



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 233

15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2024

### GREETINGS:

This was Remembrance Week, with Services held all over the country to remember and honour those who gave their lives in the service of their countries... Rand suffers big slump amid anxieties over Trump tariffs, China... Mozambique in uproar: South Africa and SADC are failing Mozambique... even by their low standards... Disruptive rain experienced in parts of SA... equipment to change food expiry dates seized by police in Joburg... IGB is alive and well in SA – 4,500 Zama-Zamas underground in old Reef mines... Two arrested after shootout at Bellevue substation - rising attacks on City Power employees... Manenberg after-party shooting rampage at leaves two dead and two injured... Kiss Eskom goodbye - new plan to punish solar users... Mutichoice (DSTV) lost a whopping 1.8 million subscribers in the past year - 11% of their base!... more cases of food poisoning – “parallel” economy in SA operates outside any laws or regulations... Joburg residents, brace yourselves for a new water-usage experience...

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby's resignation over John Smyth scandal dominates the headlines... This year a “masterclass in human destruction”, UN chief tells Cop29... Trump selects Elon Musk to lead government “slash and burn” efficiency department... Starmer plots to thwart Trump on Ukraine... Netanyahu hints he may strike Iran oilfields... The briefcase, the Porsche and the collapse of the German government... Jamie Oliver's children's book 'Billy and the Epic Escape' pulled - offended indigenous groups in Australia... Scot Coach Townsend says Bok 'Bomb Squad' less effective than most perceive (Well, he would, wouldn't he?)

## ARMISTICE DAY:



*Approximately 10,000 members of the public lined Whitehall in London to take part in the annual two-minute silence at the Cenotaph and to watch The Royal British Legion's Veterans Parade.*

Of the 10,000 individuals marching this year, 326 different Armed Forces and civilian organisations were represented. Among those marching are people of all ages from the bereaved children of Scotty's Little Soldiers through to the D-Day veterans of the Spirit of Normandy Trust. Minister for Veterans and People, Al Carns who completed his military service in May was on parade for the first time as part of the Royal Marines Association.

The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery fired a Minute Gun from Horse Guards Parade at 1100 to begin the Two Minute Silence. They then fired a second gun to mark its conclusion. At this point, buglers from The Royal Marines Band Service performed The Last Post. The Massed Bands of the Household Division then played Beethoven's Funeral March No 1 in B Flat Minor, followed by the hymn 'O God our help in ages past', which all personnel on parade sang as wreaths were laid at the Cenotaph. At the conclusion of the service, Trumpeters of the Royal Air Force sounded the Rouse before the Massed Bands played the National Anthem.

The Band of HM Royal Marines Portsmouth and The Central Band of the Royal Air Force joined The Massed Bands of the Household Division to play music as around 10,000 veterans marched past the Cenotaph as part of The Royal British Legion's Veteran Parade.



## RAF LEEMING REUNION:

Five Cold War pilots have reunited at the RAF airfield where they trained 50 years ago. Back then, they cut their teeth behind the controls of the Jet Provost before going on to fly aircraft such as the Buccaneer, Jaguar and Tornado. They may be pilots from another era, but they remain part of the Royal Air Force family, and as former members of RAF Leeming, they'll always be welcome at the station, as highlighted in the video above.

RAF Leeming, located near the A1 in North Yorkshire, oversees a multitude of tasks and has been described as crucial to UK defence. Among the many units calling the base home, 11 Squadron Qatar Emiri Air Force sees the next generation of Qatari and British fighter pilots learning their craft, side-by-side, on Hawk Mk 167 jets. But this task, vital as it is to both the air forces of Qatar and the UK, is just one part of a much wider defence picture operating out of the base. It's also home to one of the country's busiest Mountain Rescue teams and its runway handles 22,000 aircraft movements per year - more than some civilian airports. (*ForcesNet*)

## SABBATICAL OVER - DETERRENCE IS BACK:



*ACM Sir Rich Knighton said he had not known a more challenging strategic environment in his 35 years of service (Picture: MOD)*

