



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 232 8<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

### GREETINGS:

New Moon rising... Chaos in Mozambique, borders closed, Mozambican police flee in underwear to escape angry protesters at SA border... Russian bombers South African visit thwarted by foreign diplomatic pressure... Royal visit to Cape Town as Prince William arrived - greeted by protestors and excited crowds at Kalk Bay on last day... Battle for the soul of the ANC... Eastern Cape a playground for criminals – more murders and rapes... Expropriation without compensation will soon be law, says Mashatile... Cape Town R300 freeway closed off after deadly shooting... Bridge collapse on N2 near Amanzimtoti causes severe traffic disruptions... Godfather Mark Lifman gunned down in George... Julius Malema on the War Path (which one!!)... Magudumana in Court for another tilt at windmill – wants her extradition declared illegal... more schoolchildren eat suspect Spaza food... Beyond Biko: Race, shame and pride – the Woke mentality wobbles... South Africans to get 'unique ID' for everything from taxes to hospitals... Giraffes 30 times more likely than humans to be struck by lightning (so don't stick you neck out)...

Trump waltzes in as the first US President in history to be re-elected after an unsuccessful previous attempt... Trump's triumph is a disaster for Starmer and the self-regarding, virtue-signaling elites... 'Leftie pundits cannot fathom Kamala's loss'... Ms Harris branded "classless" for failing to concede more than nine hours after Trump's victory was declared (who did not concede at the last election)... No verstoppen Verstappen either... German government collapses after Scholz sacks finance minister... Rachel Reeves thought she was being clever: punishment has been swift... Ukraine is about to get a ballistic missile that could kill Putin in the Kremlin... Pro-Palestine activists steal wrong statue in university raid... PwC Sydney under investigation for Tax fraud... Rain in Spain doesn't stay mainly in the plain Valencia and Barcelona is inundated, death toll rises... Tesla EV giant soars on news of Trump's win... Trans woman sues Salon Workers for refusing to wax her balls - loses court case is tossed out...

## ROYAL AIR FARCE:

All of Britain's Top Gun RAF pilots to be trained in the USA under radical military reform plans - in a move branded 'reckless' by ex-Tory Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson. All RAF pilots are to be trained in the US under radical new plans to reform Britain's military, it was last night claimed. The proposals, which have been branded 'reckless' by ex-Tory Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, would see recruits train in the US before returning to undergo standard RAF conversion courses. Some 27 RAF pilots are already being trained in America and Italy at a yearly cost of £55million due to problems with the Hawk T2 trainer jets. But military chiefs have warned that shifting all training across the pond would bring 'radical changes', The Express has reported.



Responding to the plans, Mr Williamson said: “You cannot surrender our capability to decide who we will train and in what quantity. Our allies will think we are giving up. If we ever find ourselves in armed conflict, we will be competing for resources with another. We need to have the ability to turn the valve and increase the number of pilots. That won't be possible if we're zooming across the Atlantic with a begging bowl, as Ukraine is forced to do.”

Penny Mordaunt, who was appointed Minister of State for the Armed Forces in 2015, described some of the considerations as 'deeply concerning'. She called for the Labour government to provide the Armed Forces with 'stability and sustainability'. (*Express*)



Rachel Reeves



Gavin Williamson

The plans are being considered as part of Lord George Robertson's 'radical' defence review which will be published in the first half of next year.

The review was launched by Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer in July to reevaluate Britain's defence strategy amid an ongoing manpower crisis and questions over Britain's ability to fight a war. Among the plans being considered is a greater reliance on Britain's NATO partners and a 'complete recalibration' of the British Army. This may see the Army abandon heavy artillery for drones and the closure of several army bases as troops quit, according to The Express's report.

It comes after Chancellor Rachel Reeves handed the Britain's Armed Forces a £2.9billion spending boost in this week's Budget. Some £400 million is expected to be used to hand troops a six per cent pay rise, backdated to April. The forces are currently haemorrhaging experienced personnel and struggle to attract new recruits.

Last week Defence Secretary John Healey questioned whether Britain was currently able to fight a war, in the latest warning about the state of the military.

The funding will also be used to buy weapons, with the aim of replenishing stockpiles depleted by donations to Ukraine. But a pathway to increasing defence spending to 2.5% of national economic output, demanded by the Tories, will not be in the Budget.

The Chancellor instead kicked the decision down the road, saying a date would be set at 'a future fiscal event'.

