



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 231

1<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

### GREETINGS:

Well, we've reached the end of October – “Die mooiste, mooiste maand” and Christmas is round the corner - where has this year gone?... uptick in vehicle theft at car washes in SA... Zuma in ‘circus mode’ over MK/ANC membership... National Lotteries Commission rolls out lifestyle audits in effort to regain trust... ‘Russian air arsenal’ lands in Pretoria as Ukraine’s foreign minister takes off... Putin’s expanded BRICS summit risks buckling under its own contradictions... “Please Call Me” idea-man says “no thanks” to R20 billion... South Africa’s next energy crisis could be worse than load-shedding - no plan exists to decommission and replace approx. 8,000MW by 2035... Petrol price pain expected next week... Drug dens, violence, sex workers plague Roodepoort old age home... Three suspected hijackers were killed in a shootout with a motorist at the Diepkloof N1/N12 interchange... Cape cobra caused panic among security guards at a wastewater pump station when it slithered into the only toilet available for employees. (Why panic, when you can just s\*\*t yourself?) Israel limited attack on Iran takes out air defence systems... Norway seeks ICJ opinion on Israel’s aid obligations to Palestinians... West’s addiction to ‘soft power’ leaves us “dangerously exposed to those who wish us ill”... Kamala Harris is the worst candidate for president in American history... Trump slams “the enemy from within”... Harris has cast Trump as a divisive, chaotic force... Russia is “on the verge of collapse”... Europe cannot abandon targeted sanctions... Labour’s attitude to earning money takes no account of risk and reward... Rachel Reeves’s “shameful disrespect of the Budget” shows how far UK politicians have fallen... EU hits China with tariffs on its EVs... New AI tech emboldens “deed theft” scammers... Ferrari unveils first supercar in 11 years – makes R55 billion from it... young men’s newest obsession: Testosterone injections...

## RAF PROVIDE LEBANON WITH SUPPLIES:

This package of medical supplies and provisions are funded by the UK's Integrated Security Fund and will help support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).

As the only legitimate military force of the Lebanese state, investing in the Lebanese Armed Forces is essential to the future security and stability of Lebanon, and the wider region.

For more than a decade, the UK has given critical support to the Lebanese Armed Forces as a trusted partner, through training, mentoring and the provision of equipment. Since 2009, the UK has trained over 34,000 Lebanese Armed Forces personnel and dedicated over £106 million in funding including the gifting of over 300 Land rovers. The UK has also helped to construct nearly 80 Border Observation posts and Forward Operating Bases as part of our efforts to support Lebanese border security. *(RAF News)*



*The RAF has delivered more than 12,500 ration packs and 79 battlefield medical kits to the Lebanese Armed Forces.*

## AVM Suraya Marshall visits Exercise Strike Warrior:



*AVM Suraya Marshall, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, visited HMS Prince of Wales whilst it was taking part in Exercise Strike Warrior off the UK coast.*

Arriving by Royal Navy Mk4 Merlin aircraft, she witnessed an F-35B Lightning launch and had a tour of HMS Prince of Wales' key areas.

Exercise Strike Warrior serves as a crucial test of the Carrier Strike Group's readiness and effectiveness in a variety of complex combat scenarios. F-35B Lightnings from 617 Squadron have

been taking part, joining 809 Naval Air Squadron and assisting the Royal Navy in conducting maritime operations, in addition to Typhoons from IX(B) and 1(F) Squadrons from RAF Lossiemouth. Typhoon and F-35B Lightning aircraft form the backbone of UK Combat Air, together forming an interoperable, complimentary, and extremely potent force mix that offers persistence and a mass of sensors and weapons. This is especially important in the face of an advancing and proliferating threat.

