



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 209 31st MAY 2024

GREETINGS:

The (election) carnival is over... reasonably peacefully, except for 3 shot and killed at a KZN Polling Station... Mantashe horrified by MK inroads in KZN... First snow of winter possible this weekend... NHI shock horror! - We've been suckered... Political murders – one every 2 weeks since Jan 2024... Menlyn Park Mall Pretoria officially opens a new taxi rank... Vodacom drops bomb in legal challenge against ICASA ruling on MTN bandwidth... Eskom sabotage disappears into thin air... Proteas collapse against West Indies, limber up for international T20... Blitzbokke open campaign on Friday. Perfume fragrances dark secret - child labour in jasmine season... Joe Biden to hire a 'meme expert' for campaign... Jury continues deliberations in Trump trial ('stop press' he is guilty on all 34 charges) ... Sunak struggles to control Tory party on chaotic "immigration election" campaign... Starmer lining up a huge tax raid on the elderly... no such thing as a "moderate" left in Labour... "DVD size" hail batters Texas... Putin's plot to destroy NATO reaching climax... Post Office scandal lumbers on... Spain to give Ukraine €1bn in military aid... Rafael Nadal out of French Open... Jeremy Clarkson fired by farm manager Kaleb... One of Ladies competing at Roland Garros claimed "her balls were not bouncing so well" (True story)... we all have days like that, my dear...

SQUADRON LEADER MARK LONG RAF:



26 May 2024 RAF Official Statement: It is with great sorrow that I must confirm the death of Squadron Leader Mark Long. Mark was a Typhoon pilot here at RAF Coningsby and for the last four years, he has been a pilot with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. A great friend, colleague, and a passionate, professional aviator he will be sorely missed by all that knew him. An investigation into the cause of this tragic event has now begun. The RAF will not be offering any comment on the accident until that investigation has concluded, and likewise, we ask others not to speculate. I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the RAF personnel and our emergency services colleagues who responded so swiftly yesterday. Our thoughts remain with

Mark's family and friends to whom we offer our deepest sympathies. We ask that their privacy be respected at this tragic and shocking time. *Group Captain Robbie Lees, Commander Display Air Wing*

A LEGEND IS BORN:

On this day in aviation history: May 27th, 1958; a legend was born. The Double Ugly, Lead Sled, Flying Anvil, St. Louis Slugger, Flying Brick, Snoopy, Rhino, Old Smokey, the triumph of thrust over aerodynamics, and "World's Leading Distributor of MiG Parts" more simply known as the Phantom; made its maiden flight on 27 May 1958 with Robert C. Little at the controls. There were proposals to name the F4H "Satan" and "Mithras", the Persian god of light. In the end, the aircraft was given the less controversial name "Phantom II". Soon afterwards, the Double Ugly squared off against the XF8U-3 Crusader III, and on 17 December 1958 the F4H was declared a winner.

During her service, the Phantom served many countries, including Australia, Egypt, Germany, United Kingdom, Greece, Iran, Israel, Japan, Spain, South Korea and Turkey, and is the only aircraft to have flown the colours of both the USAF Thunderbirds as well as the USN Blue Angels.

