



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 229 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024

### GREETINGS:

Full Moon tonight... first big rain of the season on Tuesday... Warnings of severe weather ahead... SIU report on collusion and corruption – ABB and Eskom senior managers, NFSAS and every Tom, Dick and Harry under Blade Nzimande... “endemic corruption” and “culture of impunity”... Mapisa Nqakula committed to High Court on 12 counts of corruption... Pule Mabe “steps aside” - sanctimonious clown Mbalula “lauds” him... “Man Alone” – Mandela’s Top Cop – exposing SA’s ceaseless sabotage... Tito Mboweni punches his time card for the last time at 65...” How can we be called sellouts? asks witless Lamola... SACP “re-evaluating its role” in the GNU (when thieves fall out)... Mkhwebane ditches EFF... Lobola goes wrong – multiple family shootings in Bergville... Drip Footwear has gone into liquidation... Eskom blames delinquent municipalities, errors made by government for them asking for 36% increase in prices (well, they would, wouldn’t they?)... Arcelor Mittal in trouble due Chinese steel supply glut... Durban man’s body sent to Nigeria by mistake- (Oh, sorry about that...)

King Charles visits Australia... North Korea blows up border crossings with the South in blatant provocation... Hezbollah uses UN Peacekeepers as human shields in Lebanon... Mayor of Beirut blown away by Israeli response... Israel considers its options in Iran... Russia using an extremely old D-74 122mm howitzer artillery gun (likely from North Korea) on the Ukraine frontlines... Kamala Harris embroiled in plagiarism row... “Biden’s chaotic Afghanistan withdrawal emboldened Putin”... Taliban bans all images of living things... Tornadoes kill four and leave three million without power in Florida... Ryanair axes thousands of flights to Germany in tax row... James Cleverly crashes out - spent too much time in the pub... Labour’s surrender of the Chagos Islands - Xi Jinping rubbing his hands with glee... terrifying rise in Left-wing anti-Semitism has been laid bare... Britain is being run like a Ponzi scheme... collapse is imminent... enjoy your local pub while it lasts – before Labour’s ‘banter cops’ arrive... Conkers cheating row as men’s champion found with steel chestnut - By Jove, what a cad, Sir!!... German Thomas Tuchel now England football manager...(Whatever next?)

## ALPINE44 80TH ANNIVERSARY:

In October 1944 SAAF 2 Wing, consisting of 31 and 34 Squadrons, and part of RAF 205 Bomber Group under Maj. Gen. Jimmy Durrant, based in Southern Italy near Foggia, was tasked with a supply dropping mission to the Partisans operating in the Po Valley north of Genoa. Four drop zones were selected, code named Morris, Dodge, Parrot and Chrysler, with 5 Liberators assigned to each. Weather conditions during the beginning of October 1944 were terrible, but the forecast for the night of the 12th was for a break, and the mission was given the go-ahead. The aircraft took off at regular intervals from about 16h00 hours, the flights would be about 8 hours, and they would be back at around midnight. At the briefing the crews were told to return to base if they faced bad weather. The flights encountered persistent, heavy rain, low clouds, and frequent flashes of lightning. Eleven aircraft turned around, only three found their target, and six aircraft failed to return, with the loss of 48 men. The meteorologists had forecast a westerly wind, but, unbeknown to all, the wind was now blowing from the east, resulting in the aircraft being roughly 60 km west of where they should have been, with disastrous consequences. Five aircraft crashed into the Alps and one, KH158, is missing to this day, presumed to have ditched in the Ligurian Sea off Genoa. The bravery and sacrifice of the 48 members of 31 and 34 squadrons of the South African Air Force (SAAF), Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), who lost their lives 80 years ago during that mission were commemorated at a Memorial Service in Pretoria. Attending and participating were children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of the lost aircrew. This was the largest loss of life in a single day in the SAAF's 105-year history.