Mr Healey was praised by his Tory predecessor Ben Wallace, who stood down as an MP at the election.

He said: 'So credit where credit is due for John Healey. He got a one-year defence increase that leaves the door open for 2.5% of GDP in the future.'

'In doing so he continues my record of reversing both previous LABOUR and Tories hollowing out over decades.'

'The devil will be in the detailed split between revenue funding and capital funding but the increase continues and it is an important signal of a cross-party acceptance that defence needs more money.'

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence said: 'We won't comment on speculation.'

'The Strategic Defence Review will be published in the first half of 2025 and will establish the roles, capabilities and reforms required by UK Defence to meet the challenges, threats and opportunities of the twenty-first century.'

MailOnline has contacted the department for further comment. *(Daily Mail via TC Schultz)*

## ARE THE HOUTIS WINNING?



Who is winning the battle for the Red Sea? If I were taking bets right now, I'd have some of my money on the Houthis, for they seem to be retaining the initiative. That's based on current results, and one cannot really imagine they will be able to continue preventing over 60 per cent of all shipping from the waterway dividing Africa from Asia.

This month it is one year since the first drone or missile was fired at a merchant ship sailing innocently through the now

infamous Bab al-Mandab Strait. That's the narrow point at the lower end of the Red Sea after which it becomes the Gulf of Aden. This is conveniently close to the Yemen coast from where the Houthis are able to fire off Iranian-supplied missiles and drones almost at will.

Who are these Houthis? The Houthi movement is a Zaydi Shia Islamist militant organisation enjoying the backing of Iran, which by force of arms has wrested control over a large part of Yemen, including the capital of Sanaa and most of the coast facing the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. The result of this year-long naval activity, ostensibly targeting ships with an Israeli interest although making no guarantee that other shipping remains safe, is that the majority of vessels that ordinarily would travel via the Red Sea and Suez Canal, have been forced to sail the much longer route around the Cape of Good Hope. (*DefenceWeb*)

## COMMANDANT GENERAL RAuxAF REVIEWS CRANWELL GRADUATION:



*AVM Ranald Munro presents the McRobert Sword of Merit to Flying Officer Susca*

In a landmark moment for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) last Thursday Air Vice Marshal Ranald Munro became the first Part Time Volunteer Reserve 2\* officer to have the honour of Reviewing a full RAF Officers' Graduation Parade at RAF Cranwell.

"This was a tremendous honour for me and for the RAuxAF to be invited to undertake this duty in the centenary year of the RAuxAF. My congratulations to all of the new officers who worked so hard to complete their training and present a very polished parade". AVM Ranald Munro, Commandant General of the RAux.

The parade saw the formal graduation of 26 Officer Cadets from the Modular Initial Officer Training Course No.30 and 12 Officer Cadets from the Reserve Officer Initial Training Course No.72. Among the 12 RAuxAF graduate officers was Flying Officer Susca, who has been a Reservist for some time serving as a Corporal in 3 (Reserves) Police Squadron at RAF Honington. Now commissioned, he will remain with his squadron but undertake an additional role for the RAF which plays squarely to his skill set. In his civilian life, Flying Officer Susca is a commercial airline pilot and will now be "loaned" for part of his time to assist 8 Squadron at RAF Waddington with the development programme for the new Wedgetail aircraft where he will work with fellow Part Time Volunteer Reserve pilot Group Captain Mannering. To round-off a great day for Flying Officer Susca, during the graduation ceremony he was awarded the McRobert Sword of Merit given each year to the individual judged to have been the Reserve Officers' Initial Training Course best all round cadet. "We are really looking forward to Flying Officer Susca being part of the team, it is a great use of his

skills and a perfect way for the RAF to gain extra specialist support for its front line tasks". *Wg Cdr McDonnell, Officer Commanding 8 Squadron*

## LONDON POPPY DAY:



*On 31 October, London transformed into a sea of red as London Poppy Day takes over the city, marking the flagship event of the Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal.*

This one-day collection brings together over 1,000 uniformed personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force, alongside 1,000 additional veterans and volunteers, in a powerful display of unity to generate public support. At Liverpool Street Station, six pipers and two dancers from the Halton Pipe Band have been delivering stirring performances to captivate commuters. Meanwhile at Marylebone Station, a nine-piece Street Brass Ensemble from the Band of the RAF Regiment are playing lively sets all day to draw in onlookers and encourage them to contribute to the appeal. More than 250 volunteers from 18 different RAF units have joined colleagues from across the armed forces to make this day a success. This year's event welcomes both first-time volunteers and many familiar faces who return annually, inspired by the RBL's mission to support those currently serving and veterans.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, was also in attendance this morning and personally distributed poppies at Euston Station. "I was proud to join veterans and serving personnel at Euston Rail Station today for London Poppy Day. Your donations make a huge difference, supporting those in our Armed Forces community who have served with honour, and their families, who now need our help." *Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, CAS*

