



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 215

12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024

### GREETINGS:

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Well, we've really had a dose of winter cold this week... Thousands displaced in Cape Town storms and floods as icy cold front hits SA... Cocaine, kidnappings, and chaos in Cape... 'The minister of everything but nothing' - Dlamini-Zuma... Ramaphosa creating parallel Cabinet - doesn't trust his ministers?... "Kafkaesque era" of opposition parliament... SIU boss Andy Mothibi: death threats, cyber-attacks and a broken system... SA flight academy battles CIA over China pilot training... 'We fear for our lives': Portuguese over surge in kidnappings... Former VBS chair pleads guilty... Esidemeni culpable findings... remarkable career of Colonel Jan Breytenbach commemorated at Voortrekker Monument Service... Kenya unrest continues... Bolt bans 6 000 drivers from e-hailing platform... AutoZone in business rescue... "Marquee wars" at the 2024 Durban July... "Oriental Charm" wins... Boks beat Irish hoodoo... Municipal car used to pick up women (why ever not?)... SA ranks third in the world for alcohol consumption (no bl\*\*dy wonder...)

Defiant Poor Old Joe Biden thought he had it under control - then it got worse... Hurricane Beryl threatens Texas coast... UK is about to enter a nightmare... Muslim Vote campaign is a glimpse into a horrifying future at "crossroads between fury and hope"... Angela R: Starmer's greatest asset - or biggest headache?... Starmer says the Rwanda deportation plan is "dead and buried"... 'Open season' for small boats after Rwanda "killed", warns former immigration chief... Struggles at Harland and Wolff Titanic shipyard reflect UK's faded naval power... Starmer commits to defence and security at first press conference... France: surprise win for leftwing alliance keeps Le Pen right from power... Macron reigns over a field of political rubble... Far-right National Rally of Marine Le Pen poised to become dominant... Fighting rages on in Gaza... Chinese troops hold military exercises on Belarus - Polish border... Putin plans wartime-style barrage balloons ... Taliban limits options for Afghan women... Hamilton thrills home crowd - wins ninth British GP... Ollie Watkins' "bolt from blue" stuns Netherlands and sends England to final Euro 2024... Ice cream van rescued after floating out to sea...

## RIMPAC MAJOR EXERCISE:

Two Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) maritime patrol aircraft have arrived at Hickam Air Force Base to join over 25,000 personnel from 28 other nations participating in Rim of the Pacific 24 (RIMPAC). The aircraft departed RAF Lossiemouth in early July at the start of a 7,000 nautical mile journey to Honolulu via a refuelling stop at Goose Bay, Canada, and overnight stay near Seattle. On arrival they were greeted by Indian Navy Captain A K Singh, Deputy Commander of Combined Task Force 172 for the exercise. The biennial exercise and will see members of CXX and 201 Squadrons fly and train alongside other maritime patrol squadrons, fighter aircraft, 40 surface ships and three submarines. Engineering and operations support personnel will also operate alongside multinational colleagues, with others embedded within the exercise headquarters.



*Royal Air Force personnel and aircraft have deployed to Hawaii for the largest military training exercise in the region.*

RIMPAC represents the longest and furthest range exercise to date for the RAF Poseidon Force. It is also the largest gathering of Poseidon aircraft with squadrons from the US Navy, Indian Navy, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force, and Republic of Korea Air Force all taking part. Other maritime patrol aircraft will also be involved, including from Japan and Canada. The nine-strong RAF Poseidon fleet based at RAF Lossiemouth are fitted with advanced, state-of-the-art, Anti-Submarine Warfare and Anti-Surface Warfare sensors which help provide global protection to UK, NATO, and our Allies' submarines and warships. *(RAF News)*

## WSM WIDER SERVICE MEDAL:



The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton has awarded the RAF's first Wider Service Medals (WSM) to RAF personnel currently deployed on NATO air policing duties in Romania.

The WSM has been introduced to acknowledge the changing nature of operational activity. It will be awarded to all Armed Forces personnel that have accrued more than 180 days' aggregated service on eligible operations since December 2018. The medal recognises that Armed Forces personnel are increasingly deployed or used to deliver operational output but not necessarily in roles that expose them to physical risk. There are a variety of missions that qualify for the medal including NATO air policing in the Black Sea and Baltic regions. The first thirteen of these medals were presented to individuals during a ceremony at the air base in Romania that is hosting the RAF detachment. Air Chief Marshal Knighton was visiting the RAF detachment at Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base, where the RAF Typhoons are helping to protect NATO air space. The Typhoons are working alongside Finnish F-18s and Romanian F-16s to provide Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) to intercept any Russian aircraft that encroach NATO airspace. (*RAF News*)