*Emilio Coccia, President of the Zonderwater Block ex-POW Association laid a wreath.*

Speaking at the Service, at the SAAF memorial - Bays' Hill, National President of SAAFA Reverend Trevor Slade said 80 years ago these men offered their lives and their future to bring relief and support to Italian partisans struggling against an evil enemy. He paid tribute to the Alpine 44 veterans association and the residents of the Italian Alps for keeping their memories alive. The Memorial Fly-past was performed by 2 SAAF Museum Cessna 185 "Kiewiets" flown by RAFOC member Carl Bollweg and Charles Pratley, younger son of the late Kim Pratley, of "Pratley Putty" fame.

Martin Urry, Chairman of Alpine 44, which organise the annual services, pointed out that many of those who died in the Italian Alps on the night of 12 October 1944, were little more than boys. The

majority of the crew members were RAF personnel seconded to the SAAF Squadrons. On one aircraft – KG 999 – the pilot was 21-year-old Charlie Nel of Oudtshoorn, and one of his crew members, RAF Sgt R Bailey, was only 19 – emphasising that during war they grew up quickly. Urry is the nephew of Major S S Urry, the pilot of 31 Squadron Liberator KH 158 which has never been found. It is believed to have crashed into the sea between Genoa and La Spezia.

## RAF RIVET JOINT LANDMARK JOURNEY:



An RAF Rivet Joint has been the first to complete a surveillance journey from NATO's most southerly point in the Mediterranean to the Barents Sea in the high north, supported by the United States Air Force. A noteworthy achievement with the aircraft launching from Souda Bay, in Greece, and transiting through multiple NATO partners' airspace, including its newest member, Finland, up to the Barents Sea, prior to recovering to its home base; RAF Waddington.

The Air and Space Commander, Air Marshal Marshall emphasised the significance of the journey; "This is a landmark moment and demonstrates the UK's unwavering commitment to NATO".

(Air Marshal Marshall, Air and Space Commander)

The RC-135W Rivet Joint aircraft from 51 Squadron, forms part of the RAF's Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance Force and has the ability to Hoover up a huge amount of data which on-board crew analysts can quickly process, exploit and then disseminate high priority information to air and ground units in real time. The Rivet Joint routinely conducts transits along the borders of individual NATO countries but completing it in one sortie demonstrates a projection of capability that puts the UK front and centre in the defence of NATO airspace alongside our US partners. Officer Commanding 51 Squadron highlighted how beneficial it is to work closely with NATO allies; "Working directly with NATO allows our crews to practice the tactics, techniques and procedures required to support a large Combined Air Operation". (*Officer Commanding 51 Sqn*). Highlighting the strength of the enduring alliance through the RAF's continued interoperability and cooperation in NATO's air domain, it reaffirms the UK's relationships with the United States Air Force and our NATO allies – what better way to mark NATO's 75th year!



## “BUFF” AT 72 STILL GOING STRONG ON ROLLS ROYCE ENGINES:



*The legendary Boeing B-52 has outlived several generations of newer bombers and still flies on...*

The B-52 is expected to remain in service with the USAF until 2050. The USAF still has 72 active B-52H bombers in its inventory, operational with the following units and locations of the United States Air Force: 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB in Louisiana. The Boeing B-52 Stratofortress is a long-range strategic bomber designed and developed by Boeing in the early 1950s. The type has been in service with the United States Air Force (USAF) for over 70 years. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has been operating the type for over 40 years. The B-52 has the capability of 70,000 pounds (32,000 kg) of weapons and a combat range of 8,800 miles (14,200 km). Despite entering service with the USAF over seven decades ago, the USAF still operates 72 examples of the type. Following Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945, the American military was looking for a long-range strategic bomber capable of performing worldwide missions without the need to use foreign bases. The plane needed to cruise at 300 mph and have a combat range of 5,000 miles. The request got three companies to bid: Boeing, Consolidated Aircraft, and Glenn L. Martin Company. After many discussions and back-and-forth meetings between the Air Force and Boeing, it was agreed that Boeing would build the "B-47 Stratojet." The aircraft featured a 35-degree swept-back wing and was to be powered by eight jet engines paired in four underwing pods.

