



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 200: 29 MARCH 2024

Speaker Mapisa-Nqakula files urgent High Court bid to interdict Minister Bheki Cele, NPA from arresting her...has ANC infighting brought down the Speaker?...Target on new Eskom CEO's back...South Africa kisses 235 more Post Offices goodbye... Quo vadis, SAA?...Zuma bank account frozen... DWS Minister Senzo Mchunu's attempt to seize Clackson Power's operations at Clanwilliam dam fails in court...GOOD Party fires former Springbok coach Pieter de Villiers...proposed tariff increases in Joburg "outrageous"...MTN pumps R2.5 Billion into SA network to combat loadshedding... Upsurge in Cabo Delgado ISIL attacks....Ladysmith renamed uMnambithi (a great leap forward for democracy!).... School 'shuts off lavatories with metal doors during lesson time'...

Baltimore Bridge has fallen down...Seven Men fingered by the US government as part of a Chinese hacking ring... The UK must find money for defence or risk a Nazi-style invasion... Downing Street admits that the UK is in the grip of a 'migration emergency'... Islamic State claims Moscow concert hall attack – 135 dead...but Western agencies had warned of possible attacks 48 hours previously...Whodunit? ISIS posts purported video of Moscow concert attack...World's top fossil-fuel bosses deride efforts to move away from oil and gas... Prince Harry and Meghan have sent the Princess of Wales their well wishes..."no greater contrast than that between the dignified Princess and sickening online trolls"...China and Russia fuelling the social media attacks...(and targeting bridges??)...The Venerable Archdeacon Dr Miranda Threlfall-Homes calls for 'anti-whiteness'....Churches 'undermining asylum system' 169th Oxford/Cambridge Boat Race this Saturday...

GREAT ESCAPE 80th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Eighty years to the day since 76 allied prisoners of war escaped a detention camp in what is today west Poland, a ceremony has paid tribute to those involved. Military personnel from the Polish Army and Royal Air Force paraded near the site of Stalag

Luft III, a Luftwaffe-run PoW camp for aviators shot down over Europe during the Second World War.



RAF personnel volunteered to participate in the Commemoration

Of the 76 who escaped, all but three were recaptured in the days that followed. Fifty of the men were then summarily executed upon orders of Adolf Hitler. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Royal Air Force Police conducted the hunt for those responsible, succeeding in bringing 18 members of the Gestapo to justice in 1947. Thirteen of those were then later executed.



The Polish Army guard of honour fired a volley for The Great Escape

OPERATION JERICHO 80TH ANNIVERSARY

RAF HEROES who lost their lives in one of the most daring raids of World War II have been remembered by their families in a special commemoration ceremony. The relatives paid tribute at the 80th anniversary of Operation Jericho – the low-level raid on Amiens Prison in northern France – joined by VIPs, dignitaries, Amiens townspeople and schoolchildren.

On February 18, 1944, in appalling weather conditions, the raid – a precision attack

on the prison to allow resistance fighters taken prisoner to escape – was carried out by three squadrons of Mosquito VI bombers from 140th Wing. The pilot and navigator of the Mosquito that led the raid, Gp Capt Percy Charles ‘Pick’ Pickard and Flt Lt Alan Broadley, were killed when their aircraft was shot down in the first minutes. The attack consisted of three successive waves, each targeting one side of the prison. The human toll was very heavy – of the 832 prisoners, 102 were killed by the bombings, 74 were injured and 258 escaped, including 79 resistance fighters and political prisoners. Two thirds of the escapees were recaptured.

Memorial Association Le Souvenir Français (Amiens section and Somme section) organised an international ceremony to commemorate the raid and its fallen, which included Flt Lt Richard Sampson of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the pilot of another Mosquito shot down by the Germans. His navigator, Sqn Ldr A.I. McRitchie RNZAF, was captured. Clair Pepper, Flt Lt Broadley’s niece, said:

“My husband Trevor and I were invited to attend the ceremony by M Gérard Lobry, one of the organisers of the commemoration weekend, and we were very honoured to do so. At the crash site we were still able to find fragments of the Mosquito including the Perspex canopy. One gentleman with a metal detector found three live 20mm cannon rounds – quite remarkable after 80 years in the ground.” The next day the relatives travelled to Amiens prison after being presented with raid memorabilia and a commemoration plaque by the mayor of Amiens’ representative. Clair added: “The wreathlaying ceremony was attended by numerous Amiens dignitaries, Air Force personnel from the UK, Canada and New Zealand and veterans. The people of Amiens turned up in large numbers.”

