



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 99 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022

### GREETINGS:

Day 701... 'feel-good' budget leaves critical questions unanswered... Last Monday saw a keystone cops' shootout in Forest Hill as police engaged no less than 25 alleged CIT robbers... unfortunately the man in the hat only arrived afterwards... South Africans can renew driver's licenses in 20 minutes, says Mbalula: Pray do tell, Minister?... Magashule wants asbestos scam charges set aside – he would, wouldn't he?... Zondo SSA docs reveal plot to threaten Ramaphosa's personal security at Nasrec 2017... Geopolitical tensions and rising oil prices have sent the rand down a slippery slope... fuel prices up and now toll fees from March... No evidence that municipal tap water is 'responsible for typhoid outbreak'... "Purple Poppy Day" for all animals killed in wars...

From howling winds at home to gathering clouds abroad... BoJo chairs an emergency COBRA (*Cabinet Office Briefing Room A is how the name came about*) meeting at 6.30am on Tuesday... 'smart' homes left UK hostages to electricity outages as UK battered by successive storms... the wee Scottish lassie hits out at Boris Johnson's decision to end free Covid tests... Johnson sounded more grownup – until his threat to get Russia by the oligarchs... Queen cancels engagements due Covid... Commonwealth Games Athletes permitted to protest on the podium... Ms Truss calls on English football clubs to boycott the Champions League Final if it is staged in Russia...(Serious!!) Men over 60 become 'unbonkable' (in UK, apparently)....

Putin goes "full tonto"... Putin upstages poor old Joe, the UN and all, and moves troops into Ukraine... now a full-on invasion... Moscow redraws the map of Ukraine and neighbouring countries... war of misinformation as Putin twists history in his SONA... massive cyberattack on Ukraine... "Damn you masters of war": Toothless Biden failing West.... Macron's Napoleonic aspirations in tatters... Mainstream media doing damage control for Putin in a blizzard of misinformation... Biden's Ukraine policy has doomed the EU to years of decline... invasion brings "a dark and dangerous era"... the lights are going out again all over Europe... this may be 9/11 all over again.

### BROTHERS IN ARMS:



A Royal Air Force pilot from RAF Lossiemouth who deployed to Nevada in the United States for the recent Exercise RED FLAG was able to take time out to meet his brother, who is also a RAF pilot and who is currently on an exchange posting with the United States Air Force. Squadron Leader Ben Spoor is a Flight Commander with 1 (Fighter) Squadron and flies the Typhoon FGR Mk4. He deployed to Nellis Air Force Base to take part on Exercise RED FLAG, a high intensity simulated war fighting exercise.

Meanwhile his brother Squadron Leader James 'Showtime' Spoor, who used to be a pilot with 1(F) Squadron, is now on exchange and flying a United States Air Force F-35 A jet with the 422 Test and Evaluation Squadron that is based at Nellis Air Force Base. Taking time out of the exercise the brothers met up with their respective Commanding Officers to talk jets, the exchange programme and flying at Nellis Air Force base. The Exercise is Squadron Leader Ben Spoor's fifth RED FLAG. "It is obviously different in a number of areas and adapting my knowledge of how a fourth-generation fighter would solve a certain problem compared to how an F35 would solve the same problem has been interesting and challenging. The Typhoon certainly has the edge in performance but the F35's capabilities and systems do provide the pilot with a vast amount of information that is astounding. I will always hold the Typhoon in high regard and right now I don't think I have a clear favourite" said Squadron Leader James Spoor, 422 Test and Evaluation Squadron USAF. (*RAF News*)

## MAJOR EDWIN SWALES VC DFC SAAF (Attached to the RAF)



This week we remember a very notable South African hero and Victoria Cross winner, Captain (Acting Major) Edwin (Ted) Swales VC, DFC (pictured in the centre with his crew) was born in Inanda, Natal, South Africa, he went to Durban High School (DHS) and then joined Natal Mounted Rifles, seeing action in Africa before he transferring to the South African Air Force and then went onto serve with the Royal Air Force. In 1945, while with the RAF Pathfinders (No. 582 Squadron), Captain Swales was the Master Bomber and captain of Avro Lancaster III PB538. On 23 February 1945, the very same day as his D.F.C. award was gazetted; Swales led the bombing raid on Pforzheim, Germany.

