



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 208 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024

### GREETINGS:

James Clarke, that institution of 'The Star' newspaper for many years, has passed away at the age of 90 after a stroke – see the Obituary below... Election fever takes hold in SA and now UK... full moon this Thursday – and we're all moonstruck... Zuma struck from ballot by Concourt: "respect for the rule of law" – what next?... Over 1.2 million calls to Gauteng 10111 line dropped in a year... SA truckers strike averted – for now... massive queues of SA voters at South Africa House in London... George building disaster exposes blind spots (and what about the construction mafia?)... N1 sinkhole repairs in Centurion hit massive roadblock... eThekweni water and sanitation is bankrupt... Pikitup workers trash Joburg... (another) attempted coup in DRC... Bulls, Lions and Stormers still in URC running, Sharks out - plagued by doom and gloom... Five reasons why ducks might not be your perfect pet...

UK Snap election called... D-Day anniversary "a time to reflect on security of Europe": General Lord Dannatt... Iranian helicopter crash kills President Raisi and Minister of Defence - State funeral... Biden attacks request by ICC prosecutor for Israeli arrests as "outrageous"... "A free Palestine would be a Taliban-like state", says Salman Rushdie... Zelenskiy asks Nato – "shoot down Russian missiles in our skies"... Contaminated blood scandal rocks UK... Starmer leaves UKTV Show Sunday Brunch after "brutal swipe"... proof that mass migration is making Brits poorer... sanctioned Russian tankers now operating under Eswatini (Swazi) flag – go figure... Verstappen does the Italian job...

### KING CHARLES STEPS IN:

King Charles III has taken on two key honorary roles with the RAF as he marks the first anniversary of his reign. Buckingham Palace announced that His Majesty has become patron of the RAF Museum and the Royal Air Force Association in a move which celebrates his lifelong links with the Service. It comes after a review of more than 1,000 Royal Patronages conducted by the Royal Household. Prince Philip, the late Duke of Edinburgh, was Royal Patron of the RAF Museum from 1968 until his death in 2021. A museum spokesman said: "We are honoured and thrilled to announce

that His Majesty King Charles III has graciously accepted the role of Royal Patron for the RAF Museum. Nick Bunting, Secretary General for the Royal Air Forces Association, said: “We are immensely proud to have His Majesty the King as the new Patron of the RAF Association.

### **ROYAL AUXILIARY AIR FORCE 100TH ANNIVERSARY:**

On 17 May 2024, thousands of spectators gathered in front of Buckingham Palace to see the King’s Colour Squadron of the Royal Air Force and Colour Parties from nine Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) squadrons celebrate 100 years of volunteer reserve service in the RAF by taking part in a unique parade. The Sovereign’s Colour of the RAuxAF was marched before the HRH Duke of Gloucester (Honorary Air Commodore in Chief of the RAuxAF), followed by the Squadron Standards of 502 (Ulster) Squadron, 600 (City of London) Squadron, 601 (County of London) Squadron, 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron, 605 (County of Warwickshire) Squadron, 2503 (City of Lincoln) Squadron, 2620 (County of Norfolk) Squadron, 2622 (Highland) Squadron, 2623 (East Anglian) Squadron, and led by the Band of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force from RAF Cranwell.



The Royal Auxiliary Air Force is the reserve element of the Royal Air Force whose members contribute their spare time service to the defence of this country. It can trace its roots back to the Auxiliary Air Force (AAF) and RAF Special Reserve founded in 1924 to provide trained personnel to support the RAF wherever it is deployed. Today, people are joining the RAuxAF to lend their civilian experience, skills and expertise to the RAF in such diverse fields as medicine, media, intelligence, music, cyber and even space as this year saw the first RAuxAF Space Flights stand-up to support the work of UK Space Command. The service has clearly come a long way in 100 years and is as important and relevant today as ever it was to the defence of our nation’s interests.

