



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 227

4<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024

### GREETINGS:

Lost in transition no more, Cyril Ramaphosa's living his best life (at our expense)... Crime goes upmarket – armed robbery, shots fired in Nicolway (that's what happens when you name something after Winnie...) mass shooting in Lusikisiki claims 18 lives... Activist shot in retaliation for speaking out against municipal 'water mafia'... eThekweni metro executives connived a tender and kickback scheme to finance an internal ANC political campaign... Zizi Khodwa wants corruption charges against him withdrawn – well, he would now, wouldn't he?... Mkwebane slammed for racist remarks about Indian judicial officers... Transnet Freight Rail officially splits into two - amid a backlash from labour... Mchunu grandstanding to beat the Mad Hatter... JSE wobbles due to Iranian attack on Israel... Simelane charged over VBS loan... 'Disappointed but not surprised': Pandor unmoved by Malema's 'cowardly' VBS apology.

Israel launches second wave of air strikes on Beirut... takes out Nasrallah and hierarchy... Hezbollah "reaping the whirlwind"... invades Northern Lebanon... Iran loses its mind and (tries to) bombard Tel Aviv with ballistic missiles... "debauched insensibility" of Western politicians (See article at end)... Kamala Harris the Meghan Markle of American politics... Taiwan slammed by typhoon Kraython... Kris Kristofferson Country music star dies aged 88... Dame Maggie Smith dies aged 89... Tornado warnings issued in England... Starmer's ship is listing... faces profound humiliation over Labour's private school tax raid... wealthy and skillful are fleeing Britain... 'Migrants were Macron's revenge for Brexit'... Albanian drug gangs use migrants to get stranglehold on Britain's cannabis market... England demolish Australia, level ODI series... Man Utd's recurring ineptitude... Nearly a thousand British tourists ill after trips to Cape Verde... Loose Women celebrate 25 years with silver jubilee portrait... Couple caught performing sex act on easyJet flight... Trans rapist referred to as 'she' by judge... but sent to male prison... where's Meghan? Harry going it alone?...

## RAF CENTENARIAN HONOURED AT PORTRUSH AIR SHOW:



A 100-year-old Royal Air Force veteran was in attendance at the Northern Ireland International Airshow as the RAF honoured Northern Ireland's unique part in its history over the last century. Londonderry resident and wartime Women's Auxiliary Air Force flight mechanic Margaret Robertson was the RAF's guest of honour on Sunday afternoon at the North Coast event. During the war, she worked on the Lancaster aircraft, which took to the skies over Portrush on Saturday afternoon alongside a display by a

modern-day Typhoon Display Aircraft bearing the iconic D-Day 'Invasion Stripes'. Mrs. Robertson served at RAF Dishforth, a training facility for Bomber Command crews. A Vampire aircraft bearing the historic markings of the Aldergrove-based 502 (Ulster) Squadron, also graced the skies as crowds of around 75,000 people watched the airshow from vantage points around Portrush and Portstewart on Saturday afternoon.

Northern Ireland served as a hub of aircraft production during the Second World War, as well as a base for submarine-hunting aircraft that played a pivotal role in winning the Battle of the Atlantic, ensuring that the UK could be resupplied with food and key materials. Today, the local defence sector continues to deliver exceptional operational capability for the RAF, while making a significant £900 million contribution to the local economy.



Northern Ireland's people, and spirit of innovation, have been central to the RAF's story for over 100 years and so we were delighted to welcome our centenarian Margaret to the Northern Ireland International Airshow to see our historic and modern aircraft, and meet today's aviators. We continue to honour the sacrifice and bravery of Margaret and her generation, while recognising that Northern

Ireland plays a significant role in today's RAF – through its world class defence and cybersecurity industries, regular and reserve personnel". *Air Marshal Sean Reynolds, Air Officer Northern Ireland.*

## **DISRUPT, DECEIVE AND DISABLE:**

A new advanced radar that will allow RAF pilots to locate, identify and suppress enemy air defences has flown for the first time. A prototype of the European Common Radar System Mark 2 (ECRS Mk2) was operated on a Typhoon at BAE Systems in Lancashire. As well as performing traditional functions, the ECRS Mk2 can provide advanced electronic warfare capabilities.



