



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 221 23rd AUGUST 2024

GREETINGS:

“Hulle weet nie wat ons weet nie!” Our amazing Boks showed their depth to give the Aussies another walloping... look forward to the New Zealand tests... ‘Prophet’ Mboro stays in jail, no bail... Zuma officially no longer ANC member after missing appeal deadline... “Leadership” of MK announced – what a koeksister!... Libyan nationals flown home from Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport on Sunday, 18 August 2024, flight paid for by the Libyan Government... ANC outdated socialist policies strangle entrepreneurs... Criminal mafias standing in way of SA’s big turnaround... “Boko Haram” extortion syndicate operating in Mamelodi, Pretoria... Martin Moshal, pioneer in SA online gaming is biggest individual political party donor... 25% of Airlink sold to QATAR... Goodbye, Johannesburg. Dada Morero will finish demolition job ANC started... So ry hierdie trein!...

USS Abraham Lincoln has positioned within striking distance of Iran... US prepares for threat of joint Chinese, Russian and North Korean nuclear strike... Putin hiding true cost of Ukraine war... Europe about to help Putin seize victory from jaws of defeat... 'unshackle' Storm Shadow missiles to let Ukraine operate with them inside Russia'... Long-range strikes a must against Russian aggression... superyacht sinks - IT magnate Lynch and daughter drown, 5 bodies recovered... Poor Old Joe Biden gives emotional farewell speech: ‘I gave my best to you’... Swing states trust Trump more than Harris on economy... Labour plotting a devastating plan to make millions tax prisoners in their own homes... Labour continue to kowtow to Unions, blame Tories for everything – is this the best they can do - why not apartheid?... Clarkson’s new pub forces council to cut speed limit... “Pope takes captaincy reins” (*Didn’t know England cricket so desperate*)...

RAF SAF:



The Royal Air Force is ensuring Britain is secure in a more sustainable manner using a blend of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) with normal jet fuel on routine operations for the first time.

Aircraft including Typhoon and Poseidon submarine hunters, operating from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, have been using a blend of conventional and SAF in a first for the air force as they take to the skies to defend the UK and allies. During November 2023 to February 2024 four million liters of blended sustainable aviation fuel were delivered to the Royal Air Force through a contract with World Fuel Services. A further five million one hundred and fifty thousand liters of fuel are being delivered over the period July to October 2024. Sustainable fuel sources include hydrogenated fats and oils, wood waste, alcohols, sugars, household waste, biomass and algae. As aviation currently accounts for nearly two thirds of fuel used across defence, this first for the RAF demonstrates the Ministry of Defence's commitment to reduce carbon emissions with no compromise to national security. "We remain at the forefront of this important work with industry partners, and introducing sustainable aviation fuel to one of our busiest stations demonstrates our commitment, bringing defence and industry together to reduce our carbon footprint. As well as contributing to reduce carbon emissions as part of the Defence Aviation Net Zero Strategy*, our ability to use new fuels ensures that the Royal Air Force can continue to operate anywhere we are needed globally".

Air Vice-Marshal Shaun Harris, Director Support (*RAF News*)

RED ARROWS FOUNDER DIES:



One of the men responsible for the formation of the Red Arrows display team has died at the age of 90. Retired Squadron Leader Henry Prince, Callsign Red 7, (*pictured*) was part of the founding team that Lee Jones put together to establish the Red Arrows 60 years ago.

"We didn't realise we were doing anything tremendous," he told BFBS Forces News in March. "We were enjoying our flying; we were enjoying showing our team to the country. It certainly is nice to know that you were there at the start."

He also explained how the famous Red Arrows almost didn't last, saying "the team was disbanded at the end of '65". Sqn Ldr Prince said the team had been split up because the pilots were posted elsewhere – until one day someone questioned what had happened to the Red Arrows. From that point, the team were brought back together. "We reformed in '66. I came back to the team as the deputy leader to Ray [Hanna] and we went from there," he explained. "Thank goodness they kept it going." While other teams have come and gone, he also told BFBS Forces News he could not believe how the Red Arrows have now been flying for 60 years. "We thought it was only going to last a couple of years," he said. (*ForcesNet*)



The Red Arrows fly over the Royal Mile for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo 2024

KIDSTON MEMORIAL RESTORED:

"I am the Chairman (Old Bill) of the Moth (*Memorial Order of the Tin Hat*) Organization in Harrismith and more specifically, the Platberg Shellhole. We are a Charity Organization that focus on the wellbeing of old soldiers, including soldiers from World War 2, the Korean War and any other ex-servicemen. Our organization became involved with the Kidston Monument just outside Harrismith, which was vandalized a few years ago. Together with the Heritage Foundation in Harrismith and Ladysmith, we decided to restore the Monument to its original glory, a task which was recently completed. As background, the Kidston Monument was erected after an aircraft crashed just off the N3 near Van Reenen in the vicinity of Tandjiesberg and Nelsonskop Mountains on 5 May 1931. The three-seater De Havilland Puss Moth, DH 80A, was piloted by Commander Glen Kidston and Captain Thomas Gladstone was the navigator. They were on a pioneering flight, in partnership with the newly formed Union Airways (Pty) Ltd and were on the first leg of a round trip from Johannesburg to Durban via Pietermaritzburg in KZN to plot a possible flight route



Restored Memorial near Nelsonskop and Tandjiesberg

Approaching Nelsonskop, they flew into gale-force winds which buffeted the small plane alarmingly. The fierce winds had created a dust storm below, which impaired their visibility considerably. It would appear that they dropped altitude to try and find a safe place to land. According to a number of local eyewitnesses, the plane was about 300m off the ground, when a piece appeared to break off it, causing it to nosedive and crash into the ground. On examination of the crash site, it was confirmed that a wing had broken off in flight and was found about 180m behind the wreck. At the inquest it was found that the two aviators lacked local knowledge and experience of flying in the tortuous maintain conditions around Tandjiesberg and were not familiar with the terrain.

At the request of the families, their bodies were returned to Wales for burial. The local Harrismith Moths, police force and school cadets formed a guard of honour and acted as pall-bearers from the morgue to the station from where the bodies were taken by train to Johannesburg.

A memorial, in the form of a stone cenotaph with a stainless-steel dome, was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Kidston (*the parents*), through a law firm in Johannesburg in memory of their son Commander Glen Kidston.

It needs to be mentioned that after this fatal accident, the Puss Moth design was officially modified in 1933 to correct the inherent wing design flaw. It is interesting to know that in each accident involving wing separation in flight, abnormal wind conditions were recorded.

I attach herewith a photograph of the Kidston Monument before the vandalism, a photo of the damaged memorial and also a photo after we and the Heritage Foundation repaired the memorial. We hope to unveil the new restored Monument on 23 October 2021 and we invite you, if you are interested in this story to also attend the unveiling of the monument. We also attach herewith a photograph the bronze plate confirming the names of the aviators. One of our members made a thorough research of this specific accident, as well as other accidents in the area of Harrismith and is more than willing to assist if you require any further information.

I wish to congratulate you and your team with a very interesting and well published magazine.

H.C. Marais Old Bill (Chairman)" (*SA Flyer November 2021*)

PRESERVING WARBIRDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS:

The Supermarine Spitfire is a popular Warbird and other military aircraft favoured by restoration enthusiasts include the Messerschmitt Bf-109, the Mikoyan MiG-15, Grumman F6F Hellcat and North American P-51 Mustang. For the individual, these general aviation size Warbirds are affordable and easy to accommodate in local airports; but only organisations, typically, have the capacity to overhaul, maintain and fly larger aircraft such as the Avro Vulcan bomber, Vickers Wellington or Boeing B-29 Super Fortress. One example is the Kansas-based non-profit

organisation, Doc's Friends, which maintains and flies a B-29 from Eisenhower National Airport, Wichita, Kansas.



With DC-2 c/n 1354 Hanssin-Jukka wearing its 'Air Force One' Winter War Finnish Air Force markings as a backdrop, the Demoiselle No 20 makes for an interesting addition to the Tuulonen shopping centre. (KIMMO SALOMAA VIA JANNE SALONEN)

The Mustang, the Spitfire and others like them, the North American T-6 Texan and the Hawker Sea Fury, all these World War II era fighter aircraft are called Warbirds. Originally, it was only piston-powered, propeller driven aircraft that were referred to as Warbirds, but as jet fighters became vintage, they were included too. Today, other types of military aircraft, transports, bombers, are also now referred to as Warbirds. From the Kansas Aviation Museum's 1931 Stearman Model 4D Junior Speedmail, to UK-based Aerospace Bristol's Bristol Freighter Type 170 and the Qantas Founders Museum's Lockheed Constellation, aircraft of many different models have been restored for future generations. When vintage aircraft find their way to the restorer they are often corroded and missing vital parts such as cockpit dials and wheels. Removing corrosion and repairing the damage is a key area for restoring an airframe with the intention of making it airworthy.