## **RAF TYPHOONS JOIN POLISH F-16S FOR ASTRAL KNIGHT:**

Royal Air Force Typhoons from 140 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW), deployed to Romania on enhanced Air Policing have joined Exercise Astral Knight 24, conducting an Integrated Air & Missile Defense (IAMD) exercise in Poland. More than 50 serving personnel from 140 EAW flew out from Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase to the 31st Air Base in Krzesiny, commonly known as Poznań-Krzesiny Airport, to support 3 Typhoons from IX(Bomber) Squadron performing joint air operations with the Polish Air Force F-16's. Exercise Astral Knight 24 has been identified as being part of the Large-Scale Global Exercise (LSGE) which drives requirement to present a multi-regional Integrated Air & Missile Defense dilemma to the Combined Forces Commander. With 5000 personnel from six nations, Astral Knight is the capstone IAMD exercise with the UK contingent working alongside their US, Lithuanian, Greek, Danish and Polish counterparts as we continue to strengthen our links with the Baltic states. "Our role in the exercise is conducting DCA, which stands for Defensive Counter Air, we're going up and acting in very much defensive posture against a simulated attack on European countries.



"There's been a lot of nations contributing to this exercise, and we've all learned a lot from each other on how to move forward as part of NATO. It has been a very successful mission and the Polish Air Force have supported us fantastically. We're very grateful for all their support throughout the exercise, and we look forward to working with them again in the near future." Flight Lieutenant Clarke, RAF Typhoon Pilot. (*RAF News*)

## **SHIP'S BELL RECOVERED AND RETURNED TO US NAVY:**

An American ship's bell recovered from the seabed by the MOD's specialists in marine operations has been returned to the United States Navy.

Defence Equipment & Support's Salvage and Marine Operations (Salmo) team retrieved the bell from the depths of the ocean 40 miles south of the Scilly Isles, 107 years after the ship went down, costing the lives of 64 men.

The bell belonged to USS Jacob Jones, which was torpedoed by the Imperial German Navy submarine U-53, becoming the first destroyer in US history to be lost to enemy action.

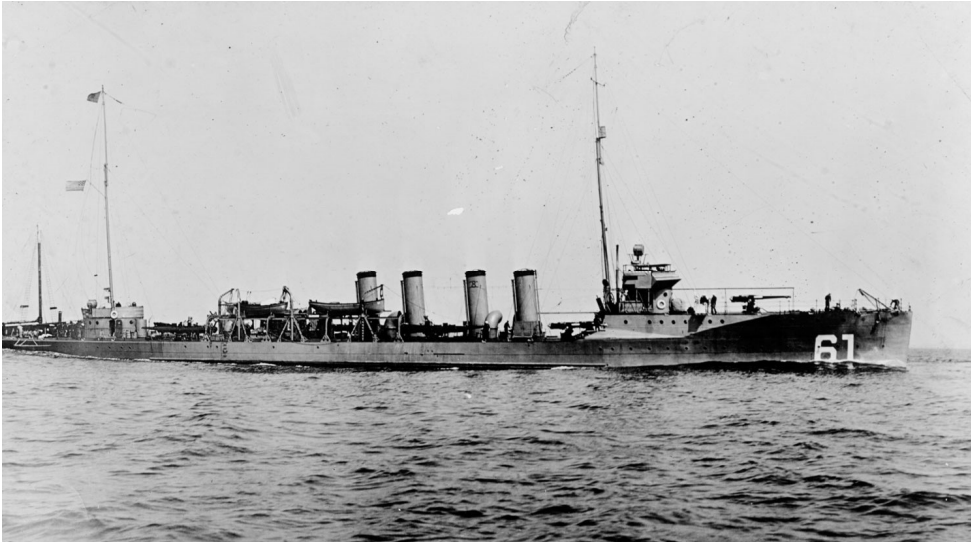


Admiral James W Kilby, the US Navy's Vice Chief of Naval Operations, received the bell in a handover ceremony at Lancaster House in London.

Andy Liddell, the head of Salmo, said: "Playing a pivotal role in returning this historic bell to US soil is something we can all be proud of and is yet another example of the special relationship between our two nations".

"While this is a momentous occasion, this handover ceremony is also a poignant reminder of the brave allies who defended our nation and, importantly, those who lost their lives in doing so."

*(ForcesNet)*



*USS Jacob Jones' bell found 40 miles south of the Scilly Isles (Picture: Crown Copyright)*

### **WARRANT OFFICER Kate ORCHARD WAAF (retd):**



A WWII plotter who helped defend India against Japanese bomber raids has marked her 102nd birthday alongside serving members of her local RAF station at St Mawgan.