Swales' Victoria Cross citation:

"Major Swales was 'Master Bomber' of a force of aircraft which attacked Pforzheim on the night of February 23, 1945. As Master Bomber he had the task of locating the target area with precision and of giving aiming instructions to the main force of bombers in his wake. Soon after he reached the target area he was engaged by an enemy aircraft and one of his engines was put out of action. His rear guns failed. His crippled aircraft was an easy prey for further attacks. Unperturbed, he carried on with his allotted task; clearly and precisely he issued aiming instructions to the main force. Meanwhile the enemy fighter closed the range and fired again. A second engine of Captain Swales' aircraft was put out of action. Almost defenceless, he stayed over the target area issuing his aiming instructions until he was satisfied that the attack had achieved its purpose."

It is now known that the attack was one of the most concentrated and successful of the war. Captain Swales did not, however, regard his mission as completed. His aircraft was damaged. Its speed had been so much reduced that it could only with difficulty be kept in the air. The blind-flying instruments were no longer working. Determined at all costs to prevent his aircraft and crew from falling into enemy hands, he set course for home. After an hour he flew into thin-layered cloud. He kept his course by skillful flying between the layers, but later heavy cloud and turbulent air conditions were met. The aircraft, by now over friendly territory, became more and more difficult to control; it was losing height steadily. Realising that the situation was desperate Captain Swales ordered his crew to bail out. Time was very short and it required all his exertions to keep the aircraft steady while each of his crew moved in turn to the escape hatch and parachuted to safety. Hardly had the last crew-member jumped when the aircraft plunged to earth. Captain Swales was found dead at the controls.

Intrepid in the attack, courageous in the face of danger, he did his duty to the last, giving his life that his comrades might live" (*SA Military History*)

### **FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JACK SHERBURN DFC RAF:**



JACK SHERBURN, who died aged 89 in 2014, was a distinguished pilot who was born in Howden where the R100 Airship was built. He had a career as an RAF pilot and later as a test pilot for Short Brothers and in the 1960s was heavily involved in the development of the Short Skyvan and Belfast. He was a Flight Sergeant in the ATC and joined the RAF in 1943 together with three fellow cadets, who became air gunners, and all died on operations before he had finished his pilot's training. This always saddened him. He undertook his pilot training in South Africa progressing from Tiger Moths to Harvards and then Hurricanes. In 1945 he joined 78 Squadron in Egypt and flew Dakotas around the Middle East. In 1947 he returned to the UK and was posted to RAF Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire to join 65 Squadron flying the De Havilland Hornet, the fastest ever piston-engined fighter and later converting to Meteors. The Hornet remained his favourite aircraft of all the many types he flew. In 1953 he volunteered for service in Kenya and joined 1340 Flight, flying Harvards, and had regular reunions with surviving members. He was awarded a DFC for gallant and distinguished service in Kenya – one of very few awarded in that post-war era. After conversion to the Canberra fighter bomber in 1955 he joined 18(B) Squadron at RAF Upwood near Cambridge and in 1956 took part in the Suez Campaign as marker/bomber. Before leaving the RAF in 1962 he served as an experimental test pilot at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough flying many different types. This included 30 flights in the Avro Delta 707, an experimental aircraft designed to aid the development of the Vulcan. Following retirement from the RAF, he joined Short Brothers in Belfast during an exciting period of development with two major aircraft programmes in progress, the large freighter aircraft, the Short Belfast for the RAF, and the smaller versatile and commercially very successful Short Skyvan. He was proud to have carried out the maiden flight of the Belfast now in the RAF Museum at Cosford. In 1970 his flying career ended due to a heart attack whilst demonstrating the Skyvan in Zambia. He retired from Short Brothers in 1979. After a brief spell as an instructor at the Hamble College of Air Training he concentrated on his other passion, cars. He had owned many cars as diverse as an Avon Special and an Aston Martin DB2. He worked in the car industry until 1987 and retired to Devon and later Somerton in Somerset, a town he remembered from his days in Weston Zoyland, and which reminded him of Howden. In 1957 he married Thelma Joyce Luscombe, a WRAF pilot officer he met at a dance in Cambridge. They got engaged after a flight in a Canberra and they were married 10 weeks later. She, their two sons, three grandchildren and great-granddaughter survived him.