The F-35B Lightning is a 5th generation, swing-role combat aircraft. This means it can perform the roles and missions of different aircraft types simultaneously. Equipped with advanced sensors, mission systems and low observable stealth technology, hostile radar systems cannot easily detect the aircraft, giving those nations operating the F-35 a significant tactical advantage in many operational scenarios. (*RAF News*)

### **RAF's first Wedgetail reveals new colours:**

The E-7 Wedgetail AEW Mk1 is the RAF's successor to the E-3D Sentry and will provide a 5th Generation Airborne Early Warning and Control capability (AEW&C), with a Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array (MESA), that is interoperable and interchangeable with key allies.

The Wedgetail is the most technologically advanced AEW&C system available and will provide UK Defence with eyes in the sky, for at least the next 20 years, to see far beyond ground-based systems and fighter aircraft sensors. Capable of generating a 360-degree view of the airspace and as a force multiplier, it will provide advanced warning of approaching threats to enable commanders to fight effectively in complex environments. Wedgetail WT001 rolled out of the hangar at Southend Airport in the markings of VIII Squadron, who will operate the new aircraft in service.



The Royal Air Force's first Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft has received its new RAF paint scheme.

The VIII Squadron badge, a sheathed Arabian dagger known as a Jambiya, was adopted in recognition of the Squadron's long association with Arabia. The weapon is sheathed to symbolise the squadron's guardian duties and was approved by King George VI in December 1943. As well as RAF markings and roundels, the aircraft also sports the emblem of NATO's Airborne Early Warning



& Control Force (NAEW&CF) - home to NATO's 'eyes in the sky'. The E-7 Wedgetail has also recently been selected by NATO as their next command and control aircraft. The RAF's Wedgetails will join this NATO Force when in service, where they will play an important and unique role for the Alliance by protecting Allied airspace with their air and maritime surveillance capability.

The mission crew will utilise state-of-the-art workstations to deliver a multi-domain battle management capability: providing situational awareness to other assets, directing offensive and defensive forces whilst maintaining continuous surveillance of an area. The Wedgetail significantly enhances the capability of friendly combat aircraft and warships, enabling their missions and increasing their survivability in a hostile environment. *(RAF News)*

## HELLO VIRTUAL SKIES:

Trainee helicopter instructors at RAF Shawbury are now using VR technology to replicate real-world flying as part of an effort to improve training efficiency and reduce operational costs. The VR system provides detailed flight simulations, allowing students to observe flight instruments and pilot actions as if they were in the cockpit.



Lieutenant Commander Martin Pickles, Assistant Training Officer at Central Flying School Helicopters, said: "What you're looking at... is recorded footage of being in a Juno helicopter. "I'm flying a manoeuvre called an auto-rotation... and if you look around, you can see 360°. It really does feel like you're actually in the aircraft. It's more realistic than a simulator because it is actually real. We are seeing improvements in their performance in the air because they've been able to look at this footage and really get better and better."