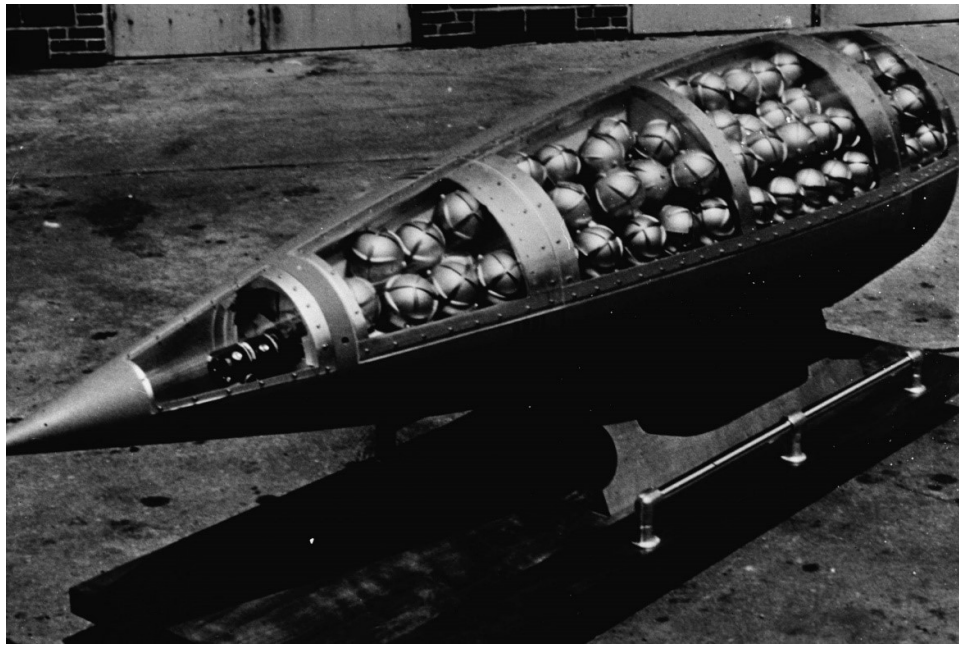


Pictured: Operation Top Flight

On 6 December 1959, the second XF4H-1 performed a zoom climb to a world record 98,557 ft. Commander Lawrence E. Flint, Jr., USN accelerated his aircraft to Mach 2.5, (1,650 mph; at 47,000 ft) and climbed to 90,000 ft at a 45° angle. He then shut down the engines and glided to the peak altitude. As the aircraft fell through 70,000 ft, Flint restarted the engines and resumed normal flight. www.Sierrahotel.net

THE DREL - A BIG PROBLEM?

Russia could use its new gliding cluster bomb to target key Ukrainian weapons systems, and if the Drel truly is invisible to radar and resistant to electronic warfare, it could prove to be a major problem for Kyiv's air defence network. Reuters noted that Western sources have labelled the Drel as cluster munitions, which is a type of weapon that typically releases a number of submunitions over a large area and has been banned by over 100 countries due to their lingering dangers. *(Daily Digest, Photo Wiki by U.S. Army)*



F-22 Raptor vs F-35 Lightning-II Aircraft:



David Berke, USMC, became well acquainted with flying the F-22 while the division commander in the Test and Evaluation Squadron. Berke also had the honor of being the first operational pilot to fly and be qualified in the F-35B, as the Commanding Officer of the Marine Corps' first F-35 unit. He gives a pilot's assessment of the 2 aircraft: "While the F-35 is a single-seat, single-engine, stealth multirole fighter jet capable of performing ground attacks and air defense missions, the F-22 Raptor is a single-seat,

twin-engine, fifth-generation, tactical fighter aircraft specializing in air dominance.

The Joint Striker Program was initiated in the mid-1990s. While the first prototype, the X-35, flew in 2000, the F-35 aircraft took its first flight in 2006. Since then, the fighter has led the pack among fifth-generation aircraft and is being used by 14 militaries worldwide.

According to Lockheed Martin, more than 1000 F-35s have been developed and operated from over 26 bases worldwide. Over 1,255 pilots and 10,030 maintenance staff have been trained on the aircraft.



On the other hand, F-22 Raptors are only meant for the US Air Force. The US has federal laws over the export of fighters, and the US government apprehends that such 'classified' designs and technology could fall into the wrong hands.

Additionally, the F-22 Raptor has many distinctive features that the Pentagon has classified, so much so that even its pilots are barred from using its full capabilities in international drills, even with close allies.

Regarding stealth technology, the F-22 Raptors are considered the stealthiest fighter jets on the planet. The aircraft boasts an even reduced cross-radar section than that of the F-35s.

Despite being loaded with state-of-the-art features, the F-35s were built for air-to-ground missions. Therefore, they do not stand a chance against the Raptors when it comes to dogfighting, given that F-22s are air-superiority fighter jets.

