



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 230 25th OCTOBER 2024

GREETINGS:

Halloween is around the corner... disruptions hit SA airports due to inclement weather, ATC challenges (and ACSA)... SAA mulls selling Heathrow landing rights to stay afloat... civic discontent over floods in PE... Vaal Dam level continues to drop... SASFIN follows BNP Paribas and HSBC quitting retail banking in SA... What's missing from the NHI debates? - the Integrity Icons and Civil Leaders Awards, championed by Accountability Lab, are changing this narrative... how Bela Bill plays out in the next three months will show whether GNU will work... five die in Cape gangland shooting... horror testimony in Jocelyn murder case... Putin "no friend of ours" says John Steenhuisen... MK Party 'CEO' Sifiso Maseko quits top Gauteng job after banking millions while suspended... Ex Mayor Gwamanda turns out to be serial crook...

Hawks bag Louis Liebenberg in alleged R4bn diamond scam... BRICS backfired on Putin with no support of war, says Kyiv... North Korean soldiers trained in Russia will be sent to fight Ukrainians next week - a major escalation... King Charles heckled by witless Australian Sheila activist... King out of the frying pan and into the fire in Samoa... Israel hammers Hezbollah... UN chief makes a mockery of peace... Houthi rebels strike British oil ship in Red Sea... Britain's defence vulnerabilities have now been fully exposed... West losing focus on Ukraine at this critical time... US Elections near - Trump and Harris neck and neck... BHP hung out to dry over Brazilian dam collapse... Starmer refuses to rule out signing away Gibraltar and Falklands... Starmer's top aides dragged into Trump row... another disaster for Starmer... Britain's defence vulnerabilities have now been fully exposed... 'Labour made very major political mistake over Trump row'... Diesel car sales outpace electric amid 'flawed' net zero targets... Lions beheaded in ritual-use poaching incident in Hwange National Park... Zimbabwe smash 17 runs an over to shatter T20 records

REMEMBRANCE DISPLAY AT TOWER OF LONDON:



The Tower of London is to be illuminated with a light show in remembrance of those who lost their lives in World War One & Two.

People will be invited inside the walls of the famous fortress next month to see the historic White Tower transformed with moving images reflecting on the conflicts.

Falling poppy petals, silhouettes of soldiers and the World War One military medal "For Bravery in the

Field" will be among the artwork lighting up the Tower. The display, from 8-16 November, will also be accompanied by music and poetry recordings.

Ticket holders for the after-dusk event will also be granted special access to see the Crown Jewels without the usual crowds and learn about their removal from the Tower during both world wars.

Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that cares for the Tower of London, said: "Poppy Fields at the Tower will create space for visitors to remember those who lost their lives in those conflicts, as well as all those who served, and will also look forward, exploring the collective desire for peace." *(BBC News) Sent in by Clive King.*

VINTAGE AVIATION: WARBIRDS OVER THE BEACH:

Your Scribe came across this treasure trove of preserved and restored aircraft, now flying for the Military Aviation Museum through the generosity of the Yagen family, on the Vintage Aviation site. To have so many aircraft restored, serviceable and flying is no mean feat, and represents a substantial investment of time, money and TLC. As the Scribe has been out of SA for most of the last week, this collection replaces much of the usual mixture for this week... to make things a bit more interesting, you may want to put correct names/types to each picture... there may be a prize at the next lunch...



After missing the 2023 airshow season, 'Warbirds over the Beach' returned in October this year, a change from the traditional May date and this proved to be a good plan with great weather for the event. The big news for the event was that Jerry and Elaine Yagen have donated the location, buildings, and aircraft all to the non-profit museum, located in Virginia Beach, and additionally donated US\$30 million to provide a fund to be used to maintain and operate the aircraft for years to