The legendary Concorde has now been retired for many years and the remaining hulls sit in museums, but there has been an organisation, called Club Concorde, which wanted to bring a Concorde back to an airworthy condition to fly it. The airshows where vintage aircraft that have been restored can be seen include, the Experimental Aircraft Association's AirVenture in Oshkosh, the History of Flight Airshow in New York state; and in Europe, the Bedfordshire, UK-based Shuttleworth Collection which has displays in the summer and in France the annual La Ferté-Alais show, which takes place 50 kilometres south of Paris. Whether a Concorde ever flies again, what is true about past restoration projects and will be so for all future works, restoring aircraft is an endeavour powered by enthusiasm and love. *(Key Aero)*

'FOR THE LOVE OF FLYING.'

South African low-cost carrier FlySafair is a subsidiary of Safair and operates several routes across Sub-Saharan Africa. The airline was established in August 2013 before commencing operations in October 2014. This year marks ten years of operation for the airline.

FlySafair operates from three main bases: Cape Town International Airport (CPT), Johannesburg O. R. Tambo International Airport (JNB), and Durban's King Shaka International Airport (DUR). Next time you're taking to the skies in Africa, look for the airline's slogan, 'For The Love Of Flying.'

FlySafair operates 15 destinations in six countries with 23 routes, including Cape Town, Durban, and the Johannesburg hubs. The airline has interline partners with major international airlines, such as Air France-KLM, Qatar Airways, Emirates, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, and Proflight Zambia. FlySafair's top international routes include Johannesburg to Harare, Johannesburg to Port Louis, and Johannesburg to Zanzibar. (*SimpleFlying*)

MEMBERS WRITE:

Bruce Prescott, after a conversation last week which included some of his experiences with Boeing, sent in this anecdote about a certification exercise: "In the early 1070s, ANA [Japan] wanted a Boeing 747 with 550 passenger capacity for short haul routes, whereas the 747 had been certified for "only" 500. As ANA was adamant, Boeing carried out an evacuation exercise with 550 "unsuspecting" passengers for demonstration for the FAA, volunteers from a local Rotary club. Together with my betrothed, Pauline, I witnessed this test which was carried out in a hangar in total darkness to simulate a typical night-time emergency evacuation situation. The passengers were not told what was going to happen [so-called "ignorant" subjects]. While sitting in the cabin for a half hour with cabin lights on to simulate a night-time flight, at the 30-minute signal the warning sounded with an instruction to evacuate immediately [with no time for eyes to accommodate to darkness], to the starboard pax doors flung open and the slides deployed. One gent at the far rear door, no.5R, jumped up and out instead of just out and onto the slide. In doing so he hit his head on the doorframe and dropped straight down into the unfurling slide. As the slide inflated it popped the gent out into the air and he landed with a thud on the hangar floor, breaking a bone. A woman evacuated via the over-wing exit and instead of stepping onto the slide, she walked onto the wing and slid down and over the extended flaps, landing on the concrete floor, breaking an arm. The result – all 550 pax were evacuated in the stipulated 90 second limit but the FAA still refused to grant an exemption at that time. Just one of my anecdotes of my Seattle experience."



Just 19 of the 747-400D variants were built. (Kentaro Iemoto / WikiCommons)

While the majority of 747 operators were interested in how far their aircraft could fly the Japanese market was somewhat different. The regions topography resulted in great demand for short-haul flights and Boeing created the 747-400D (*Domestic*) especially to meet this requirement. Built as a high-density seating model optimised for short-haul domestic sectors the -400D could seat 660 passengers in a single-class configuration. In order to lower the stresses on the airframe caused by multiple take-offs and landings the variant dispensed with the wingtip extensions and winglets included on conventional -400s.