Despite calls for further revisions and the possibility of canceling the order and starting a new competition, the USAF agreed to what would become the Boeing B-52A. On April 15, 1952, the B-52 flew from Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington, to Larson Air Force Base in Grant County, Washington. After building only three B-52As, the Air Force requested several revisions, resulting in the B-52B being a much-improved bomber with new turbofan engines.

As highlighted by the Air Force, Boeing B-52 bombers were used in combat for the first time on June 18, 1965, to strike a communist stronghold in South Vietnam before returning to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. After the Vietnam War (1955-1975), the B-52 was not used in combat until the 1991 Gulf War with Iraq. Following NATO's decision to bomb Serbia during the Kosova War between March and June 1999, B-52s were not used in combat again until Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001, following terrorists hijacked planes and crashed them into the World Trade Center and

Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Between 2013 and 2015, the B-52Hs received several upgrades and are scheduled to receive new Rolls-Royce F130 engines manufactured at the company's American factory in Indianapolis, Indiana. With the addition of the new engines, the aircraft is expected to remain in service with the USAF until 2050. (*SimpleFlying.*)

*ED. Coincidentally a link to the IWM with the B52 story was sent in by Gordon Dyne. It's a good article and tour around the aircraft*

[HTTPS://WWW.IWM.ORG.UK/HISTORY/WHY-THE-LEGENDARY-B-52-IS-OUTLIVING-NEWER-BOMBERS?UTM\\_SOURCE=EMAIL&UTM\\_MEDIUM=EMAIL\\_WEEKLY\\_10\\_OCT\\_2024&UTM\\_CAMPAIGN=MKTG\\_IWM\\_DUXFORD%20HISTORY\\_PAGE\\_AWARENESS\\_UK\\_PROSPECTING\\_HISTORY\\_PAGE\\_ENEWS&UTM\\_TERM=B-52&UTM\\_CONTENT=SHORT\\_FORM&UTM\\_AUDIENCE=SUBSCRIBERS](https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/why-the-legendary-b-52-is-outliving-newer-bombers?utm_source=email&utm_medium=email_weekly_10_oct_2024&utm_campaign=mktg_iwm_duxford%20history_page_awareness_uk_prospecting_history_page_eneews&utm_term=b-52&utm_content=short_form&utm_audience=subscribers)

## MAN ALONE:

*Man Alone* tells the incredible story of how a former anti-apartheid intelligence operative became one of the country's most important police figures, leading units that fought to dismantle powerful gang networks - while battling immense pressure from corrupt systems that took root during the apartheid era.

In this thrilling account, Caryn Dolley explores: The dark legacies of apartheid-era policing structures and how they still shape the relationship between law enforcement and criminal syndicates today.

The heroic yet dangerous fight Major-General Lincoln waged to protect South Africa's communities against the toxic alliance of gangsters and rogue cops.

This virtual launch is your chance to hear firsthand from Caryn Dolley and Major-General Lincoln as they unpack the harrowing realities behind the headlines and reflect on what it means for South Africa's future. *"A Gripping Thriller" - Thuli Madonsela*

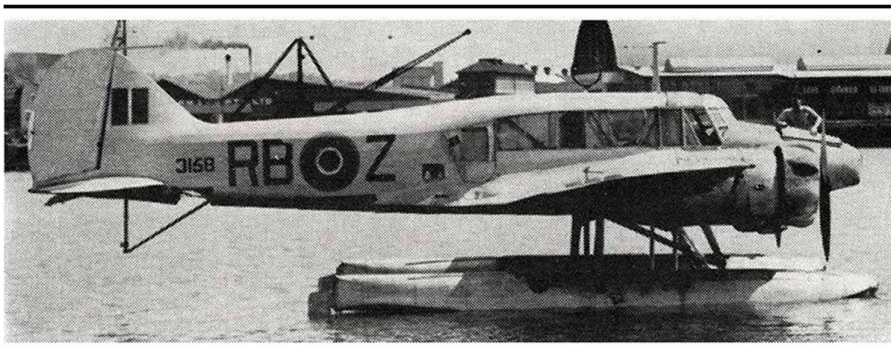
## MEMBERS WRITE:

Captain Don Pengelly (SAA Retd) writes, via Karl Jensen from the "land down under" and sends a note of appreciation from another literate Aussie reader, Tony:

"Morning Don: Good Ramblings. Twice I have tried to enter St Clement Danes Church, but each time it has been bolted. I think it's in the Strand and when you're on holiday from Australia there is only so much time you can spend waiting for a Church to open (Praise the Lord!). An enjoyable read. Best regards, Tony.