## UKRAINIAN YAK 52.



The Yakovlev Yak-52, a training aircraft that's popular with civilian pilots performing aerobatics, (and of which there are a number in SA ownership) is being repurposed by Ukraine for a more aggressive application – destroying Russian drones. One of the key features of the war in Ukraine has been the ingenuity of Kyiv's forces and their ability to turn non-combat equipment into offensive weapons. An example of that happened over Odessa when a Ukrainian Yak-52 was filmed chasing down a Russian Orlan 10 reconnaissance drone. Yak-52 is a two-seater and the man in the back seat – where the instructor would normally sit – is believed to have been shooting at the drone, possibly with a light machine gun. Eventually, the drone's parachute deploys and it then floats down towards the ground. And it seems this isn't a one-off, as pictures have appeared online showing a Yak with several drone kill markings painted on the fuselage. There has also been footage taken by a Russian Zala drone of a Yak-52 close up. The video shows the rear canopy open with the man in the back presumably getting ready to fire a weapon. (*ForcesNet*)



## MWD:

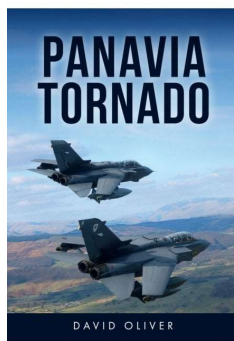
Military Working Dogs (MWDs) are integral to operations across Land, Sea and Air, leveraging their unique force multiplier capabilities in detection, protection patrol and control.

Their agility and extraordinary senses allow them to navigate challenging environments that sometimes a person cannot access. It's this set of skills which provides unmatched support in the operational field. Using their keen sense of smell and heightened senses, on land they excel in detecting and patrolling, searching for explosives, controlled substances and hostile personnel, providing warning not only to their handler but to the group of people the MWD is attached to.



In the sea environment, MWDs are trained to search boats, harbours and ports for contraband or threats. These Sea-bound MWDs can be deployed from Ridged Inflatable Boats (RIB) onto other boats to secure the area or prepare for search. Before getting to an operational environment MWDs are put to the test at Defence Animal Training Regiment (DATR) based in Melton Mowbray. This Tri-Service facility will assess, from a young age, the determination and drive of the dogs often brought to the UK from Europe. The handlers don't get off lightly either. MWD Handlers have to complete 6 months of Police training at Southwick Park and 3 weeks training at DATR before being assigned their dog. In the face of operations, our Military Working Dogs and their handlers stand resilient, embodying the spirit of unwavering loyalty and duty. These teams are not just a testament to the capabilities of our forces but also to the profound bond between human and canine. (RAF News)

## NO TONKA TOY:



First flown in August 1974, the Tornado multi-role strike aircraft entered service with the RAF in the 1980s at the height of the Cold War. It was designed to meet a 1968 specification for a two-seat Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) and developed by the international Panavia Aircraft consortium. The RAF Tornado GRs achieved 38 years of unbroken service and deployed on various conflicts with NATO allies including operations in the Gulf, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Libya and Syria before it was withdrawn from service in 2019. In "Panavia Tornado" (amberley-books.com) aviation expert David Oliver covers the jet's development, production and service in the RAF and German, Italian and Saudi Arabian air forces. The book tells the fascinating story of this ground-breaking aircraft – nicknamed 'Tonka' by its aircrew – and contains 200 illustrations. (RAF News)

## **CAPTAIN HENRY PEEL RITCHIE RN: First VC won by sailor in WWI**



The medal is part of hundreds of decorations, awards, campaign and gallantry medals that were collected by former US Navy officer Jason Pilalas. The Royal Navy enthusiast's incredible collection spans a couple of centuries, including the Suez Crisis and both World Wars.

The Victoria Cross awarded to Captain Henry Peel Ritchie tops the collection and could fetch as much as £260,000. Capt Ritchie was wounded eight times in 25 minutes as he tried to steer the steam pinnace from HMS Goliath out of

danger during a raid on the port of Dar-es-Salaam – then under German rule – in east Africa in November 1914. Mr Pilalas, who died last year, served three tours in Vietnam and used his successful career in investment management to fund his passion for the Royal Navy. Nimrod Dix, deputy chairman of auction house Noonans and director of its medal department, said Mr Pilalas was a fascinating character with many facets and many interests "none more so than his relentless pursuit of knowledge of all things relating to the Royal Navy. This voracious appetite for knowledge was matched only by his seemingly unquenchable thirst to collect objects relating to his passion," he said. "However, as much as Jason cherished his collection, he was always mindful of the fact that he was just the custodian of these objects in his own lifetime.' (ForcesNet)



*Contemporary depiction of Capt Henry Ritchie earning the VC at Dar-es-Salaam (Picture: Royal Navy)*

