, Glass Factory and Marine Oil Refinery-which all needed to be serviced by railway sidings-now gone. In 1902 the Glencairn siding had been used for the test firing of a 9.2 inch gun which had been modified in the Salt River Cape Government Railway Workshops to be carried on a Type U7 well wagon - this was needed as a result of the lack of heavy artillery for the British forces during the Second Anglo Boer War (South African War). It was at the time the heaviest weapon ever mounted on railway wagon and the forerunner of the massive rail- guns used in both World Wars. Originally named "Sir Redvers" after Sir Redvers Buller, it was later changed to Kandahar after Lord Roberts of Kandahar. It was intended to use it against the Pretoria fortifications but, when Pretoria was left undefended by the Boers, it travelled to Belfast in the Eastern Transvaal. It arrived after peace had been declared on 31 May 1902 and was never used in combat. (*History Portal*)

MILLENNIUM BRIDGE WORKERS HANG STRAW BALES



In accordance with ancient tradition (and Port of London Thames bylaws), a bundle of straw is dangled from the Millennium Bridge on the Thames. Photograph: City Bridge Foundation/X

Workers on London's Millennium Bridge are hanging a bale of straw under the structure after triggering an ancient bylaw. Repair works to the footbridge mean straw must be dangled to warn oncoming boats of the work going on beneath it. The large bale, which these days is lowered on climbing rope by workers in hi-vis jackets, is intended to alert river traffic of the reduced headroom. Urgent repair and cleaning work means the bridge was closed on Saturday for three weeks, until 5 November. According to the Port of London Thames By-laws, clause 36.2: "When the headroom of an arch or span of a bridge is reduced from its usual limits, but that arch or span is not closed to navigation, the person in control of the bridge must suspend from the centre of that arch or span by day a bundle of straw large enough to be conspicuous and by night a white light." Part of the bridge had started to degrade and a layer of membrane needed to be replaced, according to the City Bridge Foundation, a charity that looks after London's five major Thames crossings. The repairs are due to take place 24 hours a day to try to complete them quickly. "This is one of those quirky traditions London is famous for, but it also does serve a practical purpose, to warn shipping when the headroom under a bridge span is reduced," a City Bridge Foundation spokesperson told City AM. "The bundle of straw is lowered by our contractor when they're doing work under the bridge, in this

case to install netting ahead of work to replace the separation layer between the aluminium bridge deck and the steel structure underneath. As a 900-year-old charity which maintains five Thames crossings and is London's biggest independent charity funder, we're proud of the part we've played in the history of London and our modern day role looking after some of the capital's key transport infrastructure." The Millennium Bridge was the first new pedestrian bridge to be built across the Thames for more than a century, linking the City of London at St Paul's Cathedral with the Tate Modern gallery at Bankside. It wobbled so much on its opening day in June 2000 it had to close until February 2002 while supportive struts were fitted. Before its most recent closure, an artist who paints on pieces of discarded chewing gum and displays these on the bridge has pleaded for his works to be saved, after being told most of them will be removed during the works. (*Guardian*)