John Boardman wrote:

"Good Afternoon Jon, There is an article in Ramblings (Issue 228) regarding the "handing-over" of Catalinas from the RAF to the SAAF at the end of WW2. Attached is an article which has reference to this event. There is also mention of a unique Anson (with floats) With greetings from a sweltering Pretoria, John."



The Squadron had an Anson float-plane. This Anson with floats, was the only one in the World. It never flew, but was often used for Training, of "Air and Ground" crews, in the boarding, handling and taxi-ing of the Flying Boats.

January 1949

SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE JOURNAL

## SHIYA AMANZI

The Story of 35 Squadron.

by

CAPT. D. S. EDEN

THE PLACE—Congella Officers' Mess.

THE SCENE—A Great Bonfire composed of a Coffin filled with Bumpf.

In the midst of the flames and smoke, figures garbed in sackcloth and ashes can be seen chanting weird sounds of mourning. Above all a mighty voice, clear and correct, can be heard—

“And so, dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,  
Perish the remains of 262 Squadron,  
What the R.A.F. hath given the S.A.A.F. taketh away.”

A few minutes later, a strange figure, nude except for a napkin and large safety pin, is borne in on a pram. None other than Capt. Dereck Broadhurst (The Navigators' favourite) who represents the newly-born 35 Squadron of the S.A.A.F. The date is the 15th February, 1945. The South African Air Force has a Flying Boat Squadron.

**BRITESTORM:**

Aerospace firm Leonardo has unveiled a new jamming system called "BriteStorm" that will fly ahead of friendly aircraft to interfere with enemy air defenses. The product will be small enough to fit onto drones and is also designed to be affordable and expendable.



*BriteStorm installed on a Launched Effect and a UAV.*

According to a company release, the BriteStorm product will be able to perform "stand-in jamming" ahead of the main force, essentially delivering forward jamming capabilities to disrupt enemy Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS). This is distinct from conventional "stand-off" jamming systems—such as the EA-37B Compass Call or Boeing EA-18G Growler—that operate at a safe distance from enemy defenses. Weighing in at just 2.5kg in weight and 3.5l in volume, BriteStorm typically resembles a 'six-pack' of canned drinks in terms of its form factor. Components include a Miniature Techniques Generator (MTG); Transmit and Receive Modules; and mix of High-, Medium- and Low-Band Antennas covering NATO bands 'A to J' (0 - 20 GHz) which can be integrated wherever necessary across the body of the host aircraft. (RAeS)



## SPACE X:

The biggest and most powerful rocket ever built took to the skies again. And this time, came back. And that's exactly what happened. About seven minutes after liftoff, SpaceX's Super Heavy executed what appeared to be a bull's-eye landing, hovering near the Mechazilla launch tower as the tower captured it with its metal arms.

"This is a day for the engineering history books," Kate Tice, SpaceX manager of Quality Systems Engineering, said during live commentary as SpaceX employees screamed and cheered at the company's Hawthorne, California headquarters behind her. "This is absolutely insane! On the first-ever attempt, we have successfully caught the Super Heavy booster back at the launch tower."

"Are you kidding me?" SpaceX spokesperson Dan Huot added from the launch site. "Even in this day and age, what we just saw — that looked like magic."



The booster catch was not the only goal for Flight 5. SpaceX also aimed to send Starship's 165-foot-tall (50 m) upper stage — known as Starship, or simply Ship — to space and bring it back to Earth with a splashdown in the Indian Ocean. That occurred about 65 minutes after liftoff, with the Ship firing three of its six engines to hover over the ocean before tipping over and exploding. "That was amazing," Tice said. "We were not intending to recover any of Starship, so that was the best ending that we could have hoped for." Elon Musk, SpaceX's founder and CEO, agreed. "Big step towards making life multiplanetary was made today," he wrote on X (formerly Twitter) after the landing.