## MCAS: WG CDR ANDY GREEN:



**Wing Commander Andy Green RAF (Retd)** whom some of us met in the run-up to the 2012 Bloodhound SSC World Speed Record attempt which was to have taken place in the Northern Cape, is featuring as an expert in a new National Geographic series on Aircraft Accident Reconstructions. He is pictured here sitting on Hakskeenpan, where the track had been prepared for the Bloodhound attempt. The project ran out of funds and only a couple of test runs were made.

One of the recent episodes features the malfunction of the Boeing MCAS system on the B737 MAX, and caused widely reported fatal accidents in Indonesia and Ethiopia, and gave Boeing the worst reputational and financial setback in the company's long history...

## ZONDERWATER MEMORIAL CONTROVERSY:

Emilio Coccia, well known to many of us and the President of the Zonderwater Block Prisoner of War Association, has happily been exonerated after several years of controversy and allegations initiated by the Italian Consul General, and writes:

"Dear Friends,

Since March 2021, after the arrival of the new Consul General of Italy in 2020, the Zonderwater Block ex POW Association has been forced out of the Italian POW cemetery and an accusation of crime was laid with the Italian judicial authorities in Rome against its president.

After six months of investigation, the Public Prosecutor insisting on indictment against the undersigned, the Preliminary Hearing Judge ruled, on 18 May 2023, "that COCCIA EMILIO, regarding the offence ascribed to him, should not be proceeded against because the fact does not constitute an offence." The Preliminary Judgment was endorsed Final Judgment the 7 September 2023.

Rumours are still being spread that are defaming the character of the undersigned, as happened on the 12 November 2023 at Zonderwater, and thereafter. I attach, for your information, copy of the Final Judgment by the Criminal Court of Rome, trusting that this will assist the interested persons to assess the truth on the matter.

Kind regards, Emilio Coccia."

## ESKOM'S BIG COAL STATION SHUTDOWN MISTAKE:

Over two years after shutting down its Komati coal power station in Mpumalanga to convert it into a renewable power facility, Eskom has not yet appointed the companies that will be building the plant's new generators.

Komati was supposed to be the first testing ground for Eskom's Just Energy Transition (JET) project, which is aimed at reducing the utility's reliance on fossil fuels like coal power in favour of renewable energy.

A key part of the project's goals is to ensure that this switch does not leave workers and communities behind that rely on Eskom's extensive coal power station fleet for their livelihoods. When Eskom originally announced the shutdown of Komati's last unit in October 2022, it said the site would be getting 150MW of solar, 70MW of wind, and 150MW battery storage.

As of November 2024, not a single megawatt of that capacity has entered construction.

However, Eskom's failure to plan and execute properly on the Komati project threatens its ability to get buy-in from coal-reliant communities on the shift towards clean energy at its other to-be-decommissioned power stations over the next few decades. (*My Broadband*)

## **BOTSWANA: DUMA BOKO - THE POLITICIAN WHO DID THE UNTHINKABLE:**

Botswana continues to be the exception that proves the rule in SADEC African politics – not least in democratic elections, in contrast to the current chaos on Mozambique...

In a stunning result that ran counter to much of the pre-election analysis and expectations, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which had ruled Botswana since the country's first post-independence election in 1966, lost its parliamentary majority in last Wednesday's elections by a landslide. The long-ruling party won only four of the 61 seats in the National Assembly, down from the 38 it won in the last general election five years ago. The main opposition party, the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), won 32 seats, surpassing the 31 needed to secure a governing majority. Under Botswana's constitution, the majority in parliament elects the president. As a result, the UDC's leader, Duma Boko, has ascended to the presidency, taking the place of the BDP's Mokgweetsi Masisi, who resigned after more than seven years in power.