"The F-35 cannot match the F-22 as an air superiority fighter it was never designed as such. The US Air Force's initial plan was for the F-22 to be its high-end air superiority fighter. At the same time, the F-35 was developed essentially as an air-to-ground strike aircraft capable of protecting itself".
(*Eurasian Times*)

AK OR HK?

Ukrainian soldiers will soon be able to field Western-built weapons that can fire ammunition designed for the Warsaw Pact-type equipment they would normally use.

The armed forces of Ukraine are equipped with a mish-mash of Western and Eastern European small arms, with a corresponding mix of calibres, presenting some logistical difficulties. But firearms manufacturer Heckler & Koch has now announced it will be manufacturing some of its own weapons in Warsaw Pact calibres, simplifying ammunition supply.



One such weapon is the HK132, which is being chambered in 7.62x39mm, a calibre found in some Kalashnikov assault rifles as well as the RPD and RPK light machine guns. Marc Roth, HK's Task Force Leader Ukraine, told German trade journal European Security & Technology that Ukrainian soldiers were having to field a mix of weapons to match the available ammunition.

In general, weapons like the Kalashnikov AKM tend to be more tolerant of dirty, dusty or muddy conditions, are simpler to operate and can continue to function with less maintenance. Western small arms, in contrast, are usually more precise and offer easier fitting of optics and accessories.

ISLAMIC STATE TERRORISTS USE DA'WHA...

Extremists linked to the Islamic State group (IS) in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province are notorious for raiding and torching entire towns, beheading civilians and attacking security forces. However, IS-linked groups are pushing to change their image in an effort to win public support and recruit new fighters, analysts say. Notably, they have increased "da'wah" activities in the provincial districts of Chiure, Macomia, Meluco, Mocímboa da Praia, Nangade and Quissanga, which 300 rebel fighters reportedly captured in March. Da'wah is an Arabic term that roughly means proselytizing. As Caleb Weiss noted in the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' Long War Journal, it is terror groups often attempt to convert people to their version of Islam and build goodwill in communities — even those they seize. (*DefenceWeb*)



MEMBERS WRITE:



The article on the solo Meteor sent to SA for SAAF evaluation brought this response from Dave in the US:

"Thanks folks - excellent - as always. Great article on the 'Tiny' parachutist. Attached is a photo of my 1/72 model of that Meteor - accurate down to the serial number!"

BRUCE-BAYS BRIDGE, BUFFALO RIVER.



Combined road/rail bridges were common in earlier days, particularly on coastal river estuaries. More mature readers may remember that the old South Coast road had a number of them, down to Port Shepstone, in most cases replacing a pont previously in use. A man with a red flag was stationed at each bridge to warn road traffic of approaching trains, which had right of way. Pictured above is the last one still existing and in use: Rail bridge on lower deck and road bridge at upper deck. The bridge was officially opened by Mayor Dr. James Bruce-Bays on 20 February 1934. The original Buffalo Bridge was a combined rail and road bridge constructed out of timber and was completed by the Cape Government on 1 January 1908. The Buffalo Bridge was replaced in 1935-36 by the double decker Bruce-

Bays Bridge. Some fragmentary remains of the curved south approach of the Buffalo Bridge are still visible on the West Bank of the Buffalo River.

CHEERS FOR NOW:

With the cold weather running in quite fast we urge you to keep warm and exercise, it makes you thirsty 7th June (next Friday) is the June lunch at the Wanderers Club, 12:00 for 13:00. We have selected Leek and Potato soup, followed by Braised Lamb stew served with Coconut Rice and Sambals. Warm weather offering. The cost is R300 per person and bookings should be made at bookings@rafoc.com to secure a seat. We expect another good turn out as the topic for the address is the 'disposal of the Mirage F1 and the Atlas Cheetah' from the SAAF. It will be interesting to hear the story firsthand. Make your booking and come along and get warm, inside and out.

TAILPIECE:

Once upon a time, a perfect man and a perfect woman met. After a perfect courtship, they had a perfect wedding. Their life together was, of course, perfect.