## BIG DIAMOND:

This has been widely reported... Do you ever wonder whether the diamond you see really came from the mine at which it was claimed to have been discovered? For instance, if you believe that all the diamonds that apparently came from the Maranke mine in the East of Zimbabwe really did, then you probably believe in fairies at the bottom of the garden as well...

An extraordinary discovery has made headlines across the globe in the vast deserts of Botswana. Miners have uncovered a diamond that weighs over one pound - a colossal 2,492-carat gem. This giant diamond, discovered in August, marks one of the most significant finds in mining history,

second only to the famous Cullinan diamond. The rare find occurred in the Karowe mine, about 300 miles north of Botswana's capital, Gaborone.



The Cullinan diamond, unearthed in South Africa in 1905, remains the largest diamond ever found at 3,106 carats. That impressive stone was famously cut into multiple parts, many of which adorn the British crown jewels today. Botswana's new find, while not quite matching the Cullinan in size, could eventually be divided and polished to produce some of the world's most spectacular gems.

The Karowe mine, operated by Lucara Diamond Corp, has established a solid reputation for being one of the world's richest sources of exceptionally large and high-quality diamonds. This mine has also produced other precious stones, including the 813-carat Constellation diamond, which set a record in 2016 when it sold for a staggering \$63 million.

Finding such enormous gems isn't a simple matter of luck - it's also about using the right technology. X-ray technology and precision grinding have made it much easier for miners to locate large diamonds, even those deep in the rock. These modern methods allow miners to search more thoroughly and effectively than ever before, often finding stones that previous generations of miners would have missed. *(Royal Examiner)*

## **CHEERS FOR NOW...**

At the October Lunch, Jon Ledger gave us an excellent and informative presentation on Climate Change titled "Climate Change – Crisis? Catastrophe? Or Con?" John very ably fielded a remarkable number of questions - in fact, question time went on until 15h00 when we called "Time", not because there were no more questions, but as we were reaching the limits of endurance of some of the senior members present... Due to the level of interest he has followed up by sending in an article on hurricanes – attached to these Ramblings... and enjoy the great pic of the Emirates A 380 inbound at the end...

Next month is a Ladies Lunch and 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. Members are most welcome to lay Regimental or private wreaths or flowers at the Wall.

Please book early with names to [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org) and make your payment to our bank account by EFT. Details at the start of Ramblings.



## TAILPIECE:



*'My accountant told me  
to dig up all the nuts and  
eat them before the budget'*



*'It's not high speed any more.  
In fact, the replacement  
bus service cuts an hour  
off the journey time'*

The Most Dangerous Superstition: Belief in illegitimate authority, especially government, is deadly...

Changes: I recently asked a dear friend, who is in his 70s and nearing 80, about the changes he's noticed in himself as he's grown older. His response was so beautiful, I just had to share it with you all:

1. After spending a lifetime loving my parents, siblings, spouse, children, and friends—I've finally started loving myself.
2. I've realized that I am not "Atlas." The world doesn't rest on my shoulders.
3. I no longer haggle with vegetable or fruit vendors. A few extra pennies won't hurt me, but it might help them save for their daughter's school fees.
4. I always leave my waitress a generous tip. That little extra might bring a smile to her face as she works hard for her living.
5. I've stopped telling the elderly that they've already repeated that story. It allows them to relive their precious memories.
6. I no longer feel the need to correct people, even when I know they're wrong. It's not my job to make everyone perfect, peace is far more valuable than perfection.
7. I freely give compliments. They lift the mood of both the giver and receiver. And remember, if you receive one, never turn it down - just say "Thank you."
8. A crease or spot on my shirt? I don't sweat it anymore. Personality speaks louder than appearances.
9. I've learned to walk away from people who don't value me. They may not know my worth, but I do.
10. I stay calm when others try to outrun me in life's rat race. I am not a rat, and I'm not racing.
11. I'm no longer embarrassed by my emotions - they're what make me human.
12. I've learned that it's better to drop the ego than to break a relationship. Ego isolates, but relationships keep you connected.
13. I live each day as if it could be my last, because one day, it just might be.
14. And lastly, I'm doing what makes me happy. I'm responsible for my happiness, and happiness is a choice you can make at any moment.