India-born WO Kate Orchard and her two sisters volunteered for duty with the Women's Auxiliary Corps in 1941, working around the clock to track enemy aircraft targeting industrial sites supporting the Allied war effort. She was joined by four generations of her family, and a traditional Cornish choir and St Mawgan personnel deployed to the Remote Radar Head at Portreath to mark her birthday. Reminiscing about her wartime service, Kate said: "I wanted to do something for my country, which

we all wanted to do during the war. "There was a large grid in this room with a map of India. As the messages came through you had to identify if it was hostile or friendly. "The enemy was the Japanese aircraft. They were the ones we were plotting on the big grid. It saved a lot of lives, otherwise we would have been bombed. "If I could put my uniform back on and do it all over again, I would in a heartbeat".

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## OBITUARY:

WARRANT OFFICER Albert "FOO" Howard DFC RAF, who has died aged 101, was a navigator flying in Beaufighter strike aircraft in the Eastern Mediterranean and then during the Burma Campaign. He tried to join the RAF in 1938 but was too young and had to wait two years. He started training as a wireless operator/ air gunner before being selected to be an air observer. He trained in Canada under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan before returning to England to convert to the Beaufighter. With his Canadian pilot, Gus Gieselman, he joined 47 Squadron at Gambut III airfield 30 miles east of Tobruk, in Libya, in January 1944. Heavily armed, it was one of four Beaufighter squadrons operating over the Aegean Sea attacking German supply ships supporting their garrisons on many of the Greek islands.



On some attacks, the Beaufighters escorted Mitchell bombers of the USAAF. Howard felt the bombers should have been the escort since "one of their aircraft had more guns than all our formation put together!"

By the end of March 1944, the situation in the Aegean had become less critical and 47 Sqn prepared to depart for India. It converted to the Mosquito – nicknamed the 'Wooden Wonder' because of the use of plywood in its construction – and moved to an airfield near Calcutta. Shortly after commencing operational sorties, the aircraft was grounded following a series of fatal accidents. The problem was put down to the climatic conditions and the type of glue being used to bond the plywood during the manufacturing of the aircraft's main spar. The squadron was re-equipped with the Beaufighter. In May 1945, Howard and his pilot converted back to the Mosquito and continued with their long-range interdiction sorties, bombing supply dumps and river crossings. With the fall of Rangoon in early May, Howard left the squadron and for the next few months was with a salvage and repair unit flying Dakotas recovering usable items. At the end of hostilities, Howard and Gieselman were awarded the DFC for "action above and beyond the call of duty." Throughout his RAF service Howard was always known as 'Foo'. When asked why, he replied: "Fou is French for fool or stupid

and there was always something stupid going on – and I was always there. So, the Canadians gave me the nickname in training, and it stuck.” *(RAF News)*

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## **CFS DUNNOTTAR HARVARD:**

A few short years ago some Springs Businessman got together to start collecting and restoring vandalized neglected and forgotten mining and military equipment and then display it at a central location along the main road into Springs.

The Dunnottar Harvard is the latest addition to what is now known as the Springs Mining and Military Museum. (MMM)

The "CFS Dunnottar Harvard" to be relocated to the MMM Springs for preservation, restoration, and hi-profile tourist and public display. *(On a rotating column, approx 8000 public views per day)*



An extensive Memorial wall will be erected beneath the rotating Harvard showcasing all the Officers Commanding and Flyers that made CFS Dunnottar a Flying School of excellence. The consolidation of all large heritage assets in Ekurhuleni's jurisdiction in one is probably the only way to safeguard and preserve the assets. Collectively the assets also present a massive tourist opportunity to the Far East Rand and Ekurhuleni as a whole.

The relocation permit is for the 26th May 2024 at 8 am. Logistics, cranes and trucking have been arranged. Technical specialists from Swartkops SAAF Museum, Pretoria will be present on the day and oversee the relocation. *(Springs History Website)*

Primary Sponsors for this operation are: DELMAS CRANE HIRE, SWARTKOPS MILITARY MUSEUM, PRETORIA, PROSAFE SECURITY, EKURHULENI METRO