*Typhoon with the ECRS radar before first flight (Picture: BAE Systems).*

This will enable Typhoons to locate and deny use of an adversary's radar with a powerful electronic jamming attack, whilst staying beyond the reach of threats. It also allows for greater freedom of manoeuvre while on missions and has extended range missile guidance. This ensures missiles remain accurate, on course and effective over a longer distance. Air Commodore Nick Lowe, Head of Capability Delivery Combat Air and Typhoon Senior Responsible Officer, RAF, said test is a "positive step"

## **RED ARROWS HOMEWARD BOUND:**



*A Cold Start in Iceland as Maple Leaf Team Homeward Bound*

The Red Arrows and their A400M Atlas support aircraft have been treated to a different type of air display - taking in the Northern Lights as they made their way home from their Maple Hawk tour in Canada. They left North America earlier this week and stopped in Iceland via a refueling stop in



Greenland. The team shared some stunning images of the final stages of their journey back to the UK on social media. The Royal Canadian Air Force invited the team to tour six cities. The Reds put on a series of displays over some breathtaking backdrops including Niagara Falls, the Old Port of Montreal, the harbour of St John's and central Ottawa. As they performed a series of colourful flypasts in Montreal they painted the sky with red and white vapour trails - the colours of the Canadian flag.



But after five weeks on tour and putting on displays for millions of people it was time for them to take in their own spectacle in the sky in Iceland. (*ForcesNet*)

## **RUSSIAN 'FLOATING BOMB' JUST OFF KENT BEACH –:**



*Shades of the "Lady R in Simonstown"...*

Life in Margate (UK) continues as usual, despite the threat of a stranded ship loaded with 20,000 tons of explosive cargo nearby. The Ruby, a Maltese-flagged Russian cargo ship, is carrying twenty thousand tonnes of potentially explosive ammonium nitrate fertiliser after leaving Russia in July. A maritime explosion could happen.

## AIRBUS SA 30 YEARS

### ON:



Airbus Southern Africa celebrates its 30th anniversary in South Africa, Nam-Binh Hoang, Managing Director of Airbus Southern Africa, has highlighted Airbus' deep commitment to Africa and its thriving Southern African operations. The Airbus Group, one of the world's largest aerospace companies, operates across three primary divisions: Commercial Aircraft, Defence and Space, and Helicopters.

The commercial aircraft sector is renowned for models such as the A320, A350 and the giant A380, whilst the Defence and Space division delivers military aircraft like the C295 and Eurofighter, as well as satellite systems for communication and Earth observation.

However, it is the Helicopters division that is taking centre stage in Southern Africa. Airbus Southern Africa, headquartered at Grand Central Airport in Midrand, Johannesburg, has been a pivotal hub for supporting helicopter operations across the continent for the past 30 years. With a workforce of over 80 people, the facility provides vital services to more than 60 operators managing a fleet of over 300 helicopters in Africa. Airbus Southern Africa's capabilities extend far beyond just selling helicopters; it provides maintenance, pilot and technician training, spare parts, and a range of technical services, ensuring operators can keep their fleets in the air rather than on the ground.

### MEMBERS WRITE:

Derrick Page writes: Good Morning, Winter snap come and gone up North? Sitting in Aquila Private Game Reserve Reception hoping WiFi is alive. We are enjoying a special trip to see flora and fauna (birds and animals) in a huge natural reserve. Have seen a good variety including four of the big five. Leopard remains elusive. Saw spectacular mountains with many peaks covered with copious snow and others with dustings of snow on the drive to Aquila near Touwsriver. Definitely brisk cool weather with weak sun thus far. Apologies for Club Lunch on Friday. Wish all attendees a pleasant gathering. Warm Greetings, Derrick



