



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

info@rafoc.org

www.rafoc.org

President:	David MacKinnon-Little	
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Colin Francis, Geoff Quick, David Lake	
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison	bruce@jbharrison.co.za Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams	vice-chairman@rafoc.org Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd	Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle	Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough	Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740
	Karl Jensen	Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652
	Jean-Michel Girard	Cell: 083 659 1067
	Geoff Fish	Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Web Master:	Hanke Fourie	Tel: Cell: 082 553 0210
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch	Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 31 – 6th NOVEMBER 2020

GREETINGS:

Yet another remarkable week, and in SA day 225 of the “Bekkersdal Marathon.” ”Remember, Remember, the fifth of November, with gunpowder, treason and plot”. Widespread heavy rain and localised flooding in Gauteng.... Free State on fire.... and farmers to the rescue.... Marcus Jooste hit with an eye-watering, biggest-ever fine... Hawks circling Ace Magashule and his Free State Freebooters... Motsoaledi dodges question of whether he authorised ANC jaunt to Zimbabwe (He would, wouldn't he?)... Dudu Myeni ducking and diving at the Zondo Commission, but implicating others. No less than 528 senior SAPS officers linked to corruption, Eish!.. In the UK, the “confusion, chaos and unfairness” culminates in another national lockdown for another month. Corbyn kicked out of Labour. Lockdowns also in Germany and France. Traffic chaos in Paris exodus... Terrorist attacks in France, Vienna... All eyes on the US election process after some remarkable “Presidential” debates and now the votes are coming in...Biden leading but “Too soon to tell.” “There'll be time enough for counting, when the dealings done...” And the waves of misinformation and fear-mongering just keep rolling along from the evangelists of the “new normal.” “Those who vote decide nothing. Those who count the vote decide everything.” Joseph Stalin – an expert on these matters. “Today's Coronavirus forecast has scattered propaganda with patches of manipulated stats, a fair chance of misinformation and a strong surge of high-pressure virtue signalling, guilt tripping and patronising moving in from the miserable lying bastards in our government.”

RAFOC NOVEMBER LUNCH – ARMISTICE DAY:

On a lovely Summer's day 50 Members and guests gathered at Rand Park Golf Club for Armistice Day lunch, our first such function since lockdown began more than 220 days ago in March. All “signed in” according to Covid protocols, and there were many expressions of delight and pleasure at being able to gather once again for a lunch. Proceedings began with a splendid fly-past by the “Flying Lions” Harvards led by Scully Levin, including a “Missing Man” formation in honour of all those who had given their lives in the Great War and subsequent conflicts. Special thanks to Arnie Meneghelli for his generosity, and to Puma Energy for their ongoing sponsorship than makes such special events possible. There was spontaneous applause from crowd at the glorious sight and sound: which no doubt brought all activity in a large part of Randburg to a halt ! The Club caterers had dressed the well-spaced tables in snowy white napery and provided a generous buffet of Caprese Starter, Durban Chicken Curry or Battered Hake (some had seconds and thirds of both) followed by Malva Pudding

and Custard dessert accompanied by a selection of wines, all enjoyed in a convivial buzz of conversation. Lunch over, the Chairman welcomed Colonel TC Schultz (USAF Retd) who 10 years previously was Defence Attaché at the US Embassy, who has retired to South Africa and now lives to the East of Pretoria, near Kittyhawk.

A brief reminder of the significance of Armistice Day was given by the Chairman, followed by a video of the moving daily Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate, Ypres. All stood for the sounding of the "Last Post", which was followed by the haunting strains of "The Flowers of the Forest" by a lone piper. A "Raffle with a Difference" raised R1700 for the SA Legion. Formal proceeding drew to a close around 15h00, but a good number lingered to enjoy the camaraderie. All in all, a most enjoyable event, and a great way to "break the Covid drought".