## **GLOSTER METEOR IN SA 1946:**

The Meteor first flew in 1943 and commenced operations on 27 July 1944 with No. 616 Squadron RAF. The Meteor was not a sophisticated aircraft in its aerodynamics, but proved to be a successful combat fighter. Gloster's 1946 civil Meteor F.4 demonstrator G-AIDC was the first civilian-registered jet aircraft in the world. Several major variants of the Meteor incorporated technological



advances during the 1940s and 1950s. Thousands of Meteors were built to fly with the RAF and other air forces and remained in use for several decades. In 1946, South Africa received its first jet aircraft, a Gloster Meteor III, which was assembled and flown at Brooklyn, one of a number sent to all Commonwealth countries for trials. Both the Meteor and the Sikorsky 5-51 caught the imagination of the public and were major draw-cards at every show at which they appeared. The Meteor III operated with RAF roundels and serial numbers during its two-year service with the SAAF before being returned to the United Kingdom.



*Gloster Meteor III at Brooklyn (now Ysterplaat) Cape Town*

## **HALF A CENTURY OF CONSERVATION:**

A special function was held on 18 April 2024 at the Midrand headquarters of the Endangered Wildlife Trust to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Founded in 1973 by Clive Walker, James Clarke and Neville Anderson, the Trust has been an organisation characterised by vision, commitment and stamina. With only four Directors/ CEOs in 50 years - of which one was Dr John Ledger - successive stable Boards of Trustees, and incredible support from numerous individuals and companies, the EWT has survived and indeed prospered through the tumultuous years of apartheid, civil wars in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe, to the birth of democracy in South Africa in 1994 and the era of Nelson Mandela. Yolán Friedmann, current CEO of the EWT and the very epitome of dedication, passion and leadership herself, addressed the gathering with inspiring words, some of which are shared here:

'The EWT prides itself on instilling hope, and sharing a vision of what our future can be. We do not spread a sense of fear, loss or hopelessness when we talk about our natural world. Instead, we prefer to show, with evidence, the difference we can all make when we work together. You've seen first-hand how our work, with your support, has turned South Africa into the only country in Africa with an increasing population of Cheetah. How Wild Dogs now flourish in Malawi and Mozambique where they had previously gone extinct. How lost species like the Amatola Toad and de Winton's

Golden Mole have been rediscovered and can now be protected. How rivers can flow when invasive plants are removed and how communities can use this water for their livelihoods, their crops and their general wellbeing.”

Sadly, just a month after this function, we received the news that James Clarke, one of the EWT founders, passed away on Friday 17 May 2024, after an earlier stroke.

## **OBITUARY: JAMES CLARKE:**



Veteran Journalist and author, James Clarke, died on Friday, aged 90, following an earlier stroke that developed complications. He was a member of RAFOC in his later years. We have extended our condolences to his daughter Julie and the extended Clarke family.

James was born in London and educated in Staffordshire, and came to South Africa in 1955 as a reporter for The Star in Johannesburg. According to SA National Editors Forum, in 1961 Clarke covered the Sharpeville Massacre and got in trouble with the police. He fled with his family to New Zealand where he became news editor of that country’s largest newspaper, “NZ Truth”. Peter Sullivan, retired Star Newspaper editor, described James Clarke as a “humorous columnist, a fine conservationist, and one of South Africa’s first environmental activists”. Clarke gained fame for his longest-lived newspaper humour column, ‘*Stoep Talk*’. The column was loved by many for its infectious humour.

He authored more than 20 books, with his earliest being the 1968 best seller ‘Man is the Prey.’ Sullivan added: “With ‘The Star’s’ help, he created sufficient public protest to stop the National Party government from mining the Kruger Park and putting a railway through it. He was much-loved, and he will be sorely missed.” Clarke also co-founded the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). He developed a particular interest in environmental matters, and paleo-anthropology – the study of man’s origins. George Claassen, professor in science communication and media ethics at the Department of Journalism, Stellenbosch University, said Clarke was a leader in the field and in its good old days of excellent journalism.

Hopewell Radebe, a former student of Clarke’s, said: “As an Argus School of Journalism cadet in 1994, Clarke was the first senior journalist to predict that environmental and climate change reporting would be a niche craft for journalism at the turn of the century. He talked about water shortage and prolonged droughts. He also warned that while journalists will cover a natural disaster at least once in their lifetime, our generation will soon frequently report depressing environmental disaster-related stories on climate change,” adding that Clarke was an insightful and knowledgeable journalist.