"After a 30-year sabbatical, deterrence is back", with the service needing to move back to its Cold War role of being strategically capable, the head of the RAF has said. Giving the annual Trenchard Memorial lecture at the defence think tank Royal United Services Institute, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton said he had not known a more challenging strategic environment in his 35 years of service. The Chief of the Air Staff said the Air Force had spent the last few decades optimising itself to fight less powerful adversaries or take on asymmetric threats. He told his audience the RAF must now change. "We need to become match fit for the new bigger and more important game... to deter a costly war we must build a credible force that foes fear and our allies value," Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich said. "We cannot do this alone, the RAF must evolve." Talking about the growing need to replace the UK's "ageing" ground-based radar system, he advocated switching to a "mobile, integrated and distributed sense and warn capability". "We should also remember the old dictum that the best form of defence is attack," he said. "Ukraine cannot put up a shield to protect themselves against the 30,000 glide bombs lobbed into the Kursk Oblast. "Instead, what they need – and what we would need – is the ability to strike the aircraft launching these bombs on the



ground." The CAS also warned that Western countries had grown too accustomed to air domination and could not rely on this in the future, again citing Ukraine as an example of what happens in war without control of the skies. "Ukraine is a stark reminder of what warfare becomes when neither side can gain effective control of the air," he said. "Those who fight without control of the air tend to remember the lesson more vividly than those who have bathed in its luxury." He concluded by reminding his audience that "hope is not a strategy" and said the country had an "opportunity and a duty" to ensure the air force is ready to "fly, fight and win today, tomorrow and together". (*ForcesNet*)

## HE-FRAG AMMUNITION FOR UKRAINIAN FPV DRONES:



Ukrainian drone strikes have forced Russia to roll out protective cages for military vehicles engaged in its so-called Special Military Operation. Up to now they've offered protection from drones, shielding personnel from the blast of an exploding munition or preventing drone-delivered anti-tank munitions, which pierce armour with explosively formed penetrators, from getting close enough. Now those cages may have been rendered useless by a new type of munition.

*New HE-FRAG ammunition for FPV Drones / Photo: Come Back Alive Foundation*

The FRAGS munition can be delivered via drones, and it is hoped it can do the job anti-tank and armour-piercing munitions have struggled with. One variant of the weapon includes a shock or impact core with a charge that allows its kinetic punch to be delivered behind the protective grid, penetrating armoured personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles. The FRAGS are thought to have a blast range of up to eight metres and can pierce armour around Russian tanks.

*(Defence Express)*

## RUSSIAN LOSSES IN UKRAINE:

Russia suffered a new record high number of casualties on November 11th according to a report from the Ukrainian General Staff. Moscow lost 1,770 troops in a 24 hour period, beating its previous record high set in May 2024. The Ukrainian General Staff reported Russian military casualties stood at 710,660 as of November 10th, a figure The Kyiv Independent noted was broadly in line with estimates from Western intelligence. This figure has only risen. On September 5th, the UK Ministry of Defence reported that Moscow had suffered over 610,000 casualties since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022. This number was roughly the same as what Ukraine claimed on the same day.



The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russia had suffered 621,550 losses since the start of the full-scale invasion, which was just over a 15,000 difference from the number reported by the UK Ministry of Defence. Ukrainian figures don't specify the ratio of soldiers killed versus wounded in their reports but it can be assumed that the figure represents Kyiv's best projection of the number of Russian military personnel taken out of action. The previous record high Russian casualty loss in a single day came on May 13th, 2024 when Russian forces reportedly suffered 1,740 casualties across the frontline. May was a particularly difficult month, but October has been worse.

On November 10th, UK Defence Staff Chief Admiral Anthony Radakin revealed that Russia was losing "on average over 1,500 people either killed or wounded every single day" in October during an interview with BBC News. "Russia is about to suffer 700,000 people killed or wounded – the enormous pain and suffering that the Russian nation is having to bear because of Putin's ambition," Admiral Radkin said. However, he did note Moscow was making progress. According to the UK Defence chief, he had no doubt that Russia was "making tactical, territorial gains" and that these gains were "putting pressure on Ukraine," adding that the giants Russia were making "tiny increments of land". (*Defence Express*)

## **PARAMOUNT BUSINESS RESCUE:**

Paramount Industrial Holdings (PIH), part of the Paramount group of companies, has entered into business rescue amid legal disputes in another Paramount business division. Other subsidiary companies in South Africa are expected to continue operating as usual. The PIH board made the decision on 11 November, News24 reported, and quoted documents submitted to the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) as saying South African operations were experiencing "significant financial distress", which posed a "serious risk to its ongoing sustainability." News24 added that the financial stress is due to a dispute between the parent company in the United Arab Emirates – Paramount Group Limited ADGM (Abu Dhabi Global Market) – and unmanned vehicle manufacturer Abu Dhabi Autonomous Systems Investments (ADASI). In August, Paramount ADGM filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in Delaware, United States, over the dispute.