## STAR WARS – JAGUAR:



The UK and Japan have signed a Letter of Arrangement (LOA) on 16 Feb 2022 to jointly conduct cooperative research on a world-leading fighter jet sensor. The universal radio frequency sensor technology, known as 'JAGUAR' could enable the Armed Forces to better detect future threats from air, land and sea, quickly and accurately locating targets and denying surveillance technology operated by our adversaries. With joint work on the project scheduled to start in April, JAGUAR is expected to create 75 jobs across the UK, including 40 highly skilled engineer jobs at Leonardo's Edinburgh site. Designing, building and evaluating the JAGUAR system will take around five years, involving input from Leonardo UK and Japanese industry. Two demonstrators will be built within the project, one in each country, with the work and learning shared to maximise national expertise. This cooperative research comes after the UK and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in December last year, enabling both nations to pursue joint technologies. In December, the two countries also announced an intention to develop a future fighter jet engine demonstrator as part of their partnership. International partnership remains at the heart of the UK's approach to combat air, as set out in the Combat Air Strategy published in 2018. During the next four years, the UK is investing more than £2 billion into its major national and international endeavour to design a world-leading Future Combat Air System. The work with Japan is taking place alongside the UK's growing partnership with European nations. This news delivers against plans announced in the UK's Defence Command Paper, published in March 2021, to deepen and expand defense industrial relationships in the Indo-Pacific region, including with Japan. *(RAF News)*

## UK BOLSTERS NATO:



UK's substantial contribution to NATO's uplift in Eastern Europe is strengthening the Alliance's Defences on land, sea and air, amid ongoing tensions with Russia. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has been in Brussels last week to discuss the UK offer and the situation in Ukraine with NATO Allies. The UK is doubling the number of personnel in Estonia and sending additional equipment, including tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. These troops and equipment will begin moving to Estonia.

The Royal Welsh battle group, which includes armoured vehicles and personnel, left Sennelager in Germany and bases in the UK and arrived in Estonia during the last week. Apache helicopters will soon be making their way to conduct exercises with our Allies and partners in Eastern Europe. Four additional UK Typhoon jets have also landed in Cyprus and will shortly begin to patrol the skies with NATO Allies in Eastern Europe. HMS Trent – a UK Warship – has already begun conducting patrols in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea alongside NATO Allies from Canada, Italy, Spain and Turkey. The UK is playing a leading role within NATO and shaping the international community's response to Russia. It is also Europe's largest contributor to NATO; having deployed more troops to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence than any other Ally, and HMS Prince of Wales leads the Alliance's Maritime High Readiness Force and supplied Ukraine with light, anti-armour, defensive weapon systems as well as an additional defensive package of body armour, helmets and combat boots. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has advised all British nationals to leave Ukraine immediately. (*RAF News*)

## **ARMED FORCES DAY:**

President Ramaphosa put on a brave face in his address on Armed Forces Day earlier this week, with only a passing reference to "budget constraints" concealing a now sad and sorry state of affairs, *DefenceWeb* reports. Twenty-eight years ago, the SA Air Force (SAAF) earned the accolade "Pride of the Nation" for an impressive flypast over the Union Buildings to mark the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as president. That accolade is now effectively consigned to the dustbin of history as the SAAF of 2022 bears little resemblance to the one which proudly carried the then new South African national flag and the flags of the then also new SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and its four services over the administrative capital of the country. Just how far the SAAF has gone down the road toward becoming an air wing was brutally brought home to one of Parliament's two defence oversight committees this week. Armscor told the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans (PCDMV) that just 46 of the total SAAF fleet of 217 fixed-wing, rotorcraft and jet fighters are serviceable. Going by type, some capabilities are worse affected. For example, a lone C-130BZ Hercules is able to meet the medium-lift requirements of a national defence force which currently has elements deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique. These soldiers, airmen, medics and support personnel have to be assured a logistic chain is in place and properly operational. A lone and veteran Lockheed Martin Hercules transport isn't exactly confidence inspiring in this scenario. It's common knowledge that 2 Squadron's Gripen's are grounded with expiry and re-negotiation of maintenance contracts given as the reason. Similarly with other types in service, maintenance contracts appear not to be timeously renewed. Part of the issue is the massive budget cuts affecting the SANDF as a whole. According to the 2021 Department of Defence Annual Performance Plan for 2021/22, a total of R5.969 billion is allocated to the Air Defence programme (essentially the SAAF in its entirety), against a requirement of R7.8 billion, leaving a shortfall of R1.8 billion. That adversely impacts on preparation and provision of combat-ready air defence capabilities, aircraft maintenance, maintenance of other capabilities and aviation safety. The budget cuts are compounded by a dysfunctional relationship between the SAAF and Armscor made worse by poor contract management. Armscor blames the COVID-19 pandemic for some disruptions to aircraft maintenance, but this may be overstated.