Wreaths were laid on Alan and Charles’s grave by Clair and Trevor, Gp Capt Pickard’s granddaughter Nicole and representatives from the Somme Aviation Group and local historical society Association Jericho 44. Clair said: “We found the whole weekend of events very emotional and overwhelming. It made me feel extremely proud and thankful to know that Alan is remembered and looked after by the people of Amiens” (RAF News).

JOINT STRIKES ON HOUTIS



RAF Typhoon taking off from Akrotiri on a strike

UK AND US jets destroyed drone and missile launch sites used to attack shipping in

the Red Sea in the latest night strikes against the Houthi terror group. Four Typhoons supported by two Voyager tankers operating from Akrotiri launched Paveway precision bomb strikes on military targets during the coalition raid on eight sites. The latest operation is the fourth strike against Houthi rebels responsible for continuing attacks on merchant and military shipping in the Red Sea region. Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said:

“It is our duty to protect lives at sea and preserve freedom of navigation. That is why the RAF engaged in a fourth round of precision strikes against Houthi military targets in Yemen.” In the most recent incidents drones targeted the British-owned MV Islander and the MV Rubymar, forcing the crew to abandon the vessel. The mission follows detailed intelligence analysis which identified sites used in long-range drone strikes, the MOD added. A spokesman said: “In line with UK standard practice, a rigorous analysis was applied in planning the strikes to minimise any risk of civilian casualties and, as with the previous strikes, our aircraft bombed at night to mitigate further any such risks. (The detailed intelligence analysis is provided by Aki Det, see last week’s article) RAF News

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER



John Cruickshank VC, 103, receives his long overdue Air Efficiency Award from Group Captain (retd) Bob Kemp of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Foundation (Picture: Group Captain (retd) Bob Kemp)

A former Royal Air Force pilot who is the last living recipient of the Victoria Cross from the Second World War has just received another medal - 75 years after he earned it. John Cruickshank VC, 103, was presented with the Air Efficiency Award at his home in Aberdeen. It was awarded to many volunteers who served in the RAF’s two reserve contingents during the war and later. However, the 75-year oversight that led to Mr Cruickshank missing out on the medal was only uncovered last month.

The Air Efficiency Award has now been added to one of the most impressive racks of medals belonging to anyone who served in that period – includes his Victoria Cross. Mr Cruickshank, who was then a Flying Officer, earned the UK’s highest award for

gallantry while he was piloting a Catalina flying boat with 210 Squadron at RAF Sullom Voe in Shetland. He sustained 72 injuries during a patrol in the Norwegian Sea to protect the British Home Fleet as it returned from an attack on the German battleship Tirpitz on 17 July 1944.

Mr Cruickshank and his crew sank a German U-boat while returning from the mission, believed to have been the Type VIIC submarine U-361, but three other members of his crew were also injured - and his navigator killed - by German anti-aircraft fire. Two of Mr Cruickshank's injuries were particularly life-threatening, but he managed to get the aircraft and his surviving crew members home and land safely.

The Royal Auxiliary Air Force Foundation noticed that the Air Efficiency Award seemed to be missing from Mr Cruickshank's impressive medal rack late last year. The medal, which was instituted in 1942, was awarded uniquely to individuals serving with the RAF Volunteer Reserve or Royal Auxiliary Air Force on completion of 10 years' efficient service. Service during the Second World War counted treble. Presenting the award, Group Captain (ret'd) Bob Kemp said: "It is always a pleasure to meet John in Aberdeen, and I was delighted to be able to present him with his long overdue medal. John Cruickshank's many honours and awards clearly distinguishes him as one of the thousands of RAF Reservists who have given so much in the service of this country. The RAF has a proud tradition of maritime patrol that they continue from Scotland to this day - a tradition exemplified by John Cruickshank and his generation."