## RAF RC-135 RIVET JOINT:

A SURVEILLANCE squadron facing demands for intelligence on conflicts from the Middle East to Ukraine has celebrated a decade of operations with three awards for personnel. And Waddington-based 51 Sqn, which first flew ZZ664 (pictured), its first RC-135 of three in May 2014, has received top-level recognition for its national and NATO security role. To mark the anniversary more than 700 people from the squadron gathered for an awards ceremony to recognise personnel and support teams delivering signals intelligence to give ground-based commanders a battle-winning edge. Specialist crews, often including USAF experts under a unique co-crewing arrangement, are scrambled several times a week either from its Lincolnshire home or from deployed locations around the world – including the Middle East. Recent conflicts have seen UK Rivet Joints patrolling Eastern Europe, across the Barents Sea, Baltic Region, Finland, Romania and the Black Sea.



Cpl Eliot Beddows was named Engineer of the Year for showing resolve and determination in delivering results over the last 12 months. The Warfighter of the Year award was presented to Chf Tech Glyn West, who demonstrated the biggest commitment to furthering the operational impact and achievements of 51 Sqn. The Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers Master's Certificate (Aviator of the Year Award) was presented to Sgt Phil Howle for his unwavering commitment and drive towards delivering first class results. Officer Commanding 51 Sqn Wg Cdr Keith Bissett said: "During a period of unprecedented demand 51 Sqn has been at the forefront of operations. (RAF News)

## FORGOTTEN HERO:

Melbourne Johns (1901–1955) was a Welsh-born munitions factory worker who gained recognition for his daring actions during World War II. While working at the BMARC munitions factory in Grantham, England, he volunteered to join a team on a mission to retrieve crucial Deep Hole Boring Machines from the Hispano-Suiza works in France, before the invading Germans could secure them. These machines were used to drill the barrels of the Hispano-Suiza HS.404 20mm cannons that armed Spitfires and Hurricane fighters. Johns and his team successfully



recovered the equipment and brought it back to England, preventing the Germans from obtaining it. His heroic exploits were later depicted in the wartime film *The Foreman Went to France*, with Welsh actor Clifford Evans portraying Melbourne Johns. The HS 404 cannons are still in production and operational service. Originally designed by and produced by the Swiss arm of the Spanish/Swiss company Hispano-Suiza in the mid-1930s, production was later moved to the French arm of Hispano-Suiza. It was widely used as an aircraft, naval and land-based weapon by French, British, American and other military services, particularly during World War II. The cannon is also referred to as Birkigt type 404, after its designer, Marc Birkigt. Below: HS.404 in the TCM-20 twin anti-aircraft configuration, displayed at the Israeli Air Force Museum.



Later versions based on British development are known as 20 mm Hispano. Firing a 20 mm calibre projectile, it delivered a significant load of explosive from a relatively light weapon. This made it an ideal anti-aircraft weapon for mounting on light vehicles, as well as a fighter aircraft gun, supplementing or replacing the 7.62 mm (.30 calibre) and .303 inch (7.7 mm) machine guns commonly used in military aircraft of the 1930s. The HS.404 was produced by the French

subsidiary of Hispano-Suiza, and under license by a variety of companies in other countries. Its effectiveness is such that the weapon has continued in use in many conflicts, including in Korea, the Six Day War, the Rhodesian Bush War and Yom Kippur War. *(Wiki and others)*

## **CLARKSON AND THE MILLION POUND PUB:**

Jeremy Clarkson offered almost £1 million to the owner of a pub within minutes of meeting her. The former *Top Gear* presenter, 64, has been developing his Cotswold smallholding for the popular Amazon series *Clarkson's Farm*.

Keen to find a pub to sell his produce, Clarkson arranged to meet with the landlady of The Windmill near Burford in Oxfordshire and is said to have offered her a vast sum over a coffee.

The pub is nestled deep in the Cotswold countryside and boasts of views across the Windrush Valley, as well as being just 10 miles from the presenter's Diddly Squat Farm.

Set on five acres of its own land, the presenter hopes to transform the venue into a pub that will only serve British produce, and offer farmers a free pint.

Publican Jackie Walker, 79, was invited to Diddly Squat to discuss the terms of a potential deal for The Windmill.

She told MailOnline: "A film crew had come into the pub and the next thing I knew someone with Clarkson knocked on the door and asked if I was interested in selling." Mrs Walker, who opened the rural pub with her late husband Alan in 1983, visited Clarkson's home near the village of Chadlington to discuss terms over a coffee.

She said: "The first thing Jeremy said to me was I suppose you want a lot of money for this."

It has been reported that almost £1 million was offered almost immediately, and Mrs Walker accepted. Clarkson has secured the freedom of the pub, which is not affiliated with a brewery, meaning he can sell his own beer on site.