WANDERERS:

Colin Warner, the Chairman, writes in the latest Newsletter that new caterers have been appointed: "We believe the changes we are making will be in the members' interests and that the investments we make now in terms of time and money will bear fruit in the future. Gavin Houlston, the new food and beverage service provider, is striving to get the work completed as soon as possible so that we can welcome everyone back. The changes that are in progress should appeal to members across the different age groups and we are looking forward to you, your families and friends enjoying them in an environment that is safe and hospitable". We have been in touch with Colin who has kindly made it clear that the Club looks forward to having RAFOC back. Watch this space...

OBITUARY:

"The Names Bond – JAMES BOND." Sean Connery, who died last Saturday at 90, in the Bahamas, was the greatest interpreter of the James Bond character and served as the template from which almost all future Bonds took their cue. But he was much more besides. We remember the great actor and his achievements - as well as some of his controversies. "We may be a small country, but we're a great one too. A country of Shakespeare. The Beatles. Churchill. Sean Connery. Harry Potter. David Beckham's right foot. David Beckham's left foot, come to that..."- said Hugh Grant's irrepressibly nostalgic Prime Minister in "Love Actually" (2003). Connery was able to assume a mantle few mortals are capable of in their lifetime – that of being a global hero. He's been almost universally acknowledged as the greatest interpreter of the James Bond character. Few actors can inspire grown men to summon back their youth – as when they first encountered him as James Bond – at will; equally, he inspired their children to be unabashed when, in seeking their own hero, they returned to the path first discovered by their fathers. When I first heard of Connery's death, I was reminded of the story told about Dame Edith Evans by the British film director Bryan Forbes. When he told his daughter about the death of Dame Edith, she said, "That's not possible. She's not the type." So, it seemed with Connery. How could James Bond, or King Arthur, ever die? Connery was – is – eternally young in our collective minds, flicking the lighter in Dr No and uttering the immortal words which introduce James Bond to the world. Or, strapped to the laboratory table while the gold laser slowly inches towards him, defiantly snapping at Goldfinger: "You expect me to talk?" As most schoolboys know, on this occasion it is actually Goldfinger who has the final retort. "No, Mr Bond, I expect you to die!" Ultimately, much as he wanted to turn his back on Bond and his world, it turns out even Sean Connery couldn't escape the clutches of the evil Goldfinger. (Daily Maverick)

THE CHANNEL DASH:

In last week's piece on the closure of RAF Manston, mention was made of other notable events connected with the historic station. On 12 February 1942, 18 young men of the Fleet Air Arm flew 6

fabric-covered Fairey Swordfish Torpedo Bombers from RAF Manston in Kent, at little more than 100mph to attack in the Straits of Dover, the largest German Battle Fleet ever assembled... The Admiralty predicted that the German Battleships would come through the Straits of Dover at night and a sophisticated plan of co-operation between 32 Motor Torpedo Boats and 6 Torpedo carrying Fairey Swordfish aircraft was devised to mount a converging attack on each side of the ships' bows, lit by flares from the aircraft. The crews practiced this from the start of February but just 2 days before the attack, the Admiralty decided that the threat level had lowered. They removed most of the MTB's, leaving only 6 boats in Dover at 4 hours readiness. At Manston Lt Cdr Esmonde addressed his crews in a clipped voice. "The balloon's gone up. Get ready". It was of course essential that the vulnerable torpedo carrying biplanes should be given fighter cover for their run in. When Lt Cdr Esmonde's phone rang again, it was 11 Fighter Group, saying; "We intend putting in the Biggin Hill Wing of 3 squadrons as top cover with the Hornchurch Wing of 2 squadrons as close escort to beat up the 'flak' ships for you". The voice continued: "Both Wings have been told to rendezvous over Manston. What time should they be there?" Lt Cdr Esmonde glanced at his watch and said: "Tell them to be here by 12.25 hrs. Get the fighters to us on time - for the love of God". The fleet included the Battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the Cruiser Prinz Eugen, protected by 6 Destroyers, 40 Flak Ships and more than 200 fighter aircraft. All of the Fairey Swordfish were destroyed and only 5 of the aircrew were rescued alive from the cold, dark waters of the Straits. The Daily Mail reported at the time; "This is an episode of which Britons can be rightly proud. In planes which, against the German protecting aircraft, were as slow as a cart horse compared with a motorcar, 18 men of the Fleet Air Arm flew over the Channel. Crippled and ablaze before they got within range, they kept on, delivered their attacks - and died!" The Channel Dash Association unveiled and dedicated the Memorial Monument to 825 Naval Air Squadron at Ramsgate on Friday 12 February 2010.