Just 19 were built between 1991 and 1995 but there are reports that Japan Air Lines wanted to take the concept even further, dispensing with galleys, lavatories and even the retractable undercarriage to reduce weight and increase capacity. Thought was reportedly given to fitting aerodynamic spats to the fixed landing gear but unfortunately no drawings of this highly unusual derivative have yet to come to light.

TOMATO KINGS: Million Dollar Company:



One of the biggest and oldest producer of tomatoes in the world is ZZ2. The company exports not only the familiar “brand” of tomatoes but also onions, mangoes, avocados, blueberries and dates, among others. The company is situated in Tzaneen in Limpopo.

Bertie van Zyl was born on 16 November 1932 on the farm Boekenhoutbult in the Mooketsi valley in Limpopo Province. Bertie left school in 1948 at the age of 16 to take over the farming responsibilities from his father. The farming activities centered on a mixed crop but focused mainly on potatoes. Life was hard and the family barely survived. Enterprising by nature, Bertie soon realised that his neighbour made more money planting tomatoes than potatoes. The climate in the fertile Mooketsi valley made it possible to plant tomato crops year-round. Although convincing his father of the viability of tomatoes was not easy, his first successful tomato crop was harvested in 1953.

ZZ2 founder and pioneer Mr Willem Van Zyl started this empire. The Birth of ZZ2 brand name: in 1902 the Anglo-Boer War came to a brutal end, many lives were lost, and a new act came into play where farmers received a registered number (*branding iron*) with which to brand their livestock. In 1903 the code ZZ2 was awarded to Burt van Zyl, the grandfather of Bertie van Zyl. Mr Bertie van Zyl decided to formally register the entity "ZZ2 Farming Enterprise" which is the company we know today in 1966. Taking over from his father in 2005, Mr Tommie van Zyl (*Master of Science in food and resource economics*), inherited a +60 000 hectares of the ZZ2 Farming Enterprise.

ZZ2 is not just farming in Limpopo alone or rather in South Africa but has branches in countries like Namibia. The hectares under production are +60 000ha - Johannesburg size - in extent. The ZZ2 Farming Enterprise farms are located in:

1. Limpopo
2. Eastern Cape
3. Western Cape
4. Gauteng
5. North West
6. Mpumalanga
7. Namibia... and growing...

The Production Game farm is +23,721ha of conservation land, where you'll find game animals like: white rhino, nyala, gemsbuck, red hartebeest, giraffe, impala, kudu, Burchell's zebra and eland.

Tomatoes, the produce that made all this possible, are produced on +2000 hectares. Harvesting happens all year round with 1ha yielding 160 000kgs on average. 20 trucks are on the road daily,

transporting nearly 4,2million kgs of tomatoes every week. Livestock alone is worth +R30 million and the Net worth of the ZZ2 Farming enterprise is estimated to be valued at +R1.1Billion. The CEO is Mr Tommie van Zyl, and ZZ2 has employed more than 8000 workers.

(#mapulanengnews)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

Next month sees the 80th Anniversary of the Warsaw Flights – see article at end of these Ramblings. We look forward to the Warsaw Flights Commemoration Service on Saturday 7 September, and then RAFOCs Battle of Britain Ladies Lunch at Wanderers on the Second Friday, 13 September, 12h30 for 13h00. (Closest to Battle of Britain Day on Sunday 15 September) We will 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 “Exigencies of the Service.”

At 13h00 sharp the traditional “Missing Man” formation will be flown by the Flying Lions. Please reserve the date in your diaries now, book, and plan to get to Wanderers in good time to view the Flypast. We will be in the VISTA room which is one floor below the main entrance -0 follow the signs. Book now for you and your guests at bookings@rafoc.org and please indicate your guests names as we will have allocated tables. Cost is R300 pp which should be paid into our bank account.

TAILPIECE:

Karma: ZRP officer Commanding Chitungwiza Chief Superintendent Matsika died today at girlfriend's house having "SEX", Junior officers say, he died spending SADC summit allowance which these junior officers did not receive as promised.

Chutzpah: An elderly lady in our homegroup shared this story. Her friend was driving to the shops. She stopped at the robots and a man stepped forward and stood at her window. He pulled out a gun and pointed it at her. As she waved him away she said, "No thanks. Not today thank you. I don't have cash on me."