Our Speaker this week is RAFOC member, Dr John Ledger, currently Consulting Editor of African Wildlife and Environment magazine and writes a conservation column for the African Hunting Gazette. John is also familiar with the nuclear and renewable energy fields and is a past Chairman of the Sustainable Energy Society of Southern Africa (SESSA). He is now retired from most businesses but still keeps his fingers on the pulse of what is happening in the energy forums. In these interesting energy times in South Africa, his talk will grasp the thorny nettle of Climate Change – Crisis? Catastrophe? Or Con? He writes: "Good to hear from you, and I look forward to seeing everyone on Friday. If possible, please arrange for a new RAFOC tie for me to purchase, as my last one was rudely severed by the emergency team at the Milpark Hospital. I have decided to risk my life by talking about climate change and have updated the bio for the menu accordingly. I have made changes to my job descriptions as I am no longer associated with academia. I have also included a more recent photo which is a better rendering of my age-battered visage than the other rather optimistic image."

## CHEERS FOR NOW:

This Friday, we will have a talk on climate issues, renewable energy and threats to biodiversity, by Dr John Ledger (see above) who is eminently well qualified to address these issues:

Friday 4 October, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers. Thanks to those who have booked - please be sure we have your guests names, if any – look forward to seeing you! And yes, we've circulated the parking code beforehand... (\*4\*6138)

Next month Lunch moves to the second Friday, 8 November, closest to Remembrance (Armistice) Day. Colonel Jim Findlay will be our speaker and we will lay wreaths at the Wanderers Wall of Remembrance.

Please also be reminded that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the Alpine 44 Flights, so hope you will be able to join us at SAAF Memorial Bays Hill on Sunday 13 October 2024 at 10h00 - Please be seated by 09h50.

## TAILPIECE:

*"I am applying to be a member of the Labour party. The politics are not of interest to me but wow the fringe benefits are great." – Stephen B*



*'The Labour Party was right all along. There is a magic money tree and it's called Lord Alli'*



*'Another month of the leadership contest will cause undue suffering to the public. We might have to leave the ECHR'*





"But all the blueberries...the wholegrains... the skimmed milk...the decaffeinated coffee... the broccoli...you mean it's all been for nothing?"



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### A SEISMIC MOMENT:

*(This has to be the most coherent article I've yet seen on the Middle East conflict - Ed)*

Israel's spectacular military success in Lebanon suggests a new world order. Here in Israel, there's been deep relief and celebration over the killing of the Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, along with some 20 senior Hezbollah and Iranian operatives who were meeting with him in an underground bunker in Beirut.

It's not just the removal of an arch-terrorist and key strategist of mass murder across the region and the world. It's not just the blow this has inflicted on the genocidal Iranian regime in which Nasrallah was a vital cog.

No less important to the beleaguered Israelis has been the demonstration of jaw-dropping intelligence and military genius in a series of brilliant manoeuvres — the rapid degradation of

Hezbollah's rocket arsenal, the exploding pagers and two-way radios and the elimination of the entire Radwan high command through one missile strike, leaving Hezbollah already in chaos and on the ropes when Nasrallah and his fellow mass murderers were killed by mighty bunker-buster bombs.

To a country still deeply traumatised by the astounding failure of its intelligence and military establishment to prevent the barbaric pogrom on October 7, thus shattering the sacred promise that Israel embodied for the Jewish remnant of the Holocaust that this was the one country that would guarantee their safety, the super-smart and perfectly executed decimation of the enemy — in just two weeks, after almost a year of traumatic horror, grief and loss — has been a national shot in the arm.

Of course, the morally bankrupt and, frankly, increasingly out-to-lunch west doesn't see it in that way at all. Once again, it's blaming Israel for attempting to defeat its mortal enemies rather than surrendering to them and is siding with those intent upon genocide rather than supporting their intended victims.

Having almost universally failed to acknowledge Hezbollah's 8,000-plus rockets and missiles with which it has depopulated northern Israel by creating around 80,000 refugees inside their own country in a daily onslaught that started on October 8, the west has accused Israel of escalation!