come. Great news and a very generous donation. A couple of years ago some of the aircraft were suffering from maintenance issues, and a change of direction was started with all aircraft going through a thorough maintenance review/check before being released to fly again. This found a number of issues, and hence only a portion of the collection are currently airworthy and flying while the process continues, thus it was a much smaller number flying than on my previous visit back in 2013. Hopefully more will be able to be brought back to flying status in the coming months as work continues, my understanding is that the Mosquito, Dragon Rapide, FW190, Mustang, and P40 are all close to flying, but weren't ready for the show. What was a pity is that on my last visit many of the interesting aircraft such as the Polikarpovs and others were brought outside and put on the flight line for the show even if they weren't being flown, however this time many were sitting in the back of their hangars, looking like they had not moved in many months with flat tires. There was a nice selection of warbirds flying, and the location is great for watching the take-offs and landings with the runway fairly close to the crowd and the treeline behind adding to the effect and helping for photographs even though we were looking into the sun. The rest of the display is quite high and distant, presumably because of the houses the other side of the treeline. Visiting display aircraft were The Liberty Foundation's Douglas C-47 Chalk 40 N99FS which also carried Hurricane relief supplies to North Carolina on its way to and from the show, and Tim Savage bought his Curtiss P40N N740PN Skeeter and his Grumman TBM-3E N4147A was flown in by his son Job who also flew it in the airshow in the US Navy part of the show. All the rest of the show aircraft were those operated by the Military Aviation Museum.





Photo by Nigel Hitchman



Photo by Nigel Hitchman





Photo by Nigel Hitchman



Photo by Nigel Hitchman



Photo by Nigel Hitchman



Photo by Nigel Hitchman



The show started each day with some four ship T-6 formation flypasts and then WW II trainers with an Aeronca L-16, Stearman and SNJ-2, also joined on Sunday by a Taylorcraft L-2. Saturday the US Navy aircraft were next, including a missing man formation flypast with the two TBM Avengers, Grumman FM-2 Wildcat, Vought F4U Corsair, and Douglas Skyraider, a great sight to see. Sunday these formed the finale but sadly the Corsair became unserviceable after taxiing out and didn't fly. The European theatre of operations was showcased with the Spitfire IX MJ730 N730MJ, Messerschmitt Bf 109G N109GY, and Yakolev Yak-3M N42YK White 7 each doing individual flypasts and tail chases, then finishing with a three-ship formation flypast. It was especially great to see the BD605 powered Bf 109 flying and being well demonstrated by Mike Spalding, being such a rarity on the airshow circuit worldwide.

The Spitfire remained airborne and then joined up with the C-47 for several flypasts commemorating D-day operations 80 years ago this year. It was quite fitting that the C-47 had participated in supply missions on its way to and from the show, but carrying hurricane relief supplies rather than armed forces. One of the most recent addition to the Military Aviation Museum collection, the Bell P-39F Aerocobra N39FF 220341 should have flown as part of the final display, but aborted take-off due to a brake issue. Luckily we had seen it flying on Friday when it went up for an air to air photo session. With the P-51D Mustang already ruled out the final 4 ship formation was down to just the P-40 and P-64 replica. Tim Savage's P-40N was great to see flying in its new scheme of John Landers Skeeter which he flew in the defence of Darwin in 1942. N22518 started life as an SNJ-4, but was converted into a P-64 replica in the 90s. The P-64 was a single seat fighter version of the North American NA-16 which eventually was developed into the T-6 Texan/SNJ/Harvard. The P-64 was an export version for Thailand of which 6 were built, but never delivered; instead taken over by the USAAC and used for training. In and around the hangars there are also a large number of interesting aircraft, many of which will hopefully be flying again in years to come.







GRIPENS OVER THE CAPE:

Over the weekend, Capetonians were startled by very loud and seemingly low-flying fighter jets buzzing about. "I was in the Noordhoek area and it felt like it was taking the roof off... but people heard it equally loudly in other parts of Cape Town too," says Friedman.

People just wanted to know what was going on in their community social media groups.

So what exactly was happening?

It was Gripen fighter jets putting on a show at Ysterplaat.

Currently, there are only two out of 26 Gripens left and three of 24 Hawk Mk - so the sounds you heard over the weekend might have come from one of the only two Gripens we have left in South Africa.

The Atlantic Seaboard community captured and posted a variety of comments to their Facebook group, summed up thus:

"Obviously a lot of people were complaining about their poor dogs and others were saying well, if you lived in a war zone, this is minor stuff."

- Barbara Friedman, "Barb's Wire" (Primemedia)

ERASMUS CASTLE: HOUSE BELLA VISTA:

The re-issue of an Armscor tender this week implies there wasn't a successful bidder the first time around for the refurbishment of House Bella Vista.