HKMK: Since the elections, uMkhonto Wesizwe has been defined by erratic leadership decisions and a lack of coherence in the legislatures. According to analysts, it risks becoming a ‘one-election wonder’ if it fails to build structures and draft party policies. MK’s erratic decisions could cost it dearly, say analysts (dailymaverick.co.za)



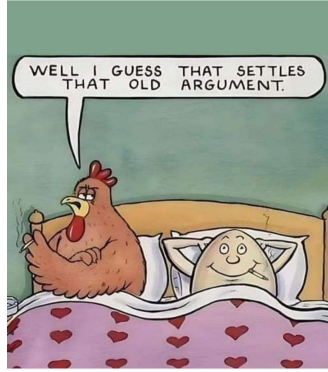
*'One day, son, all
10 recycling bins
will be yours'*



*'Rachel Reeves blamed the
heatwave on a huge yellow
ball of fiery gas left by the
previous government'*



Brilliant 😂😂😂



Just one Drink · Follow
1d · 🌐



Maybe the Aussies should stick to Break Dancing!

When you're in the club and Cotton Eyed Joe comes on



O.M.G. I'M RICH AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT

Silver in the Hair,
Gold in the Teeth,
Crystals in the Kidneys,
Sugar in the Blood,
Lead in the Ass,
Iron in the Arteries, and
an INEXHAUSTIBLE
supply of Natural Gas!
I never thought I'd
accumulate such wealth
in my old age!!!



WIFE: "There is a problem with the tractor. It has water in the carburetor."
HUSBAND: "Water in the carburetor? That's ridiculous"
WIFE: "I'm telling you the tractor has water in the carburetor"
HUSBAND: "You don't even know where the carburetor is. Where's the tractor?"
WIFE: "In the pool"

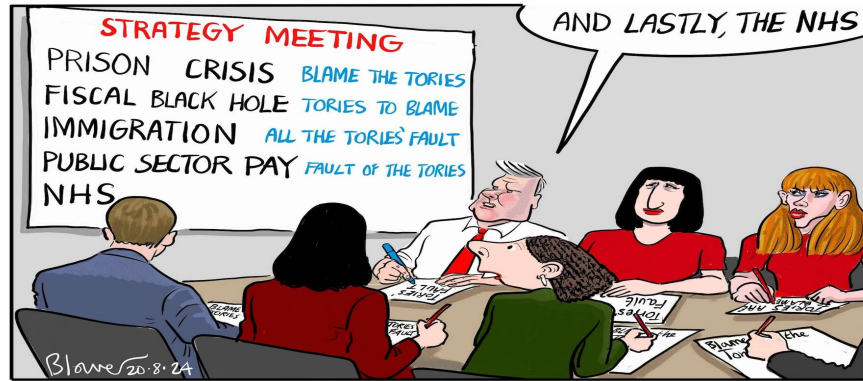
If your dog is barking at the back door and your wife is yelling at the front door, who do you let in first?
The dog, of course. He'll shut up once you let him in.

Het dit nou gemaak. Dis heerlik 🍌🍌

Chinese Melktert resep

- 玉米片
- 1罐甜玉米
- 1杯玉米粉
- 第4杯面粉
- 2个鸡蛋
- 2人造黄油融化
- 6 e的糖
- 2t发酵粉
- 1t盐
- 将所有物品混合，放入润滑盒中。
- 在180°C烘烤至熟。





WARSAW FLIGHTS:



B 24 Liberator Bombers in action

The overall participation of the South African Air Force (SAAF) in the Second World War contributed greatly to the Allies' successes. Nearly 50 000 members of the SAAF participated in the war, and South African airmen played a major role in many theatres – East Africa, Abyssinia, North Africa, Italy, Mediterranean and Europe. South Africa was the first Dominion to form an air force, and it played a role of equal importance to those of other Dominions, including Australia and Canada. In East Africa, SAAF squadrons made a considerable contribution to ultimate victory. They also served in operations in the Middle East, and undoubtedly played a vital role in reducing the enemy's air strength in the Western Desert. The SAAF participated in nearly 34 000 operations in North Africa alone, and were also actively involved in Sicily and the Dodecanese Islands. The contribution made by crews of 31 and 34 Squadrons to the Warsaw Airlift represents one of the most outstanding accomplishments in South Africa's military history.