One snowy, stormy Christmas Eve, this perfect couple was driving their perfect car along a winding road, when they noticed someone at the side of the road in distress. Being the perfect couple, they stopped to help.

There stood Santa Claus with a huge bundle of toys. Not wanting to disappoint any children on the eve of Christmas, the perfect couple loaded Santa and his toys into their vehicle. Soon they were driving along delivering the toys.

Unfortunately, the driving conditions deteriorated and the perfect couple; and Santa Claus had an accident. Only one of them survived the accident.

Question: Who was the survivor?

Answer: The perfect woman survived. She's the only one who really existed in the first place. Everyone knows there is no Santa Claus and there is no such thing as a perfect man.

**** Women stop reading here, that is the end of the joke.

**** Men keep scrolling.

So, if there is no perfect man and no Santa Claus, the woman must have been driving. This explains why there was a car accident.

By the way, if you're a woman and you're still reading, this illustrates another point: Women never listen!

MATT

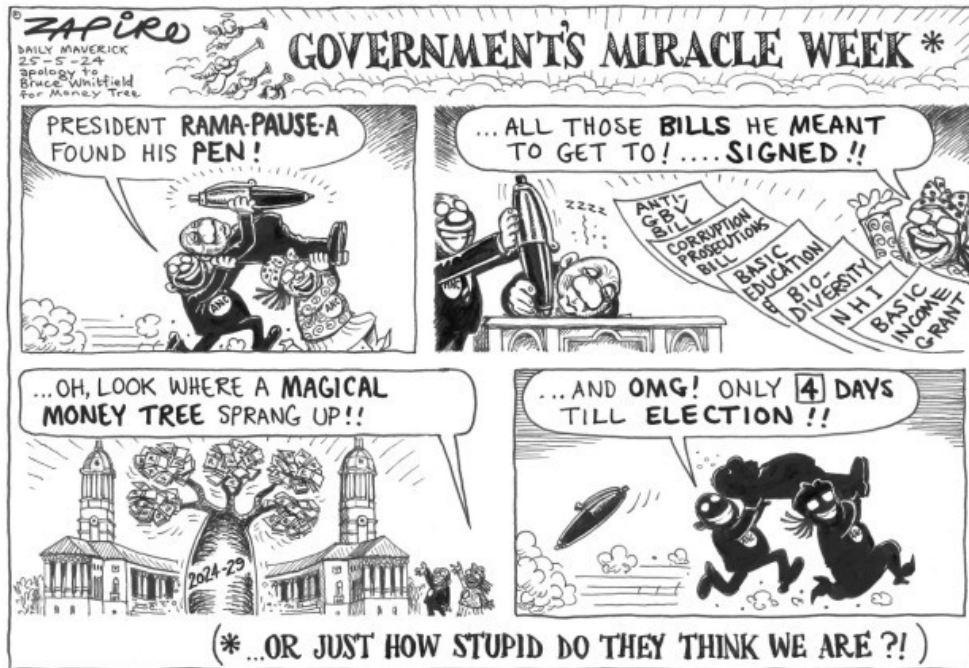


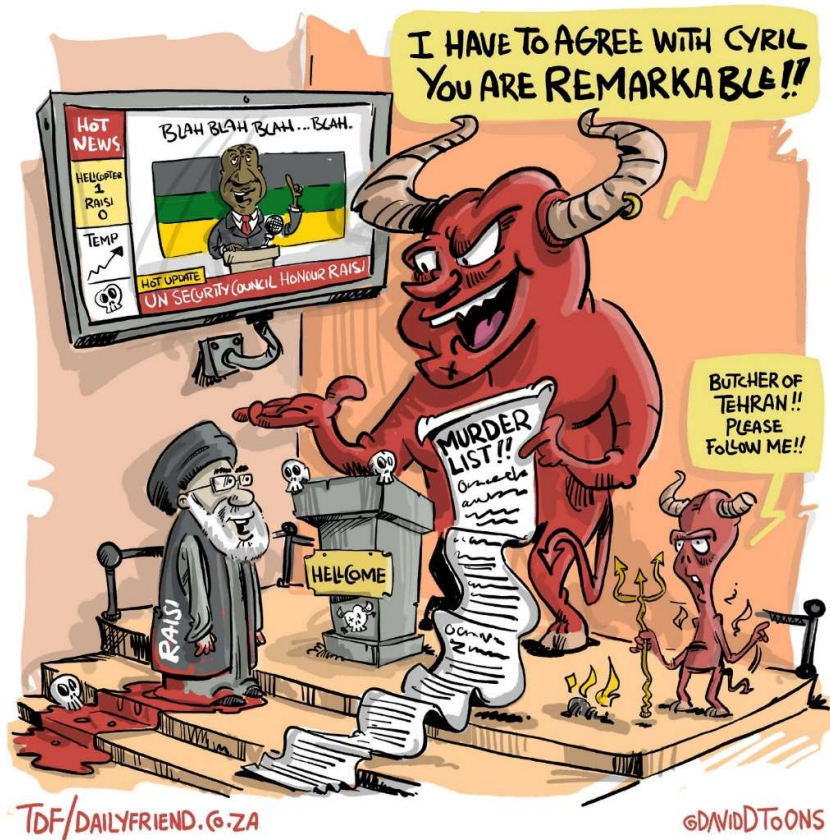
'Thope someone has told Paula Vennells there's a general election. She tends not to notice things'

MATT



'Td describe myself as a floating voter'





MONTY'S DRIVER:

The article about Montgomery's Rolls Royce led to other stories about the car...

Alan Samuel Butler, Chairman of De Havilland Aircraft; for whom the Rolls-Royce was built was a staunch patriot so, in 1940, soon after war was declared, he offered his Phantom III to the War Office on three conditions: that it was not to be sent abroad; that it was to be driven, as it had been in his service, by a Rolls-Royce trained driver; that Rolls-Royce was to carry out scheduled inspections