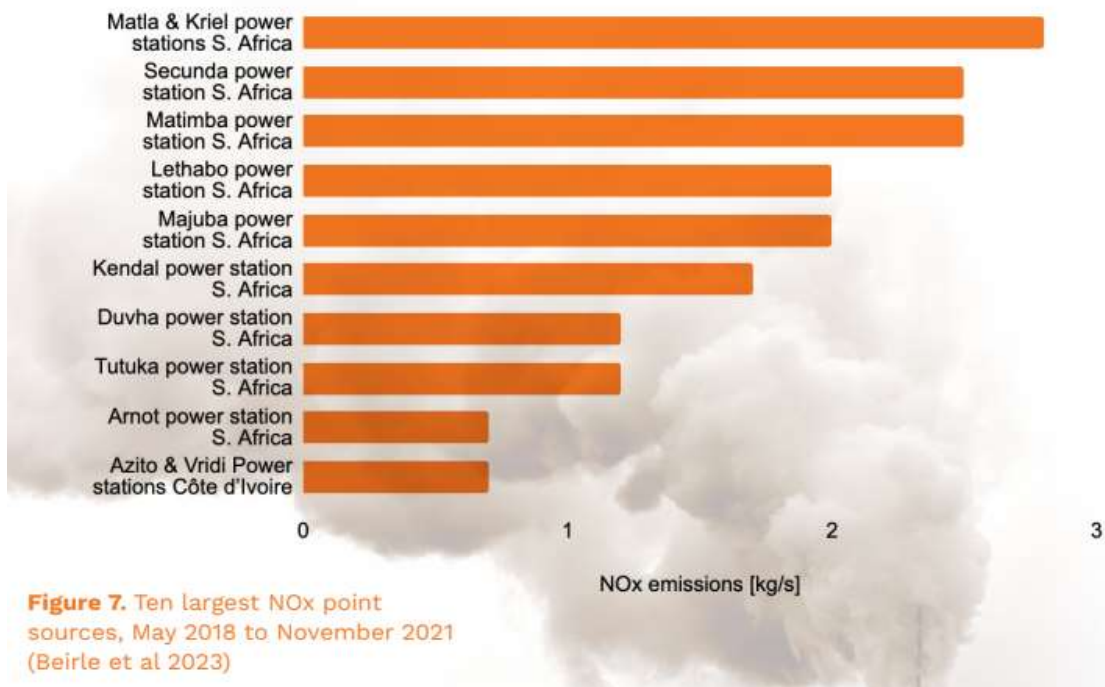
Before the arrival of VR, training relied on "armchair flying," a technique involving mental visualisation. "When you close your eyes... it can be quite hard to picture it, but with the headsets, you fully immerse yourself, and it's like you are transported up to the aircraft," said Flight Lieutenant Zoe Wilson-Chalon, a trainee qualified helicopter instructor. The in-house style of VR training allows instructors to create customised teaching scenarios, even incorporating deliberate errors in recorded footage. "Some of the recordings we watch... have deliberate errors put in, so it allows us to practise... we can try and debrief it or rewind it and see if there was an error that we might have missed," Flt Lt Wilson-Chalon added. *(ForcesNet)*

## EV BENEFITS IN SA:

Electric vehicles (EVs) are far less likely to be hijacked or stolen than other types of cars in South Africa. EVs are not a high priority for criminals as they lack the types of parts commonly sold on the black market and are not in high demand both in and outside the country. Hijackings are a crime largely driven by supply and demand, which is why the most targeted models tend to appear on the list of South Africa's best-selling cars. Over the last 12 months, Fidelity Services Group revealed 13 high-risk vehicles that criminals are gunning for, which includes the following: Ford Ranger, Hyundai i20, Nissan Almera, Nissan NP200, Toyota Corolla Cross, Toyota Corolla, Toyota Etios, Toyota Fortuner, Toyota Hilux, Toyota Prado, Toyota Land Cruiser, Toyota RAV4, VW Polo. Notably absent from this list are EVs, which isn't surprising given that they currently make up a small fraction of all the cars sold in South Africa. The lack of demand means these models aren't of much interest to hijackers who are looking to steal and quickly sell a vehicle for a profit. At the same time, the fact that EVs are still a rare sight on the roads means they will draw far more attention when someone tries to sell a stolen model, whereas the ubiquity of something like the Toyota Hilux means trying to sell an ill-gotten bakkie is more likely to fly under the radar. However, cars are not just stolen to be used in South Africa, as enormous smuggling operations are trying to move vehicles across the border into neighbouring countries like Mozambique, Lesotho, and Zambia. Bakkies and 4x4 SUVs like the Hilux, Ranger, and Fortuner are the most sought-after units for this purpose, as they are in high demand in other parts of Africa for their practicality in less developed areas. Again, EVs do not fit this bill, as a battery-powered car won't be of much use in a region with no charging infrastructure. *(BusinessTech)*

## SA'S DIRTY SECRET:

Your Scribe and Hon Treasurer flew from Barberton to Vereeniging this week, over the coalfields and power stations of Mpumalanga. The smoke from the multiple Eskom power stations was very visible in the early morning temperature inversion...