Soon after the German occupation of Poland in September 1939, Polish liberation movements were formed to co-ordinate all resistance activities against the Germans. On 1 August 1944, the Polish partisans led an uprising in Warsaw and occupied major sectors of the city. The Germans reacted quickly and isolated the areas occupied by the partisans. Owing to the fact that the Russian forces abruptly stopped their advance towards Warsaw, the situation in the city itself soon became desperate for the partisans. They needed armour and ammunition, as well as medical supplies.

On 3 August 1944, the Polish partisans in Warsaw called for urgent help from the Allies. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to send assistance. He ordered 205 Group, commanded by a South African officer, Brigadier J T (Jimmy) Durrant, to start with extensive flights to Warsaw, despite the extremely difficult circumstances that would seriously hamper these supply flights. 205 Group included 1 586 Special Polish Duty Squadron, 178 and 148 Squadrons (334 Wing) Royal Air Force, and 31 and 34 Squadrons (2 Wing) SAAF. This operation became known as the Warsaw Airlift, also referred to as the 'Warsaw Concerto'.

The flights to Warsaw took place from 13 August to 22 September and represented a round trip of 2 815km. For the greater part of this distance, the aircraft flew over enemy territory and in broad daylight, although they were timed to reach the city in the dark. The aircraft did not fly in close formation, although they left at approximately the same time. In close formation, enemy searchlight batteries would have spotted them and pinpointed them more easily as targets for German night-fighters. They would also have been intercepted more easily. Only the Americans flew in close formation to Warsaw because they enjoyed the protection of P51 escort fighters. This they did on 18 September.

The route from the Italian bases extended from Celone or Foggia to the Adriatic Sea. From there they crossed the Scutari Lake in Albania, flew north over Yugoslavia, across the Danube to Hungary and Czechoslovakia and then over the Carpathian Mountains. Pilots then had to follow the Vistula River for the last leg to Warsaw. Supplies had to be accurately dropped on identified street areas or into specified air-supply zones.

The Liberator bomber used for this exercise weighed 25 480kg (28 tons) and was equipped with four engines. Each aircraft carried twelve 150kg metal containers, a total of approximately 1 800kg. Fuel capacity was roughly 9 000 litres. The aircraft could fly a distance of 3 714km and were armed with ten half-inch machine guns.

Only a small amount of ammunition and arms could be carried on each flight since the larger part of the carrying capacity of the aircraft was taken up by fuel. Usually, during ordinary flights, the calculated fuel reserve would be 25% to account for possible emergencies. For Warsaw, the estimated reserve was only nine percent.

The risk of enemy fire or interception over such a long flight distance caused great stress and anxiety amongst the aircrew. Many aircraft were damaged so badly that they had to carry out forced landings. Others were shot down by night-fighters or anti-aircraft guns. For most of the flight, navigators were unable to communicate with radio transmission from ground stations, owing to these being out of range. Pilots had to be on the alert to spot high mountain ranges.

On reaching the Vistula, the aircrews would become aware of a dim glow on the horizon. As they approached, it would slowly become bigger until it developed into a bright inferno. This was Warsaw burning. Owing to the thermal effects of the fires in the burning city, the aircraft would shake wildly as they flew over at approximately 350 meters. The hot air and smoke inside the aircraft would become almost intolerable. The fires that lit the sky would make the aircraft easy targets for enemy machine guns positioned on the rooftops. Pilots might be blinded by searchlights. The air would be streaked with tracer bullets, and when a Liberator exploded after a direct hit, it would appear as a small spark against the fiery background.

When Liberator EW1 05 G, commanded by Lt R R Klette, arrived over Warsaw, it was immediately caught in the bright beams of searchlights for approximately fifteen seconds and bombarded by anti-aircraft batteries. Bullets penetrated the fuselage and caused several onboard fires. Three of the four engines were hit and burst into flames, causing a severe fire which threatened to destroy the fuselage. The damaged engines were switched off and the fire-extinguishing systems switched on. The pilot succeeded, with great difficulty, in flying away from Warsaw in a south-easterly direction. As their altitude was too low, it was impossible for the crew to use their parachutes. They were still flying over densely built-up areas when a clearing suddenly appeared and Lt Klette decided to use the opportunity to make a forced landing. The Liberator finally landed on its fuselage and scraped forward over the ground for several hundred meters. To the crew's amazement, they found that they had landed in the middle of Warsaw's main airfield, which was not in use at the time. Not one of them was injured.