In later years James led a number of expeditions of retired Editors on cycling tours of Europe and wrote these up in a paperback under the banner of “Blazing Saddles - The True Story Behind the



Tours de Farce.” This is a true story; a true adventure involving six colleagues – mostly retired – who, on a sudden whim, decide to embark on a 1000-kilometer cycle ride down the River Danube believing it would be downhill all the way. None had cycled since childhood nor even owned a bike. Their hilarious journey was so enjoyable that it led to a series of annual rides in Europe involving ten countries including England. Their story – reminiscent of Jerome K Jerome’s “Three Men in a Boat” – is told by their “not terribly good” leader.

Four of the six were daily newspaper editors; an author of a syndicated columnist and the sixth man claims he only goes along with them out of curiosity. All live in Africa and their mission is “to explore Darkest Europe and bring back to Africa stories about the strange natives there and their funny customs.”

James was an institution and a character who brightened up our days with his humour.

We salute his memory, and we will remember him.

## CHEERS FOR NOW:

Our next lunch is on 7th June, and we will have another aviation subject. This will focus on the disposal of the Atlas Cheetah and the Mirage F1 aircraft withdrawn from SAAF service. Vic Zazeraj, now of Paramount, accompanied by Cobus Toerien, (SAAF Retd) will be the presenters. Vic was in the SA Diplomatic service for a good number of years and Cobus is a flight safety specialist and former Mirage pilot. Both are well qualified to talk on this topic, and this should be another not to be missed lunch... You can book and pay at any time before the lunch, R300pp. [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org).

Looking further ahead, Colonel Thornton “TC” Schultz, retired USAF F111 pilot and former US Defense Attaché to SA, will talk to us at the Ladies Lunch on 5th July. Be sure this will be another ‘not to be missed’ lunch.

## TAILPIECE:

"You can hear it from Springs to Thokoza  
And, yes, it's our great Shoshaloza  
Once an old mining song  
Now our best sing-along  
And you'll find it @ something dot coza"



*'This is the Working  
From Home Garden'*



GIVE ME ONE MORE CHANCE  
I'LL FIX EVERYTHING!!  
IT WILL BE DIFFERENT...



NO MORE STEALING  
NO MORE LYING  
I'LL KEEP MY PROMISES



MMm... I'M JUST NOT  
SURE I CAN TRUST YOU!

OK LET ME SHOW YOU..

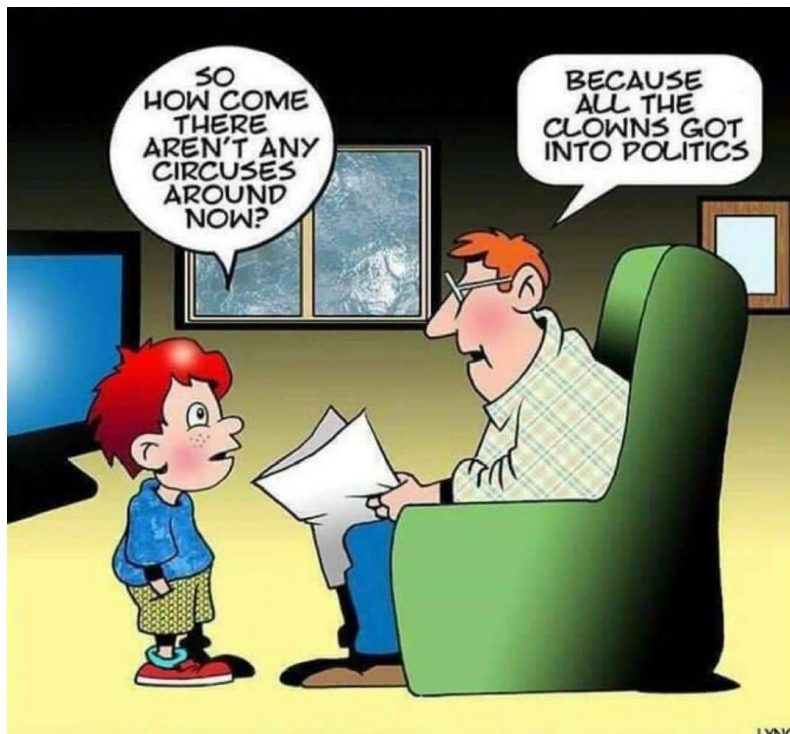


TDF/DAILYFRIEND.G-ZA

HERE'S A T-SHIRT!