FOURTH REBUILT MOSQUITO FLIES



NZ 2308 DH Mosquito of No. 75 Squadron RNZAF, c 1950s

On Monday, March 18th, 2024 at Ardmore Aerodrome, New Zealand, the fourth de Havilland Mosquito rebuilt by Avspecs Ltd., NZ2308/ZK-PWL, took to the air at 15:24 hours (local) for a brief 13 minute flight. It was flown by well-known warbird

personality Steve Hinton, with Warren Denholm of Avspecs in the second seat. More test flights will follow on the 19th, and the aircraft is scheduled to be a major attraction at this Easter's Warbirds Over Wanaka airshow.

This Mosquito was built by de Havilland Australia at Bankstown, Sydney, Australia, for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Originally planned to become an FB.40 fighter-bomber version (essentially the Australian-built equivalent of the very successful FB.VI) it was given the RAAF serial number A52-20. However, the decision was made to convert a batch of partly constructed FB.40s to dual control trainer status, and this aircraft was converted to a Mosquito T.43 while still on the production line. At that point, it was renumbered with a new serial, A52-1054.

The RNZAF decided to purchase a small batch of dual-control Mosquitos to help convert crews onto the FB.VI fighter bombers that were to be ferried from Britain. As Australia had dual control Mosquitoes surplus to their requirements, the New Zealand government made a deal to purchase four T.43 models from Australia, and 15 Mosquito T. IIIs (from the UK) as well. A52-1054 was one of those sold to New Zealand, at an individual cost of £3000, and was eventually ferried across the Tasman to RNZAF Base Ohakea, where it was brought on charge with the RNZAF on June 25th, 1947. The new RNZAF serial number NZ2308 was given to this Mossie. (Vintage Aviation News)

INDIAN NAVY ROUTS SOMALI PIRATES



The INS Kolkata intercepted the MV Ruen on the morning of 15 March, and confirmed the presence of armed pirates through a ship-launched drone. "In a reckless hostile act, the pirates shot down the drone and fired at the Indian Naval warship," an Indian Navy spokesperson said. "In a calibrated response in accordance with international laws, Kolkata disabled the ship's steering system and navigational aids, forcing the pirate ship to stop." "Forceful negotiations" from the INS Kolkata resulted in the pirates surrendering and releasing the MV Ruen and the crew present onboard. All 35 Somali pirates surrendered and all 17 original crew of the MV Ruen were safely evacuated from the pirate vessel without any injury, the Indian Navy said.

“The vessel has also been sanitised for the presence of illegal arms, ammunition and contraband. The culmination of the ongoing anti-piracy operation involving pirate ship MV Ruen in the Southern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) highlights the commitment of the Indian Navy towards reinforcing peace and stability, and also to thwart the resurgence of Piracy in the region. The Indian Navy remains steadfast in performing its role as the ‘First Responder’ in IOR,” the Indian Navy concluded. The MV Ruen’s Bulgarian owner Navibulgar said its release was “a major success not only for us, but for the entire global maritime community ... The resolution of this case proves that the security of commercial shipping will not be compromised.” The MV Ruen may also have been used as the base for the takeover of a Bangladesh-flagged cargo ship MV Abdullah off the coast of Somalia last week, the European Union Naval Force said. The vessel, en route from Maputo to the United Arab Emirates with a cargo of coal, was seized by at least a dozen pirates on 12 March and subsequently sailed towards Somalia, to within the 12-nautical mile limit off the coast of Somalia to avoid capture by the naval taskforce patrolling the coast.

A CROOKED MONKEY PUZZLE



Rebuilding a 260-year-old building that was burned to a shell and then bulldozed to a pile of rubble is no mean feat in any scenario. But rebuilding the Crooked House pub, a lopsided structure that had sunk 4ft into the ground, is even trickier. “It’s a bit of a monkey’s puzzle, with no right angles,” said Stephen Levrant, who runs a heritage architecture firm. “Because everything is out of kilter and you’ve got gravity acting in a completely different way, it will have to be approached as if it was quite a sophisticated modern structure.”

Last week, the owners of the Crooked House pub in Himley, Staffordshire, were served with an enforcement notice demanding that they rebuild the venue to exactly how it was before a fire – which is being treated as arson – gutted the property. They have three years to get the job done, if they don’t appeal against it. Experts say rebuilding the pub in its original wonky form will be tough and probably very costly, but not impossible. “The physical problems of constructing it are not insurmountable by any means, it’s just going to take a bit of effort to engineer the building,” Levrant said. “The debate will rage on about whether it’s worth doing, because some people say you’ll end up with something that has no historic value. But what will be recreated is the character, the ambience, and the cultural meaning of that property. So I think that’s worth doing.”