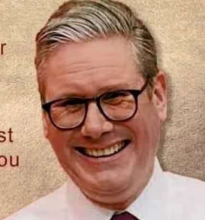
Why wait until we're 60, 70, or 80 to start living this way? Let's practice these lessons now, at any age. 🌿 This insightful message was shared by a wise friend, and I'm simply passing along his words of wisdom...

Taking the 'Blue Pill' won't make you James Bond, but it will make you Roger Moore!

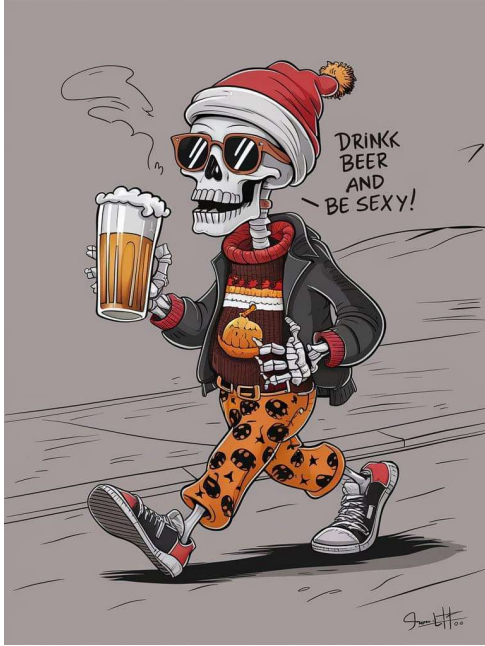


**IF**  
 (with apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

If you can take away the pensioner's winter heating allowance and then pay train drivers 80k a year for a 4 day week,  
 IF you can make smoking a ciggy outside a pub an illegal offence while 90% of burglaries go uninvestigated,  
 IF you can lock middle aged women up in jail for words they post on social media while letting criminals out of jail early to make room for them,  
 IF you can tax pension funds while enjoying a special 'tax unregistered' scheme yourself,  
 IF you can have your suits and designer glasses bought for you by a wealthy labour supporter,  
 IF you can do all this and more, whilst maintaining a sly, sickly grin...then you are a TWAT, my son.




HOW ARE PALESTINIANS ALWAYS OUT OF FOOD AND WATER, BUT NEVER OUT OF ROCKETS?  
**MAKE IT MAKE SENSE.**







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EMIRATES A 380 inbound to ORT at FL 40. Captain Wayne Jensen in Command. Picture taken by a colleague in a B 777. Great Pic! (Via Captain Karl Jensen)

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<https://www.newsmax.com/larrybell/helene-landfalling-milton/2024/10/16/id/1184259/>

## Time to Cool the Heated Climate Rhetoric on Hurricanes:



*By Larry Bell Wednesday, 16 October 2024 10:26 AM EDT*

Early on, during the Oct. 1 vice-presidential candidate debate between Gov. Tim Walz, D-Minn., and Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, with flood waters still high in parts of the southeast from Hurricane Helene, CBS News anchor (and debate moderator) Norah O'Donnell said, "Scientists say climate change makes these hurricanes larger, stronger, and more deadly because of the historic rainfall."

A week later, Florida populations who were still reeling from Helene felt the full brunt of another meteorological intruder, and disaster, with Hurricane Milton.

The storm spread a swath of wreckage and death northward to the blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina.

It also brought staggering damage to the formerly idyllic community of Asheville.

As reported in The New York Times, "the two hurricanes tell a tale of how storms, made more powerful by climate change, can devastate regions with distinct topography and varying levels of experience with hurricanes."