South Africa is home to some of the largest air pollution sources on the African continent – largely thanks to its energy sector. This is according to a Greenpeace report titled, 'Major air polluters in

Africa unmasked', which investigated the biggest human-caused air pollution sources in Africa, especially those associated with major industrial and economic sectors as well as the fossil fuel industry. The report found that South Africa boasts some of the worst nitrogen and sulphur dioxide hotspots in the world, all of which are primarily linked to thermal power plants.

Nitrogen dioxide is a harmful air pollutant produced by nearly all combustion processes, including those in fossil fuel power plants, gasoline and diesel engines, and wildfires. Sulfur dioxide is another harmful air pollutant generated from burning and processing sulfur-containing materials, including in oil and gas infrastructure, coal power stations, and mineral ore processing. Both of these pollutants, produced from high-temperature fossil fuel combustion, pose serious public health risks. According to the World Health Organisation, exposure to air pollution, including nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide, can cause both short- and long-term health problems including heart and lung diseases, pregnancy problems, kidney issues and cancer.

## CHEERS FOR NOW:

As our scribe said last week – “once you have drunk Zambezi water, you will always return to the river.” The scribe and treasurer were imbibing in the Barberton Club this week, and I think they will be returning to it as they looked as if they were enjoying it when they linked into the virtual Committee Meeting.

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. Please book at [bookings@raroc.org](mailto:bookings@raroc.org) and pay the R300 pp into our bank account.

Meantime, have a good weekend....

## TAILPIECE:

On Friday 25 Oct in the evening between 22:00 though 02:30 the entire Johannesburg CTA as well, incredibly, as the TMA, has been declared Class G (uncontrolled) airspace. Yes, you read this correctly; no ATC services in the entire Johannesburg Flight Information Region (FIR), which is a massive chunk of airspace, expect Johannesburg tower (which is operating on 121.9, the Ground Frequency).

They're saying that it's due staff shortages....

B1275/24 NOTAMN

Q)FAJA/QATAK/IV/NBO/E/076/110/2915S02505E543

A)FAJA B)2410242200 C)2410250230

E)TMA DOWNGRADED TO CLASS G AIRSPACE. TFC OPR WI THE FAOR TMA MUST

BCST ON 124.5 MHZ: INBD TO FAOR CTC TWR PASSING 8000FT ON 121.9 MHZ

AND OUBD TO CTC ACC PASSING FL105 ON 126.7 MHZ

MATT




'When AI takes my job it will be shocked to see how much tax it has to pay'

MATT




"A war has broken out in the Tory Party between the 'unity' fanatics and the 'work together' nutters"

 Jew from Khaybar ... يهود  [Follow](#)  
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What is more insulting for the IRGC?

1. That their air defense system proved to be non-existent.
2. That some of the Israeli pilots in tonight's attacks were female.