The election results evince the impressive growth of support in the relatively short history of the UDC, which was formed by a coalition of parties in 2012 to challenge the ruling BDP. In the latest election, the UDC ran in direct opposition to the BDP, arguing that the long-ruling party had repeatedly failed to deliver for the 2.5 million people of Botswana on issues ranging from the economy to healthcare, made worse by allegations of corruption. The handover of power appears to be proceeding smoothly... (*Responsible Statecraft*)

## **MEMBERS WRITE:**

**Dave Evans** writes from the USA: "A couple of notes you can use in one of the Ramblings, if you're looking for a filler.

Helicopters: As you can undoubtedly guess, the range of choppers we get in Connecticut is somewhat different from the Joburg area – plenty of Jet Rangers and Robbies, but no Alouettes, Rooivalks, Oryxs or Augustas. Sikorsky are in our state, to lots of their 76 family, as well as Blackhawks and the variants, which they also make. The occasional Chinook and members of the CH53 family – mostly Super Stallions from what I can see. What prompted this note is that yesterday a Sikorsky 58 came over – what RAFOC members who are old enough would remember as a 'Wessex', in the Westland manufactured version for the RAF and RN. The American version first flew back in the 1950s, so I can't imagine how old it must be – it was in very smart civvy colours, so I'm guessing still being operated reasonably seriously by someone. It's probably the first one I've ever seen airborne! Hope you're all keeping well. Cheers, Dave

**Derrick Page** writes: "Good Morning Bruce. Currently at Langebaanweg for the SAAFA Weskus Formal Dinner this evening. Apologies for tomorrow's Remembrance Day Lunch. Greetings to attendees. Best. Derrick"

## **CHEERS FOR NOW:**

Donald Trump has won the US presidential election with a sweeping set of victories across the battleground states. The American people have spoken, and the Woke Brigade are totally at a loss... The international political landscape has changed... As this issue goes to press we will be preparing

to commemorate Remembrance Day with Wreath-laying at Wanderers Wall of Remembrance on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> at 13h00 and Lunch follows thereafter. Our speaker will be Col Jim Findlay.

### TAILPIECE:

The god of war  
Went a riding  
Upon his favourite filly  
I'm Thor he cried  
His horse replied  
You forgot your thaddle thilly...

*"The Democrats ran a disastrous campaign. Kamala had nothing solid to offer and the tactic of trying to smear your opponent only made people get their backs up. It didn't work for Hillary and it never will."* – Paul Hume



*'It's my new working dog.  
He's an inheritance  
tax expert'*

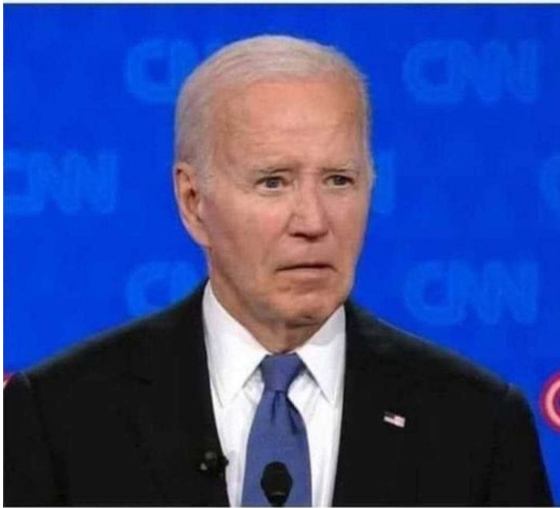


*'Net zero rules mean I've had  
to replace the gunpowder  
with a heat pump'*





Am I Winning??



Pa PaZimbabwe News @pazimbabwenews

United States Risks Sanctions From Zimbabwe If Elections Are Not Free And Fair



United States Risks Sanctions From Zimbabwe If Elections Are Not Free And Fair pazimbabwe.com

A screenshot of a social media post from PaZimbabwe News (@pazimbabwenews). The post features a headline: "United States Risks Sanctions From Zimbabwe If Elections Are Not Free And Fair". Below the headline is a photograph of Donald Trump, wearing a blue suit and a red tie, looking serious. At the bottom of the post, there is a link to pazimbabwe.com.

I'm reaching out on behalf of mate of mine who needs some help! His wife told him to go out and get some of those pills that would help him get an erection. When he came back, he handed her some diet pills. Anyway, he's looking for a place to live.

**A man is in a bar talking to his friend. 'Last night, while I was out drinking, a burglar broke into my house.' 'Did he get anything?' asks his friend. 'Yes,' says the man. 'A broken jaw, six teeth knocked out, and a pair of broken ribs. My wife thought it was me coming home drunk.'**





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