Most people who visited the Crooked House said the building made customers feel drunk before they’d taken their first sip due to its wonky floors, with marbles appearing to roll uphill.

CAPTAIN E H J MOODY



The Hugh Gordon Burge Award from Honourable Company of Air Pilots

“Awarded to a member or members of a crew whose outstanding behaviour and action contributed to the saving of their aircraft or passengers” 1982.

Aviation has lost an icon - Captain Eric Moody has passed away last week, aged 84. Captain Moody was in command of Speedbird (British Airways) flight number 9, from Kuala Lumpur to Perth, on the 24th June 1982, which inadvertently flew through a cloud of volcanic ash, resulting in all 4 engines of his Boeing 747 failing simultaneously.

The announcement he made to his passengers has gone down in the annals of history as an example of typical British professionalism and calmness:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking. We have a small problem. All four of our engines have stopped. We are doing our damndest to get them under control. I trust you are not in too much distress.”

According to AirlineRatings, Moody flew with BA for 32 years, retiring in 1996 with over 17,000 flight hours. Tributes were paid to Moody from across the pilot community. The British Airline Pilots Association said: "We'd like to extend our sincerest and deepest condolences to his friends and family at this time. His passing is met with sadness across the UK pilot community."

One fan said: "Reading that Eric Moody has passed away. He was the pilot of the BA747 where all four engines flamed out thanks to volcanic ash! He was a hero. RIP Captain Moody." Rest in Peace Sir!

ELECTRONIC WAKE UP CALL

A leading military expert has said Russia's use of electronic warfare methods should give the British military a "very good wake-up call". Recently, the GPS location systems on a jet carrying the Defence Secretary were jammed as the plane was flying close to Kaliningrad - a Russian enclave on the Black Sea between Poland and Lithuania.

We spoke to Dr Melanie Garson, Associate Professor of International Security at University College London. She said the incident was "quite a clear indication of Russia trying to... push on the boundaries of demonstrating its electronic warfare capability and...

show some power in this regard. Russia particularly has previously had an edge on this and they have necessity," she said. "The mother of invention over the last two years during the war have actually actively solidified their capabilities in this regard. They've had the chance to use it more concretely and there's a real concern that, particularly Nato, currently doesn't match that capability."

Sitrep's resident defence expert Professor Mike Clarke said the reason the RAF Envoy VIP jet carrying Grant Shapps was affected was because it doesn't have an electric countermeasure suite due to cost-saving. He also said, whilst the incident with Mr Shapps wasn't serious, "clearly the Russians are playing games and they are affecting civilian traffic as much as military traffic when they do this".

Prof Clarke said it is a warning to the UK Armed Forces as, with reliance on GPS systems consistently increasing, the military must ensure their back-up systems are resilient and reliable. This includes the use of a map, compass and pencil, with those skills still given to personnel across the military. (Forces.net)

NOSTALGIA



Brian Stableford sent in these 2 pictures and a look back in time:
"In 1954 at Wingfield, then Cape Town Airport, I took a pic of an SAA DC4 with my Box Brownie camera. It was ZS BMH that I got to fly in 1994"

CHEERS FOR NOW

Corrigenda – meant to mention last week in the piece on Lt McGarr, that Lieutenants Gouws, and Stevens (also SAAF) escaped were also recaptured and executed illegally by the Gestapo after the Great Escape, as was Sqn Ldr Roger Bushell, "Big X" also a South African, but serving in the RAF.

By the time you read this, it will be Easter, and our next function just a week away... that's the "**Annual Dinner**" (now lunch) on **Saturday 6 April, 12h30 for 13h00 at Wanderers**. Please plan to attend, and bring your ladies and like-minded friends. This is when we commemorate the founding of the RAF in April 1918, 106 years ago this year. Please book as early as you can – it helps the organisers greatly to have an early handle on numbers attending so that a suitable function venue can be arranged with the Caterers.