No one should dispute that hurricanes and other severe weather can be enormously devastating. However, the tag line connecting them with "climate change," suggesting this to be a recent phenomenon (presumably following a time before humans caused climate to change) defies undisputed records.

Let's recognize that global temperatures were as warm or warmer 2,000 years ago during the Roman Warm Period, 1,000 years ago during the Medieval Warm Period, and even a smidgen in the comparatively recent 1930s.

That was followed by three decades of cooling which began in the mid-1940s despite World War II weapons industries having released massive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere and had leading scientific and news organizations predicting the onset of the next Ice Age by the late 1970s.

However, various scientists may wish to debate how much — if any — human activities influence climate changes beginning millions of years before the Industrial Revolution introduced smokestacks and SUVs.

Official records of extreme weather events, tropical storms and hurricanes included, tell a different story regarding changes in frequency and intensity.

On the global level, as tabulated by University of Colorado political scientist Roger Pielke Jr, "The data show that from 2000 to 2021, the number of global weather and climate disasters declined by about 10%, which is very good news and completely contrary to conventional wisdom."

Pielke notes that "The period since 2000 is viewed as the most reliable for data reliability, but it is safe to say that even since 2000, coverage has improved. So, the 10% decline is possibly an underestimate."

Specifically, regarding U.S. land-falling hurricanes, records dating back to 1850 indicate they have also been declining, whereas few dispute that temperatures have warmed about 1.2 degrees Celsius since that time when a "Little Ice Age" mercifully ended.

That was soon after George Washington's troops suffered a brutal winter at Valley Forge in 1777, and Napoleon's endured a frigid retreat from Moscow in 1812.

With no intent to make light of the foreboding trauma hurricanes bring to those in their paths — after all, 80 mph July winds of Hurricane Beryl removed part of the roof above my University of Houston office — let's nevertheless recognize that from a larger historical perspective, North Atlantic tropical storm and hurricane patterns fail to reveal any worsening trend over more than a century.

Category 3-4 Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey and Category 4 Hurricane Irma back in 2017 ended an almost 12-year drought of U.S. landfalling Category 3-5 hurricanes since Wilma in 2005, whereas 14 even stronger Category 4-5 monsters occurred between 1926 and 1969.

Many intense Atlantic storms formed between 1870 and 1899.

In the 1887 season alone, 19 such monsters formed, but then became infrequent again between 1900 and 1925.

The number of destructive hurricanes ramped up between 1926 and 1960, including many major New England events, inclusive of the 1938 hurricane which struck Rhode Island.

As for more recent hurricanes, the 2005 and 1961 seasons shared records for their seven major U.S. landfalls since 1946, whereas 1983 set the record for the least number, with only one.

Twenty-one Atlantic tropical storms formed in 1933 alone, a record only most recently exceeded in 2005, which saw 28 storms.

In terms of known human tragedy, the deadliest event was the Great Hurricane of the Antilles (1780) which struck Barbados. It caused 22,000 fatalities.

The deadliest to hit the continental U.S. was the Galveston Hurricane of Aug. 29, 1900, which may have killed up to 12,000 people.

The Okeechobee Hurricane, also known as the San Filipe Segundo (Category 4-5) hurricane, struck Florida in 1928 and resulted in 2,500 fatalities.

In any case, fewer or more, stronger or not there's no factual basis for attributing patterns on climate change — much less on any human influence.

We can't change the weather, it's truly in our best interests to anticipate those bad-case circumstances and prepare our communities and households to mitigate against the outcomes.

Whether or not one such event gets hyped on the media as the "biggest ever," "strongest ever," "deadliest ever," or "costliest ever," it of course may qualify as the worst ever for you.

Consider this grim reality well in advance of every storm season, when there is still time to plan and take prudent pre-emptive actions.

Unfortunately, it's all too easy to forget to do this on nice sunny days.

Larry Bell is an endowed professor of space architecture at the University of Houston where he founded the Sasakawa International Centre for Space Architecture and the graduate space architecture program.

His latest of 12 books is "Architectures Beyond Boxes and Boundaries: My Life By Design" (2022).