## **WHAT PRICE SECURITY?**

A secret stash of documents and a SSA official caught trying to remove incriminating records revealed the extent of Arthur Fraser's power grab at the agency after his appointment as dg in 2016. In the process, he broke the law and spent r225 million on secretive operations, investigators say the latest: the budget for Arthur Fraser's office as director-general of the state security agency (SSA) grew by 621% during his first full year as intelligence boss, documents and affidavits submitted to the Zondo commission show.

What's more: this allowed Fraser to spend hundreds of millions of rands directly managing covert operations, which included projects allegedly instituted for the benefit of former president Jacob Zuma. The budget available to Fraser's office grew from R42 million in the 2016/2017 financial year to R303 million in 2017/2018. The details: A senior SSA official, known as Mr Y, told the Zondo

Commission in an affidavit that 74%, or R225 million, of this budget was spent on covert operations in the same year, in circumstances where Fraser was precluded by law and intelligence prescripts from being directly involved in operations... You couldn't make this stuff up... (News 24)

## THE WILD GEESE – MODERN MERCENARIES:

In Frederick Forsyth's 1974 novel, "The Dogs of War," a band of mercenaries slips into a small, fictional African nation at the direction of a Western tycoon bent on deposing the nation's dictator to exploit valuable platinum. The novel, and the 1980 movie based upon it, tells a violent tale that paints a stereotypical picture of mercenaries: cynical, amoral, highly trained, heavily armed, single-minded and beholden to those who pay them. In Forsyth's story, the small band of hired guns are veterans of other clandestine battles, operating through shadowy deals, selling their services to questionable benefactors. The modern mercenary is more likely to operate under a corporate banner, sometimes with government ties, striking deals with legitimate administrations to crush insurgencies and end civil wars. Mercenaries are about as old as war itself. Persia's King Xerxes I is said to have employed Greek fighters in 484 B.C. Mercenaries also have deep roots in African warfare. Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II is said to have used more than 10,000 mercenaries in the 13th century B.C. Such fighters also were hallmarks of colonial and Cold War eras. Maj. Michael "Mad Mike" Hoare, a British Army veteran of World War II, once was considered the world's best-known mercenary. He fought at the behest of Katangese Prime Minister Moïse Tshombe against the communist-backed Simba rebellion in 1964, according to a February 2020 BBC obituary. His men became known as "The Wild Geese," and a fictional movie was based on their exploits. (DefenceWeb)

Full article at: <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/land/land-land/the-face-of-the-modern-mercenary/?referrer=newsletter>

## MEMBERS WRITE:

A number of our members distribute Ramblings to other aviation friends. One such wrote:  
"Hi Karl, thank you for sharing this newsletter and most certainly read it. Appreciated the quotes. More specifically was thrilled to see and read the article about the falsehoods of Amnesty International.

Good on you and your colleagues

Enjoy your weekend

Best regards"

(Sent in by Karl Jensen)

## CHEERS FOR NOW:

Day 701 and counting... Regular Lunches have recommenced at Wanderers on the first Friday of each month to popular acclaim! The next is on **Friday 4 March 2022, 12h30 for 13h00 in the Cigar Bar at Wanderers**. Lunch will be followed immediately by the **Annual General Meeting**.

Formal notice of the AGM has been circulated on [bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org). This will be our first face-to-face AGM as things begin to return to some kind of normal since the great lockdown. This is your Club, and it is important for us to hear from our members, and it will be good to see you again, so please plan to attend.