In a fit of the vapours, the French president Emanuel Macron called on the United States to pressure Israel to accept a plan for a 21-day ceasefire with Hezbollah. He foamed: "Israel cannot invade Lebanon today. War is not possible in Lebanon today; it would be a huge mistake, a huge risk of escalation."

About the threat posed by Hezbollah and Iran not just to Israel but to the civilised world, the distinctly uncivilised Macron was silent. In a speech a few years ago, Nasrallah said:

"Lebanon was a Christian country, but we took it and now it's ours. After we kill all the Jews in Palestine, we will just have begun. We won't stop until every country on Earth is ruled by the law of Allah and the people of Islam, like our prophet promised."

In a continuation of the bizarre moral inversion it uses to demonise Israel and sanitise those who aim to destroy it, the western media have nevertheless presented Nasrallah as a cross between Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln and Mother Theresa.

The New York Times described him as: "a towering figure... A powerful orator, he was beloved among many Shiite Muslims, a historically marginalised group in the Arab world, and created a state within a state in Lebanon that provided social services."

The Washington Post eulogised him as a "moral compass" and "father figure." The Guardian described him as a "qualified Islamic scholar, effective public speaker, and competent organizer."

You would never know from this nauseating media fandom that Nasrallah was responsible for dozens of terrorist attacks and the murder of countless hundreds of people. These included the 1983 truck bombing of the US embassy in Beirut and the bombing of US and French marine barracks in Beirut in which 380 people were murdered; the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in which 85 were murdered; the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al Hariri when 21 were murdered, and numerous other bombings, kidnappings, hijackings and attempted atrocities — not to mention the rocket and missile attacks on Israel just in the past year.

Those governing the US, UK and EU have been no less despicable.

The EU's vice-president Josep Borrell told reporters: "What we do is to put all diplomatic pressure to a ceasefire, but nobody seems to be able to stop Netanyahu, neither in Gaza nor in the West Bank."



The idea that the urgent task was actually to stop Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran clearly never occurred to him. He wanted instead to stop Israel from stopping them. What kind of debauched imbecility is this?

US president Joe Biden said grudgingly that the killing of Nasrallah was a “measure of justice” for the victims of Hezbollah terrorism — but he then went on to call yet again for a ceasefire, as did Britain’s Starmer government. A ceasefire, of course, would allow Hezbollah to regroup and continue to pose a mortal threat to Israeli lives.

In unattributable briefings, the Biden administration was mulish and resentful about Israel’s sensational seizing of the military advantage. White House officials effectively accused Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, of pulling the wool over their eyes by appearing to go along with a ceasefire plan while all the time planning to kill the enemy. Oh dear!

The Biden administration is simply furious that Israel defied the Americans’ instructions and carried out these strikes without telling them. For the past year, the Bidenites have been behaving like the most arrogant and amoral of colonial administrators, bullying and blackmailing Israel into surrender by presuming to instruct the sovereign Jewish state how not to defend itself.

It’s taken Israel — in extremis — to show the spineless west that sometimes you have to make war to prevent a worse war; that in a war, you only win if the enemy is totally defeated, otherwise the enemy wins; and that you can only win if you fight with that aim in mind.

Israel has achieved more in two weeks against America’s enemy Hezbollah — which has so much American blood on its hands — than the US has achieved in more than two decades.

More significant than that, Israel has now been seen to have faced down America. This will have a dramatic and very deep impact on the Arab world.

The Arabs think that America has abandoned them for Iran — which indeed it has. Accordingly, the Arabs have come to regard America as their enemy. Now they are looking upon Israel — for whom America has also become a lethally false friend — as their brave and valorous defender.

As a result, it is Israel, not the United States of America, which is now emerging as the major player in the Middle East and the chief defender of civilised values in the world. That’s quite an achievement. And it’s happened because of the civilisational collapse of America and the west.

Given how the Americans have been undermining and sabotaging Israel’s defence for the past year, it is fervently to be hoped that Israel is telling the Iran-genuflecting Bidenites precisely zero about what it’s doing.