GIF ALT

2:58 PM · 26/10/2024 · 4.8K Views

**IT TAKES SKILL AND YEARS OF TRAINING TO BECOME A PILOT.**



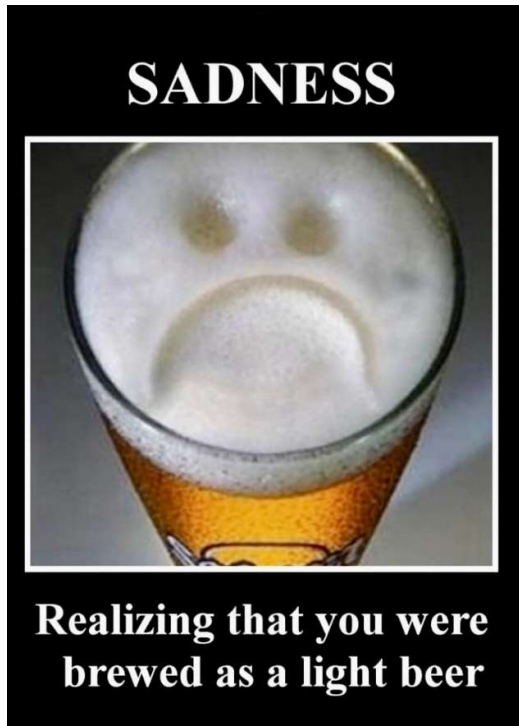
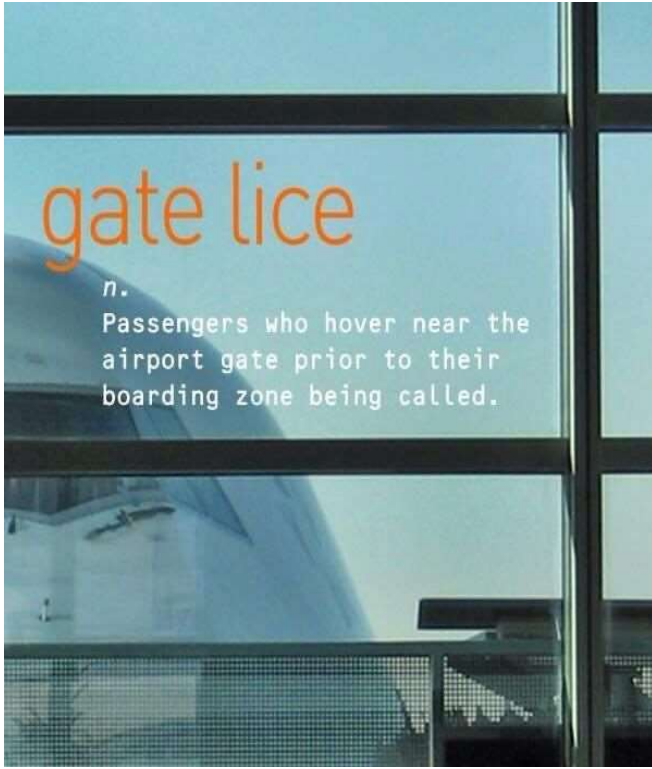
**BUT IT TAKES REAL SKILL TO CRASH THE SIMULATOR**

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Facebook Groups: [Just One Goat](#) [Just One Goat Drinking Goat](#) [Just One Flying Goat](#)







Suffering from memory loss lately  
Went to the supermarket the other day. Shopping all done, was at the checkout  
Went to pull out my wallet

Guess what ???

Yep, I'd forgotten my trousers...

## Time to put a Cork in it

A CORK radio station was running a competition - words that weren't in the dictionary yet could still be used in a sentence that would make logical sense. The prize was a trip to Bali.

DJ: "96FM here, what's your name?"

Caller: "Hi, me name's Dave."

DJ: "Dave, what's your word?"

Caller: "Goan... spelt G-O-A-N, pronounced 'go-an'."

DJ: "... You are correct, Dave, 'goan' is not in the dictionary. Now, for a trip to Bali: What sentence can you use that word in that would make sense?"

Caller: "Goan f\*\*k yourself!"  
The DJ cut the caller short and took other calls, all unsuccessful until:

DJ: "96FM, what's your name?"

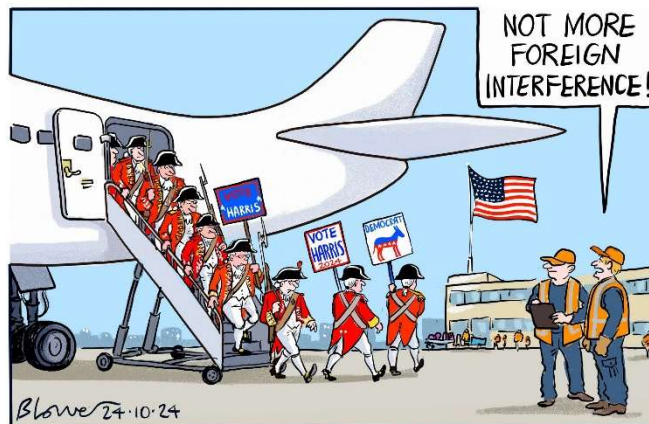
Caller: "Hi, me name's Jeff."