TAILPIECE

The breasts of the Barmaid of Krail,
Were tattooed with the price of brown ale,
Whilst on her behind,
For the sake of the blind,
Was the same information in Braille. (The Sherriff of Nottingham Road)

Ten comments by Caddies

Number :10

Golfer: "I think I'm going to drown myself in the lake."

Caddy: "Think you can keep your head down that long, sir?"

Number: 9

Golfer: "I'd move heaven and earth to break 100 on this course."

Caddy: "Try heaven sir, you've already moved most of the earth."

Number: 8

Golfer: "Do you think my game is improving?"

Caddy: "Yes sir You miss the ball much closer now."

Number: 7

Golfer: "Do you think I can get there with a 5 iron?"

Caddy: "Eventually, sir."

Number: 6

Golfer: "You've got to be the worst caddy in the world."

Caddy: "I don't think so sir . . . That would be too much of a coincidence."

Number: 5

Golfer: "Please stop checking your watch all the time. It's too much of a distraction."

Caddy: "It's not a watch sir - it's a compass."

Number: 4

Golfer: "How do you like my game?"

Caddy: "It's very good sir - but personally, I prefer golf."

Number: 3

Golfer: "Do you think it's a sin to play on Sunday?"

Caddy: "I'm afraid the way you play sir, it's a sin on any day."

Number: 2

Golfer: "This is the worst course I've ever played on."

Caddy: "But this isn't the golf course. . . . We left that an hour ago sir."

And the Number : 1 Best Caddy Comment:

Golfer: "That can't be my ball, it's too old."

Caddy: "It's been a long time since we teed off, sir."

MATT

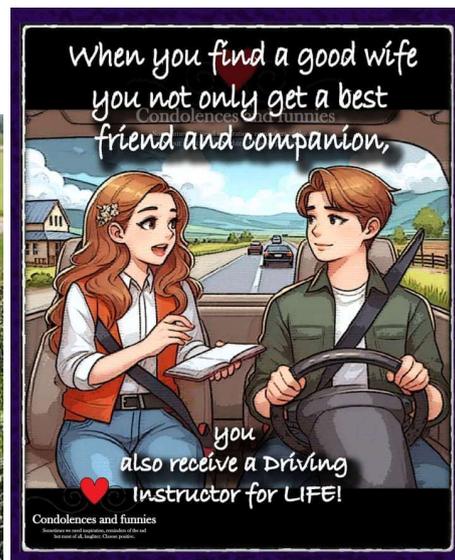


'The editor says the cricket is off-limits, don't even mention it. Write about HSBC instead'

MATT



'He's OK with fireworks, but the rugby makes him terribly nervous'



SQUADRON LEADER ROGER JOYCE BUSHELL RAF – BIG X



Here is another great South African (seen here, left above at Stalag Luft III, and right in his younger student days). Squadron Leader Roger Joyce Bushell RAF (30 August 1910 – 29 March 1944) was an Auxiliary Air Force pilot who organised and led the famous escape from the German prisoner of war camp, and also victim of the Stalag Luft III murders when participants in the famous escape were executed by the German Gestapo. Bushell was posthumously mentioned in Despatches on 8 June 1944 for his services as a POW. This award was recorded in the London Gazette dated 13 June 1946. His name also appears on the war memorial in Hermanus, South Africa, where his parents spent their last years and where they are buried.

Roger Bushell was born in Springs South Africa on the 30th November 1910. He was first schooled in Johannesburg at Park Town Preparatory School but later moved to England, and in 1929 he spent his first year at Cambridge University where he studied law. His talents however extended far beyond a career in law, as an athlete he had the honour of representing the University, both as a skier and rugby player. He excelled at skiing and during the early 1930's he was declared the fastest Briton in the downhill category.

In South Africa the memory of Roger Bushell lives on in Hermanus. His name is among those on the War Memorial above the Old Harbour, Roger's parents were living in Hermanus at the time of his death and his parents also made a presentation to the Hermanus High School, in remembrance of their son who (incidentally) could speak nine languages. The two coveted Roger Bushell prizes for character are still awarded annually at the prize-giving of the school. One prize is awarded annually to the student who has shown the most exemplary signs of character during the year and second one is for the school boy chosen by his fellow students as the best leader.



Roger Bushell's memorial plaque on the War Memorial in Hermanus, South Africa.