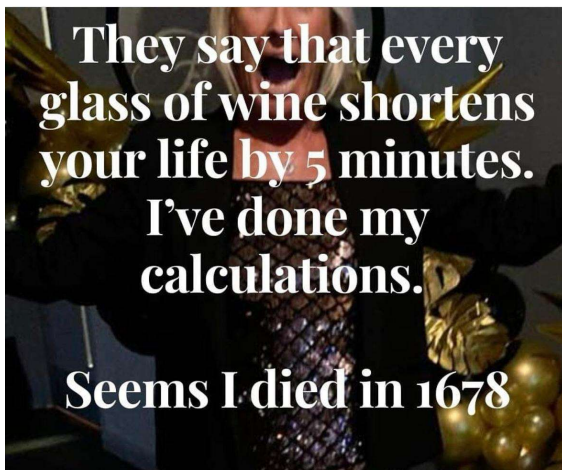


Paramount said that a limited number of its non-operating entities voluntarily filed for Chapter 11 protection in the United States after an arbitration award issued in August 2024, stemming from a dispute initiated by ADASI in 2022. (*DefenceWeb*)

#### TAILPIECE:



*'Match Of The Day presenter? Have you got anything less preachy, like Archbishop of Canterbury?'*



**TYRANTS DON'T  
CREATE THE  
TYRANNY.**  
your obedience does.

"Coffee:" a caffeinated beverage that God gave us so we can resist the urge to crawl immediately back into bed... Sol Luckman

## THEY WALK AMONGST US...

"My husband and I went through the MCDONALD'S driveway window and I gave the cashier a \$5 bill. Our total was \$4.25, so I also handed her 25c.

She said, 'you gave me too much money.'

I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a dollar back.'

She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request.

I did so, and he handed me back the 25c, and said 'We're sorry but we don't do that kind of thing.'

The cashier then proceeded to give me back 75 cents in change.

Do not confuse the people at MacD's.

We had to have the GARAGE DOOR repaired.

The repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener.

I thought for a minute and said that we had the largest one made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'You need a 1/4 horsepower.'

I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4 and he said, 'NOOO, it's not. Four is larger than two.' We haven't used that repairman since...

I live in a semi-rural area.

We recently had a new neighbor call the local city council office to request the removal of the DEER CROSSING sign on our road.

The reason: 'Too many deers are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore.'

## IDIOT SIGHTING IN FOOD SERVICE.

My daughter went to a Mexican fast food and ordered a taco.

She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce.'

He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg lettuce.

I was AT THE AIRPORT, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked,

'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?'

To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?'

He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

The PEDESTRIAN LIGHT on the corner beeps when it's safe to cross the street.

I was crossing with an 'intellectually challenged' co-worker of mine.

She asked if I knew what the beeper was for.

I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red.

Appalled, she responded, 'what on earth are blind people doing driving?!'

She is a government employee...



When my wife and I arrived at a CAR DEALERSHIP to pick up our car after a service, we were told the keys had been locked in it.

We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the driver's side door.

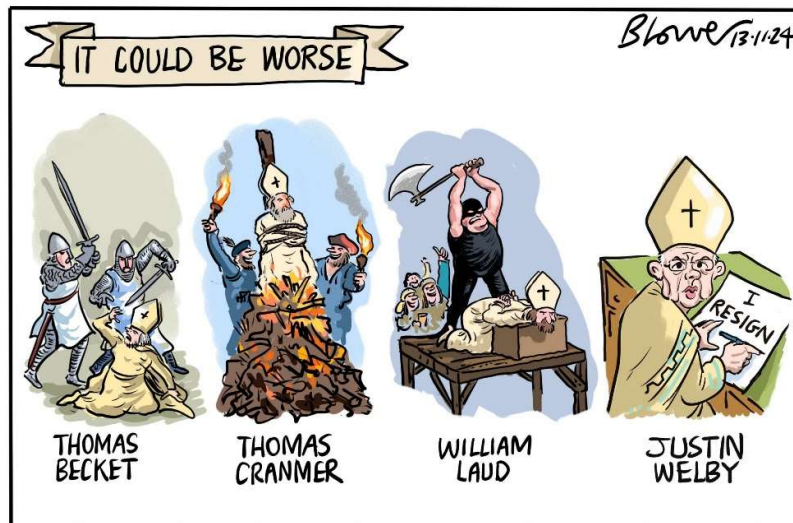
As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked.