Another outstanding example of bravery was that of Liberator KG 872 V, commanded by Captain W E Senn. It was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and Captain Senn was seriously wounded in the thigh. The mid-upper gunner was hit in the hand. The rudder control cable of the Liberator was damaged; the elevator control was partially cut; and the hydraulic mechanism of the nose wheel was put out of action. Fuel began to leak, which increased the fire hazard. Instruments, as well as the intercom system, were put out of action. Meanwhile, the tail gunner continued firing at the searchlights and shot out four of them.

The 1 450km flight home, without maps and using only the automatic rudder control, was extremely stressful. The Liberator reached the Danube at daybreak and went on to land safely at Foggia. Captain Senn's crew was at no stage aware that he had been wounded.

Lt J C Groenewald was co-pilot of Liberator EW 248 P on its second flight to Warsaw on 16 August 1944. Of all the narrow escapes during these sorties, his experience was certainly among the most surprising and dramatic. His Liberator reached Warsaw just after midnight. During the flight over the burning city, the aircraft was caught by searchlights and engaged by anti-aircraft fire. Hit several times, it soon became engulfed in flames. The pilot, Major I J M Odendaal, ordered the crew to bail out.

As Groenewald grabbed his parachute, the Liberator was hit once again, and virtually blew up. Groenewald was hurled into the air by the violence of the explosion. He found himself falling with his parachute still clasped like a suitcase in his hand. Fortunately, he kept his presence of mind and managed to fasten the parachute to its harness and pull the rip-chord. He landed uninjured, except for burns to his face and arms.

Using the parachute as a blanket to keep warm, Lt Groenewald spent the rest of the night in the German-controlled area at the spot where he had landed. At daybreak, he succeeded in stumbling to a farmstead, about 2km away. There, a sympathetic Pole took care of him and hid him under some hay. He was taken by horse-cart to a well-equipped little hospital, run by an old professor who had earlier been a lecturer at Warsaw University. Nurses, disguised as farm labourers, manned the hospital. Groenewald was treated there for ten days, during which several skin grafts were performed on him by a Polish surgeon. When he had completely recovered, he was provided with false identity documents and, disguised as an old Polish farm labourer who was too old for military service, he worked on a farm as a foreman. His new name was Jan Galles.

Later, Groenewald joined the Polish partisans and fought with them against the Germans. In February 1945, six months after his Liberator had been shot down, Russian divisions reached the area where Groenewald fought. He was taken to Moscow, where he was handed over to the British Military Legation.

From there, he was able to send a cable to his wife, who had been receiving a pension from the widow's fund for several months.

Ultimately in vain, but a contribution of great significance the Polish uprising was one of the most disastrous in the history of modern warfare. However, in terms of the Allied war effort, it was not a total failure. Nearly 10 000 Germans were killed, 7 000 went missing and 7 000 were wounded (Churchill, 1948, p 128). This meant a loss of manpower, something the Germans could ill afford at that stage of the war.

As far as the Warsaw Airlift is concerned, however, a military lesson is to be learned from this episode: Adventurous initiatives which are unlikely to work should not be undertaken for purely political motives. The flights undertaken from Italy were conducted under the most hazardous circumstances and as indicated very clearly in the individual flight reports, the crews were battling against overwhelming odds. Their objectives were unrealistic and militarily catastrophic. Seen from a military perspective, this was a reckless operation and should never have been attempted.

The airlift was, in many instances, futile and utterly senseless. When Bor-Komorowski surrendered to the Germans, the partisans had tried for 63 days, in vain, to liberate their capital. Of the approximately 40 000 men and women who were members of the underground army, roughly 18 000 lost their lives, about 25 000 were wounded (6 500 seriously), and the total number of civilian casualties was estimated at 180 000 people. Nevertheless, the airlift invokes feelings of deep respect for the aircrews who participated in the flights to Warsaw and risked their own lives.

The Warsaw operation resulted in a firm bond of friendship between the crew members who took part in the task flights to Warsaw and the Polish community in South Africa. The Warsaw Airlift is, therefore, important from a cultural-historical perspective.