©DAVIDTTOONS



LYNG

## TINY BROADWICK: FIRST FEMALE PARACHUTIST:



*Tiny Broadwick in a sling hanging from the side of Glenn Martin's plane, 1913.*

Georgia Ann Thompson, the first female parachutist and inventor of the rip cord, became famous under the name Tiny Broadwick. She weighed only three pounds at birth in 1893 in North Carolina, and never grew past 5 feet tall and 80 pounds. She married at 12, and bore a daughter, Verla, at 13. After her husband died in an accident, she had to work 14-hour days in a cotton mill.

"In 1907 at the North Carolina State Fair, Georgia saw the performance, 'The Broadwicks and their Famous French Aeronauts.' The performers ascended to the sky in hot-air balloons, then thrilled spectators by jumping out of them with parachutes. Inspired by this, Georgia asked show owner Charles Broadwick if she could travel with the group and become a part of the act. He agreed to hire her, and Georgia's mother let her go with a few stipulations - she had to leave Verla behind and send back money to help support her. Broadwick trained her in the art of parachute jumping, and in 1908, legally adopted her. When this happened, Georgia's name officially became Tiny Broadwick. "While performing, Tiny was known as "The Doll Girl". She dressed in ruffled bloomers with pink bows on her arms, ribbons in her long curly hair, and a bonnet on her head. Tiny was just 15 years old when she jumped from a hot-air balloon at the 1908 North Carolina State Fair. Describing her feelings later, she said, "I tell you, honey, it was the most wonderful sensation in the world!" It was a thrill she would come to experience some 1,000 times in her life.

"Tiny and Charles Broadwick traveled all over the country with their balloon act, but by 1912, their performance was losing popularity. Fortunately, a new opportunity presented itself to Tiny when she met famed pilot Glenn Martin. He had seen her jump from a balloon, and asked if she would like to parachute from his airplane instead. Tiny immediately agreed to work for Martin, whose aircraft company is still in business today and is operating under the name Martin Marietta.

"In preparation for the jump, Charles Broadwick developed a parachute for Tiny made of silk. It was packed into a knapsack attached to a canvas jacket with harness straps. A string was fastened to the plane's fuselage and woven through the parachute's canvas covering. When Tiny jumped from the plane, the cover tore away and her parachute filled with air.

"On her first jump, Tiny was suspended from a trap seat behind the wing and outside the cockpit, with the parachute on a shelf above her. Martin took the plane up to two thousand feet, and then Tiny released a lever alongside the seat, allowing it to drop out from under her. The jump was a success and she landed in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, making her the first woman to parachute



from an airplane. After that first jump from Martin's plane, Tiny was in great demand all over the country. She also became the first woman to parachute into a body of water.

"In 1914, at the start of WWI, representatives of the Army Air Corps visited Tiny in San Diego and asked her to demonstrate a jump from a military plane. At that time, many Air Corps pilots had already perished, and the Army wanted Tiny to showcase how to safely parachute out of a plane. During the demonstration, Tiny made four jumps at San Diego's North Island.

"The first three went smoothly, but on the fourth jump, her parachute's line became tangled in the tail assembly of the plane. Due to high winds, she could not get back into the plane. Instead of panicking, Tiny cut all but a short length of the line, which made her plummet towards the ground. Still keeping a cool head, she pulled the line by hand, freeing the parachute to open by itself. This demonstrated what would be known as the rip cord, and showcased that someone who had to leave an airplane in flight did not need a line attached to the aircraft to open a parachute. A pilot could safely bail out of a damaged craft. Following this, the parachute became known as the life preserver of the air.

"Tiny Broadwick's last jump was in 1922, when she was just 29 years old. Chronic problems with her ankles forced her into retirement. [All those forceful landings took their toll!] She stated at the time, "I breathe so much better up there, and it's so peaceful being that near to God."

"Tiny received many honors and awards in her lifetime, including the U.S. Government Pioneer Aviation award and the John Glenn Medal. She is one of the few women in the Early Birds of Aviation, and she also received the Gold Wings of the Adventurer's Club in Los Angeles. In 1964, Tiny was made an honorary member of the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg. With that honor, she was told she could jump any time she chose. At the age of 85, Tiny Broadwick died and was buried in her home state of North Carolina." (*Various sites*)