The west doesn’t realise how this abominable reaction demonstrates that it has now lost the geopolitical plot big time. For while western media and politicians were eulogising a genocidal tyrant and spitting on his designated Israeli victim for not agreeing to commit national suicide, the Arab and Muslim world was reacting very differently.

Although the Islamic death cultists had a meltdown over Nasrallah’s demise, there were scenes of wild jubilation among thousands of Arabs and Muslims.

In Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, Arabs and Muslims distributed celebratory sweets and cakes and danced in the streets to express their unbridled joy at Nasrallah’s removal from this earth and thanked Israel for “getting rid of our garbage.”

*(Shortened version of original article sent in by Brian Stableford. If anyone would like the full article, let us know and we’ll send it individually)*

## LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY:

*Found this on a Facebook site: I have no idea who put this together, but it is wonderful, especially if you're North of 70!*

Long ago and far away, in a land that time forgot,  
Before the days of Dylan, or the dawn of Camelot.  
There lived a race of innocents, and they were you and me.

For Ike was in the White House in that land where we were born,  
Where navels were for oranges, and Peyton Place was porn.  
We longed for love and romance, and waited for our Prince,  
Eddie Fisher married Liz, and no one's seen him since.

We danced to 'Little Darlin,' and sang to 'Stagger Lee'  
And cried for Buddy Holly in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
Only girls wore earrings then, and 3 was one too many,  
And only boys wore flat-top cuts, except for Jean McKinney.

And only in our wildest dreams did we expect to see  
A boy named George with Lipstick, in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We fell for Frankie Avalon, Annette was oh, so nice,  
And when they made a movie, they never made it twice.

We didn't have a Star Trek Five, or Psycho Two and Three,  
Or Rocky-Rambo Twenty in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
Miss Kitty had a heart of gold, and Chester had a limp,  
And Reagan was a Democrat whose co-star was - a chimp.

We had a Mr. Wizard, but not a Mr. T,  
And Oprah couldn't talk yet, in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We had our share of heroes, we never thought they'd go,  
At least not Bobby Darin, or Marilyn Monroe.

For youth was still eternal, and life was yet to be,  
And Elvis was forever in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We'd never seen the rock band that was Grateful to be Dead,  
And Airplanes weren't named Jefferson, and Zeppelins were not Led.

And Beatles lived in gardens then, and Monkees lived in trees,  
Madonna was Mary in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We'd never heard of microwaves, or telephones in cars,  
And babies might be bottle-fed, but they were not grown in jars.

And pumping iron got wrinkles out, and 'gay' meant fancy-free,  
And dorms were never co-Ed in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We hadn't seen enough of jets to talk about the lag,  
And microchips were what was left at the bottom of the bag.

And hardware was a box of nails, and bytes came from a flea,  
And rocket ships were fiction in the Land That Made Me, Me.  
T-Birds came with portholes, and side shows came with freaks,  
And bathing suits came big enough to cover both your cheeks.

And Coke came just in bottles, and skirts below the knee,

And Castro came to power near the Land That Made Me, Me.  
We had no Crest with Fluoride, we had no Hill Street Blues,  
We had no patterned pantyhose or Lipton herbal tea or prime-time ads for those dysfunctions in the  
Land That Made Me, Me.

There were no golden arches, no Perrier to chill,  
And fish were not called Wanda, and cats were not called Bill  
And middle-aged was 35 and old was forty-three,  
And ancient were our parents in the Land That Made Me, Me.

But all things have a season, or so we've heard them say,  
And now instead of Maybelline we swear by Retin-A.  
They send us invitations to join AARP,  
We've come a long way, baby, from the Land That Made Me, Me.

So now we face a brave new world in slightly larger jeans,  
And wonder why they're using smaller print in magazines.  
And we tell our children's children of the way it used to be,  
Long ago and far away in the Land That Made Me, Me.

*If you didn't grow up in the fifties, you missed the greatest time in history,  
Hope you enjoyed this read as much as I did when I was Me.*