DJ: "Jeff, what's your word?"

Caller: "Smee... spelt S-M-E-E, pronounced 'smee'."

DJ: "... You are correct, Jeff, 'smee' is not in the dictionary. Now, for a trip to Bali: What sentence can you use that word in that would make sense?"

Caller: "Smee again! Goan f\*\*k yourself!"



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**GAMKASKLOOF**, also known as "Die Hel," is a remote and secluded valley located in the Swartberg Mountains of the Western Cape, South Africa. It's fascinating history and unique cultural heritage have made it a very special place. Very few South Africans have visited the valley

**DISCOVERY AND ISOLATION**, The valley was originally inhabited by the indigenous Khoisan people, but European settlers only discovered it in the early 19th century. For over a century, the valley remained extremely isolated. In fact, the only access was via a rugged footpath, so the community of farmers who settled there developed a very self-sufficient and unique way of life. This isolation helped preserve both their traditions and the surrounding natural environment.

**EARLY SETTLERS**, In the mid-1830s, a few families of mainly Afrikaner descent settled in Gamkaskloof. These pioneers led a hard, subsistence farming lifestyle, relying on crops, fruit trees, and livestock to survive. Despite the challenges of isolation, the community developed a close-knit,

self-sustaining culture, complete with their own dialect, folklore, and customs. They were known for making their own clothes, growing their own food, and even producing their own brandy from fruit.

**WAY OF LIFE,** Life in Gamkaskloof was simple but tough. The settlers lived off the land and were largely cut off from modern conveniences until the mid-20th century. The valley's isolation fostered a strong sense of independence, but it also meant that communication with the outside world was minimal. Children were often home-schooled, and families maintained a tight-knit bond. However, this isolation eventually became a burden for younger generations, who began to leave the valley in search of better opportunities.

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD AND DECLINE,** In 1962, a road was finally built into the valley, which connected Gamkaskloof to the nearby town of Prince Albert. While this provided access to modern goods and services, it also marked the decline of the valley's isolated way of life. By the 1970s, most of the families had left, and by 1991, the last original inhabitant of the valley, Tannie Lenie Joubert, passed away. The once-thriving community had disappeared, leaving behind only remnants of their unique lifestyle.

**CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE,** Today, Gamkaskloof is part of the Swartberg Nature Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The South African government recognized the valley's historical significance, and several of the old buildings have been restored as part of conservation efforts. Visitors can now travel to Gamkaskloof via the scenic Swartberg Pass and explore the valley, experiencing its natural beauty and historical significance.

The valley remains a symbol of a bygone era of self-sufficiency, endurance, and the challenges faced by early rural settlers in South Africa. It is not only a place of breathtaking landscapes but also a cultural and historical treasure.

You can contact Marinette Joubert at [info@gamkaskloof.co.za](mailto:info@gamkaskloof.co.za) or WhatsApp on 0723559623 for any bookings or inquiries. It is strongly advised to join this Facebook Group for regular updates on road and weather conditions and read up on plenty more interesting facts about Gamkaskloof (The Hell/Die Hel) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gamkaskloof>

## I'LL STILL BE LOVING YOU:

When your hair has turned to winter  
and your teeth are in a plate,  
when your getter up and go  
has gone to stop and wait—  
I'll still be loving you.

When your attributes have shifted  
beyond the bounds of grace,  
I'll count your many blessings,  
not the wrinkles in your face—  
I'll still be loving you.

When the crackle in your voice  
matches that within your knee  
and the times are getting frequent  
that you don't remember me—  
I'll still be loving you.

Growing old is not a sin,  
it's something we all do.  
I hope you'll always understand—  
I'll still be loving you.

*Writer: C. David Hay*