Conclusion

Several individuals received awards for gallantry, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. Both strategists and statesmen have commented on these operations. In his book, *The Central Blue*, Air Marshal Sir John Slessor refers to the Warsaw flights as 'a story of the utmost gallantry and self-sacrifice on the part of the aircrews who participated'. Josef Garlinski says that 'the great sacrifice of the young men who died with the full knowledge that their death could not alter the course of the events, is an example of the utmost heroism', and Winston Churchill describes the courageous conduct of these air crews as 'an epic of human courage'. It is one of the tragedies of war that sacrifices like those of the Allied airmen who gave their lives to assist their Polish allies were ultimately in vain.

(Abridged – this article first appeared in the Military History Journal – Volume 13 No 1 of June 2004. It can be found on the SA Military History Society's website or here: The Warsaw Airlift, a triumph of South African bravery) - DefenceWeb

Statistical Information

The contributions of the squadrons that participated in the Warsaw Airlift can perhaps best be appreciated from a study of the following statistical information:

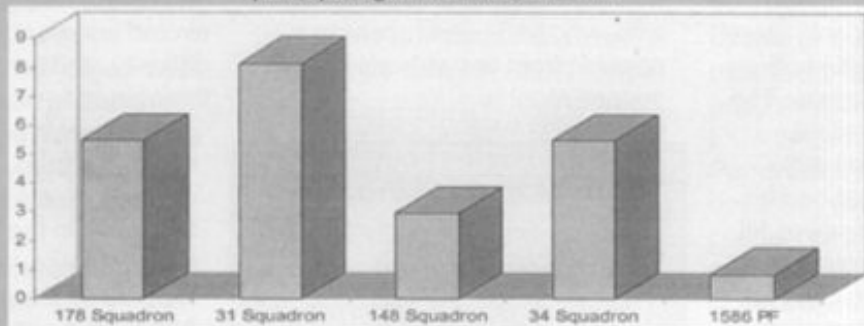
Graph 1: Number of aircraft lost during the Warsaw Airlift

Squadron	Number of aircraft that participated	Number of aircraft lost	Percentage of aircraft lost (%)
178	21	4	19,0
31	26	8	30,8
148	22	3	13,6
1586 PF	14	7	50,0
34	3	1	33,3
Total	86	23	26,7

Graph 2: Number of containers dropped into Warsaw

Squadron	Number of containers dropped	Percentage of containers dropped (%)
178	132	27,2
31	228	47,0
148	80	16,5
34	33	6,8
1586 PF	12	2,5
Total	485	100

Average number of containers dropped by aircraft participating in the Warsaw Airlift



Graph 3: Number of aircraft that reached Warsaw

Squadron	Number of participating aircraft	Number of aircraft that reached Warsaw	Success rate in percentage %
178	24	16	66,7
31	28	25	89,3
148	27	10	37,0
1586 PF	14	2	14,3
34	6	5	83,3
Total	99	58	58,6

In total, 99 aircraft participated in the flights from Italy (see Graph 3). Only 58 aircraft succeeded in reaching Warsaw. In particular, 31 Squadron did especially well, because 25 out of 28 Liberators detailed for the flights succeeded in reaching Warsaw. This represents a success rate of 89,2%. In contrast, 178 Squadron had a success rate of 67%, 148 Squadron a success rate of only 37%, and the Polish Special Duties Flight 1586, only 14%. Taking part only in the last sorties, 34 Squadron managed to obtain a success rate of 83,3%, five of its six Liberators reaching Warsaw.

An analysis of the number of containers successfully dropped compared to the number of flights undertaken to Warsaw will indicate clearly that the South African squadrons achieved a high success rate (see Graph 4).

Graph 4: Success rate of containers dropped over Warsaw

Squadron	Number of containers dropped	Number of aircraft that participated in the flights to Warsaw	Average number of containers dropped by each aircraft
178	132	24	5,5
31	228	28	8,14
148	80	27	2,96
34	33	6	5,5
1586 PF	12	14	0,86
Total	485	99	4,9

This statistical information gives ample evidence of the sound training, courage and perseverance of the South African crews that participated in the Warsaw Airlift from 13 August to 22 September 1944.