'Hey,' I announced to the technician, 'its open!'

His reply, 'I know. I already did that side.'

STAY ALERT!

They walk among us, they breed....."



**ROUND OF APPLAUSE Reloaded!**  
 Written, directed and performed by  
**MARIANNE THAMM**  
 "She tells the truth and the truth is  
 HILARIOUS!" Karen Zoid

Peter Jacobson's  
**MONTECASINO THEATRE and Studio**

web tickets

**STUDIO THEATRE**  
 14 - 24 November

WONDERFUL DEFINITIONS	
<b>SCHOOL</b> A place where Parents pay, and children play.	multiplied by the number present.
<b>LIFE INSURANCE</b> A contract that keeps you poor all your life, so that you can die Rich.	<b>CONFERENCE ROOM</b> A place where everybody talks, nobody listens, and everybody disagrees later on.
<b>NURSE</b> A person who wakes you up to give you sleeping pills.	<b>FATHER</b> A banker provided by nature
<b>MARRIAGE</b> It's an agreement in which a man loses his bachelor's degree, and a woman gains her masters..	<b>BOSS</b> Someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early
<b>TEARS</b> The hydraulic force by which masculine willpower is defeated by feminine waterpower.	<b>POLITICIAN</b> One who shakes your hand before elections and your Confidence after
<b>CONFERENCE</b> The confusion of one man	<b>HOSPITAL</b> An institution which holds your ills by pills and kills you by bills.
	<b>LAUGHTER MAKES LIFE EASY</b>



## Great story...

After I retired, my wife insisted that I accompany her on her trips to the local grocery store. Unfortunately, like most men, I found shopping boring and preferred to get in and get out. Equally unfortunate, my wife is like most women - she loves to browse. Yesterday my dear wife received the following letter, from the local store manager:

Dear Mrs. Harris:

Over the past six months, your husband has caused quite a commotion, in our store.

We cannot tolerate this behavior and have been forced to, ban both of you from the store. Our complaints against your husband, Mr. Harris, are listed below and are documented by our video surveillance cameras:

1. June 15: He took 24 boxes of condoms and randomly put them in other people's carts when they weren't looking.
  2. July 2: Set all the alarm clocks in Housewares to go off at 5-minute intervals.
  3. July 19: Walked up to an employee and told her in an official voice, 'Code 3 in Housewares. Get on it right away'. This caused the employee to leave her assigned station and receive a reprimand from her Supervisor that in turn resulted with a union grievance, causing management to lose time and costing the company money. We don't have a Code 3.
  4. August 4: Went to the Service Desk and tried to put a bag of M&Ms on layaway.
  5. August 14: Moved a 'CAUTION - WET FLOOR' sign to a carpeted area.
  6. August 15: Set up a tent in the camping department and told the children shoppers he'd invite them in if they would bring pillows and blankets from the bedding department to which twenty children obliged.
  7. August 23: When a clerk asked if they could help him he began crying and screamed, 'Why can't you people just leave me alone?' EMTs were called.
  8. September 4: Looked right into the security camera and used it as a mirror while he picked his nose.
  9. September 10: While handling guns in the hunting department, he asked the clerk where the antidepressants were.
  10. October 3: Darted around the store suspiciously while loudly humming the 'Mission Impossible' theme.
  11. October 6: In the auto department, he practiced his 'Madonna Look' using different sizes of funnels.
  12. October 18: Hid in a clothing rack and when people browsed through, yelled 'PICK ME! PICK ME!'
  13. October 22: When an announcement came over the loudspeaker, he assumed a fetal position and screamed; 'OH NO! IT'S THOSE VOICES AGAIN!'
  14. Took a box of condoms to the checkout clerk and asked where is the fitting room?
- And last, but not least:
15. October 23: Went into a fitting room, shut the door, waited awhile; then yelled very loudly, 'Hey! There's no toilet paper in here.' One of the clerks passed out.