Mrs Walker said: "It did make me laugh, but that is Jeremy Clarkson." She said she had not been planning to sell the place, but wasn't that happy with how it was being run, adding "I am not getting any younger. I assume he will make a TV series out of it. I really do hope that he can make a big success of the place and restore it back to how it was. My husband and I had so much fun running it." Clarkson has been seeking a pub as a venue to market his own products, including his Hawkstone ale. (*MailOnline*)

## **FACEBOOK HACKDEMIC:**

During the past 24 months, many South Africans have found their Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp accounts taken over by cybercriminals. While these attacks have targeted some prominent individuals like radio personalities, many people who are not in the public eye have also been victims of account hijacks. The hijacking begins with a fairly sophisticated phishing attack that tricks people into giving out their usernames and passwords. First, the criminals sent a flood of messages to potential targets. These exploited a layout quirk in Facebook Messenger, allowing them to hide a link to an attack site resembling a real "Show profile" button. Clicking on the button opens a Facebook login page, complete with the correct "m.facebook.com" URL in the browser bar. However, this is faked using a fullscreen image or some other kind of trick to make the attack page look legitimate on a smartphone screen. Once the attackers have your username and password and they successfully take over your account, they weaponise Facebook's safety and security policies to keep rightful users locked out.

Full article: [South Africa's Facebook Hackdemic \(mybroadband.co.za\)](http://mybroadband.co.za)



BEWARE THE SPYKER IN THE NIGHT...



MOTOR INDUSTRY STAFF ASSOCIATION  
**MISA** THE INTELLIGENT ALTERNATIVE | WWW.MISA.ORG.ZA

**SPIKING HOTSPOTS**

- N4 Mpumalanga to Pretoria between Solomon Mahlangu and Watermeyer off-ramp
- N4 Pretoria to Mpumalanga between Bronkhorstspuit and Balmoral off-ramp
- N1 Polokwane and N4 Mpumalanga interchange in Pretoria
- N4 to Rustenburg between R80 Mabopane freeway and Brits Plaza tollgate Golden Highway
- R21 freeway from OR Tambo International Airport to Pretoria
- R562 in Olifantsfontein
- N12 in Witbank, under the Merridale bridge
- N12 between Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom
- N3 between Leondale and Barry Marais Road
- N17 between Rondebult and Heidelberg Road

WARNING

#MISAcare

### CHEERS FOR NOW:

At last Friday's Ladies Lunch we had an excellent, well-illustrated talk from TC Schultz on the remarkable progress that ladies have been making in the USAF and Military hierarchy at large. Not surprisingly, he has been asked to give the talk again to other military associations. Coincidentally, in the same week the RAF announced the appointment of the first ever female Provost Marshal Warrant Officer, Adele Good MBE.

Our next ordinary Lunch will be on Friday August 2024 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. If his flight roster permits, we hope to have Lionel Reed (now with SAA), author of the MiG Diaries, to speak to us on that topic, and its part in the Angolan war. Not to be missed.

Then in September we will have the Battle of Britain Ladies Lunch at Wanderers on the Second Friday, 13 September (Closest to Battle of Britain Day on Sunday 15 September) We hope to have Colonel Conor O'Hara OBE, the British Defence Attache at the British High Commission as our Guest and Speaker, subject as always to the Exigences of the Service. Please reserve the date in your diaries now.

### TAILPIECE:

Conspicuous Consumption: A patron surprised Umhlanga residents on Monday morning, 8 July when he spent R114 500 on alcohol at Rockets restaurant. The R114 500 receipt also shows that the customer tipped the waiter R11 450, which totaled the bill to R125 969. The shocking R125 969 bill shows that the patron settled his bill at 4am on Monday morning at Rockets Club in Umhlanga Rocks. The bill was shared by entertainment blogger Musa Khawula on X. (Must have won big on the July...)

'Explosives expert' who blew off part of his face in botched Tembisa CIT heist was out on bail... (You just can't make this stuff up) (not Facebook)

D\*\*n, D\*\*n, double D\*\*n; we whip Ireland at Loftus on Saturday and the dirty buggers institute a visa requirement for Saffers travelling to Ireland, with just two days' notice, effective Wednesday 10 July. You know what irritates me the most? The Irish will still be able to visit our beautiful country visa-free. St\*ff all of you potato folk; we're going to whip your @rses big time in Durban this Saturday (Facebook)

MATT



*'I'm a Conservative voter. I'll be relieved if we lose by fewer than 251 goals'*

MATT



*'Do you think you could build 250 houses here on Wednesday evening when the England match is on?'*







**DISCLAIMER:**

RAMBLINGS was initiated during the COVID time and was intended to keep our Members in contact during those dark times. It has now become an institution and preparing it takes a lot of effort from the team. The views, if not attributed to other sources, are not necessarily the views of RAFOC or the editorial team. Please be prepared for RAMBLINGS to become a two-weekly newsletter in the future.