and any necessary repairs. It was at this point that the Phantom met the man who was to drive it for the next six years, Sergeant Percy Parker, who recalled: 'Scrambling back from Dunkirk, I was instructed by telegram to report to Kneller Hall, to once again drive General Ironside.' Parker, the holder of a Rolls-Royce Certificate of Merit as driver and mechanic, had been the last man out of France after World War One, escorting the body of the Unknown Warrior, and the first man into France in World War Two. Between the wars he had been chauffeur to Queen Alexandra, who died in 1925, still using the 14hp Renault that she had been supplied with by Stratton & Instone in 1906; he also drove her unmarried daughter Princess Victoria, who died in 1935. Ironside's plan for the defence of Britain met with much criticism, and after less than two months in the job he was summoned to the War Office and told that he was to be replaced by General Sir Alan Brooke. He left without meeting Brooke, and left him no information save for a brief memo noting that he had arranged for Brooke to take over the use of the Phantom III as his staff car. Parker recalled: 'Sir Alan willingly accepted the Phantom and my services, and we remained with him until his retirement in 1946.'

But in Alan Brooke's tenure it had a list of distinguished passengers that would be hard to match, including King George VI, Winston Churchill, Ike of course, and the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Who knows what wartime secrets were discussed in its rear compartment, with the division window wound up to keep chauffeur Percy from being a nosy Parker? Churchill could be a difficult passenger, remembered Percy Parker: driving from London to Chequers on a pitch-dark night, he urged impatiently: 'Can't you go any faster?' Parker thought quickly, changed into a lower gear and revved the engine to give the impression that the car was going faster. Churchill was fooled: 'Do you want to break our bloody necks?' he growled. On another occasion, Parker was driving General Brooke and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, back in the moonlight from a meeting at Chequers. Both men were fast asleep in the back when, near Northolt, 'there was a swishing sound as though something was coming up behind', followed by a tremendous explosion a few yards away that blew the Phantom onto the grass verge. The only response from the back came from the Admiral: 'Who rocked the boat?' said his sleepy voice.