*(Credit goes to the original owner)*

## TRIBUTE TO WING COMMANDER J F “RANDY” du RAND



We are here today to give thanks for the life of JF “Randy” du Rand and to offer our condolences to Gerrie and the family in their loss.

Randy attested into the RRAF with 8 SSU (Short Service Unit) 1 September 1956, together with other worthies like Pete McLurg, Varky Varkevisser, Eddie Wilkinson and Walter Garrett. Walter lost his life in a flying accident on OCU near Thornhill in August 1956, and as a token of respect for their fallen comrade the Wings Parade for this intake was cancelled.

Once on 2 Sqn Randy was selected as a member of the first Vampire formation aerobatic team, flying a No 4 to Colin Graves (1), Peter McLurg (2) and Mike Reynolds (3).

The team was initiated to “show the flag” for the RRAF and to provide flypasts on appropriate occasions such as the Opening of Parliament and Queen’s Birthday Parades in those more peaceful days long ago. During a practice for one such occasion, Randy had a mid- air collision with Colin Graves which crumpled the nose of his aircraft and broke his canopy. Unable to see in the howling slipstream, Randy intended to bale out but was talked down to a successful wheels up landing by Pete McLurg, formatting on Pete’s aircraft until touch down, saving not only his own life but a valuable aircraft as well.

Randy then decided to join the SAAF and went to UK for conversion on to the Buccaneer which the SAAF were acquiring as part of the Simonstown Agreement. He flew one of the aircraft out to South Africa on the delivery ferry. He apparently missed life in the RRAF, as after a short stint in the SAAF he rejoined the RRAF with a new service number and served until his eventual retirement

Randy was one of the aircrew who were the backbone of the Air Force during the Rhodesian Bush War, and flew in many of the operational sorties in the early days of the Bush War, and later, after his appointment as Officer Commanding No 5 (Canberra) Squadron, he flew on many of the internal and external operations

Randy also made a major contribution to the development of RAMS, the radio activated marking system, which enabled accurate bombing of targets which had been located by SAS reconnaissance teams. As the war intensified the tempo of operation increased, the Canberras were called on frequently and Randy’s name appears multiple times on the Airstrike logs connected with internal and external operations.

Paddy Morgan, a longstanding member of the Squadron said of him “Many good memories of Randy. A firm leader with a good sense of humour. His farm, Mtsiki, was in the Beatrice area, halfway to Kutanga Range and beating up the place while checking on his workers was a regular feature”. Probably due to his farming activities, Randy always had a weatherbeaten, outdoor look about him. Amongst his ground crew he was known irreverently as “Leatherface”

Mike Ronne was his regular navigator, and remembers Randy as a very capable and conscientious pilot, a man of few words, who did not suffer fools gladly. In the early days of cooperation with the Portuguese forces in Mozambique we discovered that they did not have good detailed maps of the territory. 5 Sqn was tasked with photographing the whole of the territory, from which aerial photos 1:50 000 scale maps were produced by the Surveyor General. Randy led aircraft detachments to Nampula so that they could fly the maximum number of hours in the early part of the day when conditions were best, so that the daunting task could be completed in the shortest possible time.

A few words about the Air Force in which we served are appropriate here. These are from Group Captain Tol Janek's Introduction to "Rhodesian Air Force Operations" compiled by Prop Geldenhuys: "A spirit of comradeship and loyalty developed within this tiny unit by world standards, which drew the admiration of even the dissenters of Rhodesia. For those of us who were part of this Air Force there was a special feeling of belonging. A pride that was quite extraordinary, and that in turn developed magnificent morale and the will to succeed. For most of the participants mentioned in this book the culmination of the war led to very different lives in civvy street. Many have become successful in their second careers, but very few indeed have again experienced the wonderful comradeship, passion and dedication they experienced in the Rhodesian Air Force.... This book will keep alive the memory of an outstanding Air Force Fighting for a special country and its extraordinary people"

Randy was one of that outstanding team. We salute him, and we will remember him!

**Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace.  
 The soul that knows it not knows no release from little things:  
 Knows not the livid loneliness of fear,  
 Nor mountain heights where bitter joy can hear  
 The sound of wings.  
 How can life grant us boon of living, compensate  
 For dull gray ugliness and pregnant hate  
 Unless we dare the soul's dominion?  
 Each time we make a choice, we pay  
 With courage to behold the restless day,  
 And count it fair.**