**PLEASE NOTE:** In accordance with Club Rules, Motions or Proposals will not be accepted from the floor at the AGM. Any Member wishing to raise a subject at the AGM should have notified the Secretary in good time, at least 14 days before the meeting. (i.e. by the end of last week).

## TAILPIECE:

As we get older, we always fear the shakes,

But some keep going like well-fed drakes,

Is it in the mind?

Not to be unkind,

But my girl still says I still got what it takes.

(The Sherriff of Nottingham Road)

## QUOTABLE QUOTES:

- ~ "Remember that failure is an event, not a person." - Zig Ziglar
- ~ "It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts." - Mahatma Gandhi
- ~ "Good men are bound by conscience and liberated by accountability." - Wes Fesler
- ~ "You don't have to worry about burning bridges, if you're building your own" - Kerry E. Wagner
- ~ "Man is a reasonable animal who always loses his temper when he is called upon to act in accordance with the dictates of reason." - Oscar Wilde
- ~ "Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday." - Don Marquis
- ~ "Time marks us while we are marking time." - Theodore Roethke
- ~ "If you can't excel with talent, triumph with effort." - Dave Weinbaum
- ~ "Every man must play the part of his ambition. If you are trying to be a successful man, you must play the part." - Orison Swett Marden
- ~ "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently." - Warren Buffett.

## POSITIVE ATTITUDE:

"Life is not the way it's supposed to be - it's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference." After his plane was hit and he was forced to eject, the Marine Corps fighter pilot finally regained consciousness. He was in a hospital, in a lot of pain. He found himself in the ICU with tubes/IV drips in both arms, a breathing mask, wires monitoring every function and a nurse hovering over him, looking worried. It was obvious he was in a life-threatening situation. The nurse gave him a serious look, straight into his eyes. Knowing he was not only a fighter pilot, but a Marine, she spoke to him softly and slowly, enunciating each word: "You may not feel anything from the waist down." Somehow he managed to mumble in reply, "Can I feel your tits, then?"

And that, my friends, is a real positive attitude.

*(Sent in by Karl Jensen)*

## THE GOLDEN YEARS:

Several days ago as I left a meeting at a hotel; I desperately gave myself a personal TSA pat down. I was looking for my keys. They were not in my pockets. A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot. My husband has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them. His theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the door, I came to a terrifying conclusion. His theory was right. The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the most difficult call of all, "Honey," I stammered; ( I always call him "honey" in times like these.) "I left my keys in the car and it's been stolen." There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard his voice. "Are you kidding' me", he barked, "I dropped you off"!!! Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me." He retorted, "I will, as soon as I convince this cop I didn't steal your car." Yep, it's the golden years.

MATT

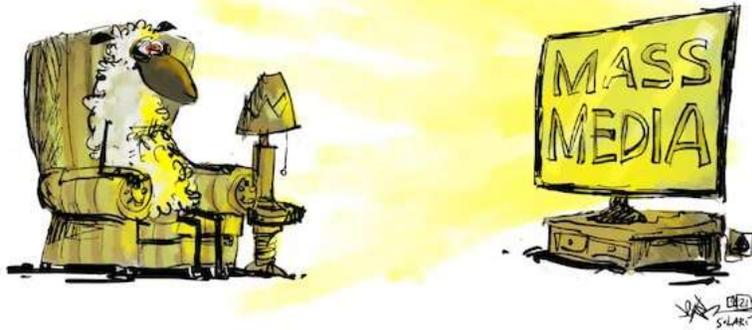


MATT



*'Was it storm Eunice, or was it a false flag attack by President Putin?'*

## The REAL PANDEMIC



### THE WAY THINGS WERE:

From "Reader's letters" in The Times of London: (*Sent in by James Clarke*)

Mr Roger Craig (reader's letter) mentions the 156-page user manual for his new digital camera. Yesterday, my father... browsed through his wartime memorabilia. These included the aircraft manual issued to him when appointed in 1943 as skipper of a Sunderland flying boat, a heavily armed, four-engine aircraft with a crew of twelve. The manual had 50 pages.

*Geoff Foster.*

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