Armscor tender EFAC/2024/09 replaces EFAC/2023/12 issued at the start of the year and calls for a CIDB (Construction Industry Development Board) registered company to submit a schedule of work to refurbish the Erasmus Castle, the better known name of House Bella Vista on the eastern side of the Armscor property in Pretoria. This is seen as a clear pointer to none of the 14 bids submitted by the March closing date as making the grade post evaluation.

Contractors wanting to submit tenders have to attend a bidders' briefing on 31 October at Armscor head office and have a further 11 days to finalise and hand in tender documentation.

When the need for refurbishment became known, *DefenceWeb* was informed a serious intervention was needed to return the historic building to its national monument status. A Pretoria architect who visited the structure ahead of the first tender issue noted "it is clear no maintenance has been done for years". According to him "the house is at a point now where normal maintenance would not make a difference. A serious intervention would be necessary to prevent the structure of the verandas from collapsing. The roof of the tower is stripped and is most probably leaking. Scaffolding is currently holding parts of the house and roofs in place (I doubt that the scaffolding was erected for maintenance purposes). The outbuildings are in a relatively good condition (probably because they were relocated), but the graveyard shows signs of vandalism and neglect."



The first tender, according to Liziwe Nkonyana, Armscor Senior Manager: Corporate Communication, was in line with the defence and security procurement and project management State-owned company (SOC) to ensure the building is kept at an acceptable standard as it is "a heritage site". (*DefenceWeb*)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

They say that once you have drunk Zambezi water, you will always return to the river. Your scribe certainly had the feeling of “coming home” during a visit to Victoria Falls last week with his niece who now lives in Brisbane, Australia. She was born in Zambia in 1967, but left when only a few weeks old. So it was a nostalgic trip for her before setting off on a tour of Far East countries, starting with Viet Nam...

November Lunch moves to the **second Friday, 8 November**, closest to **Remembrance (Armistice) Day**. Colonel Jim Findlay will be our speaker for those who would like to know a bit more about James, who is a man of many parts, there is a website which gives something of his current activities and interests at *James Findlay Collectable Books*

Before lunch, at 13h00, 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.

Meantime, have a good weekend....

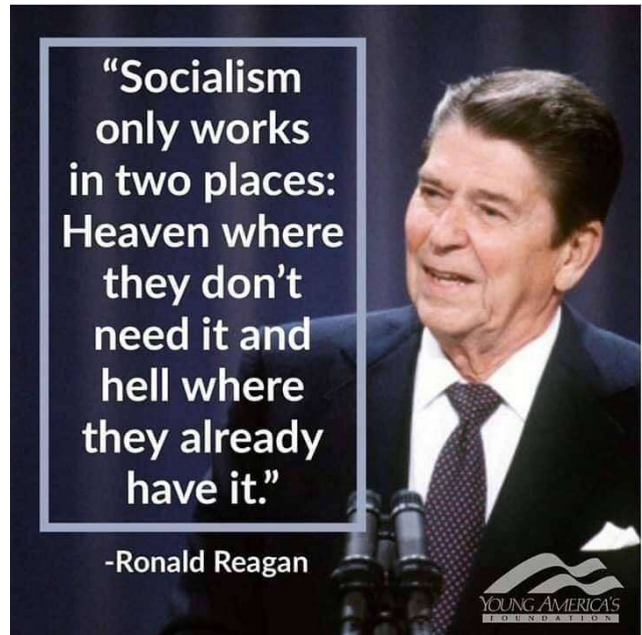
TAILPECE:



“A war has broken out in the Tory Party between the ‘unity’ fanatics and the ‘work together’ nutters”



‘A police escort for the Prime Minister? Have you cleared this with Taylor Swift’s mother?’



**My kinders soek n hondjie vir kersfees..
Ek maak gewoonlik kalkoen...
Ma dis hulle keuse**

😂😂😂



I hate people that say...

"He's a nice person once you get to know him."

They might as well just say...

"He's a prick, but you'll get used to it!"



Women say men never help with cleaning the house. So who is Mr Min, Mr Muscle, Mr Sheen, Handy Andy?

Boss hangs a poster in Office
"I AM THE BOSS,
DO NOT FORGET"
He returns from lunch,
finds a slip on his desk.
"Your wife called, she wants
her poster back home."