CENTENARIAN:

Flt Lt John 'Freddie' Nicoll RAF, a former Hurricane pilot, celebrates his 100th birthday on 5 November 2020. Born in Walthamstow in North London, Freddie joined the RAF in May, 1941. After initial training in the UK he went to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to start flying training. He was sent to Syria to train on the Hurricane then posted to 208 Squadron in North Africa in September 1942 flying the Hurricane Mk II in the tactical reconnaissance role in the run-up to the Battle of El Alamein. He was posted to 6 Sqn in October 1943 when they were converting to the rocket-equipped Hurricane Mk IV. He deployed with the squadron to Grottaglie, near Taranto, in the heel of Italy, in February 1944. George Robertson, editor of 6 Sqn Association's newsletter, The Tin-Opener, said: "Freddie and 6 Sqn had a very busy time operating the Hurricane Mk IV on antishipping duties to disrupt resupply of German forces on the Adriatic and in support of Tito's partisans along the Dalmatian coast. "As the 8th Army advanced north, the squadron followed to Foggia, but often deploying forward to the island of Vis. By now, Freddie was a Flight Lieutenant and a flight commander with increased responsibility. He never missed an opportunity to fly on operations. Conducting attacks on shipping, sometimes at night against heavy flak defences, was a very hazardous business during which the squadron suffered heavy losses." Freddie, who completed 58 operational sorties with 6 Sqn, is one of only two surviving Hurricane pilots who saw service with the squadron in World War II. He will celebrate his centenary on November 5.

HAWK JETS:

British and Qatari Hawk jets could soon be flying together in a new joint squadron under a deal signed by the two countries. The move follows in the slipstream of 12 Squadron, the Coningsby-based Typhoon unit formed by both nations. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and his Qatari counterpart His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohamed Al Attiyah signed a Statement of Intent setting out the UK offer of a British base for the Arab state's recently acquired nine Hawk aircraft. The news came as details emerged of the latest strike by RAF Reaper unmanned aircraft against Daesh in a mission coordinated by the RAF's 83 Expeditionary Air Group based in Al Udeid, Qatar. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "Building upon the success of our joint Typhoon squadron, this new era

of collaboration will deliver prosperity and security benefits for both our nations.” 12 Sqn is the UK’s first joint unit since World War II and its new Lincolnshire headquarters will allow pilots and aircrew from both countries to train together in state-of-the-art facilities. Since commencing flying in June, 12 Sqn have trained with heavy weapons and taken part in an exercise at sea alongside the Royal Navy. The Statement of Intent provides the RAF with increased flying hours, gives the Qataris RAF-accredited training, and makes a long-term investment in infrastructure and training facilities. The two nations will continue talks to establish air-to-air refueling support for Qatar. The deal builds upon the Defence Secretary’s visit to the Middle Eastern state in September, where he toured the Combined Air Operations Centre in Al Udeid.

TEMPEST TECHNOLOGY:

British boffins have unveiled a range of high-tech breakthroughs designed to give the RAF’s future combat aircraft a battle-winning edge. A consortium led by defence giant BAE says the sixth-generation Tempest will have game-changing radar capable of processing more data than the online population of a large city. Experts from Leonardo UK are developing a Multi-Function Radio Frequency System sensor 10,000 times more powerful than existing systems to give the combat jet the ability to locate and attack enemies well before it is targeted itself. Leonardo’s Air Programmes director Iain Bancroft said: “The collaborative relationship between Team Tempest and our network of academic and SME partners enables us to bring together the ‘best of the best’ engineering talent from across the UK. “Our new radar technology is a concrete example of the gains this approach has already brought, costing 25 per cent less to develop while providing over 10,000 times more data than existing systems.” Leonardo has tested sub-systems using the new technology at its Edinburgh site with airborne demonstrations expected in the next few years. Separately, BAE has begun flight testing Tempest’s ‘wearable cockpit’ technologies which replace physical controls with augmented and virtual reality displays projected directly inside the visor of a helmet, which can be instantly configured to suit any mission. Concepts including a ‘virtual co-pilot’ are still being developed but could take the form of an ‘avatar’ built into the cockpit to interact with the pilot. BAE Systems has trialed a new generation of ‘psycho-physiological’ technologies, including eye-tracking, to better understand increasing pilot exertion, stress, workload, and fatigue in controlled test flight conditions in a Typhoon. MBDA UK has embedded one of its Human Factors engineers within the team so new weapons can exploit future technologies currently under development. British aerospace giant Rolls-Royce is developing an advanced combustion system to increase engine efficiency, meaning the aircraft can go further, faster...

IT DID HAPPEN.....:

BOAC Flight 712 (call sign Speedbird 712) was a British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) service operated by a Boeing 707-465 from London Heathrow Airport bound for Sydney via Zurich and Singapore. On Monday 8 April 1968, it suffered an engine failure on takeoff that quickly led to a major fire. The engine fell off the aircraft in flight. After the aircraft had made a successful emergency landing, confusion over checklists and distractions from the presence of a check pilot contributed to the deaths of five of the 127 on board. Flight Barbara Jane Harrison was posthumously awarded the George Cross for heroism during the accident, another crew member received a British Empire Medal and a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. As a result of the accident, BOAC changed certain aspects of its emergency procedure checklists. Flight 712 took off from Heathrow at 15:27 GMT (16:27 BST), 12 minutes later than scheduled. It had 127 people aboard, including a crew augmented by the addition of an acting flight officer, John Hutchinson, and a check captain for routine performance review of the pilot in command, Captain Cliff Taylor. As well as the passengers, the aircraft was carrying baggage, mail and a radioactive isotope from the Isotope Production Unit at Harwell destined for the University Hospital in Jerusalem. Seconds after takeoff from Heathrow’s then-9,000 feet (2,700 m)-long runway 28L (extended, years later, and re-designated 27L), there was an unexpected bang and the aircraft started vibrating. The throttle controlling number two engine was shutting down. While

Captain Taylor ordered an engine failure drill, Flight Engineer Thomas Hicks carried out the engine failure drill, but both he and Check Captain Geoffrey Moss reached for the switch to cancel the undercarriage warning horn. At the same time, First Officer Francis Kirkland inadvertently cancelled the fire bell. Hicks reached for, but didn't pull, the engine fire shut-off handle. Moss, observing the fire, exclaimed "Bloody hell! The wing's on fire!" A Mayday was broadcast at 15:29. (Sent in by Bruce Prescott)

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Christopher Joseph Quintin Brand KBE DSO MC DFC RAF - 1893 - 1968



Some South Africans rose to some very senior heights during the Battle of Britain in World War 2, and this man was the most senior South African in the Royal Air Force at the time (in fact he was one of the most senior officers in the Royal Air Force), and a very impressive and brave military career he had – and for which he was awarded a knighthood. AVM Quintin Brand was Air Officer Commanding 10 Group RAF and was responsible for the defence of southwest England and Wales during the Battle of Britain. Brand was born in Kimberley, South Africa in 1893 and began his military career in 1913 when he joined the UDF. In 1915, Brand travelled to England, where he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. He learned to fly and was awarded Royal Aero Club Certificate No 3949 on 30 March 1916. During the First World War, he flew Nieuport 17 scouts, serving in No. 1 Squadron RFC in France as a flight commander before being posted back to England. After the war he remained in the RAF and in 1920 was Lieutenant Colonel Pierre van Ryneveld's co-pilot on the first flight from England to Cape Town, for which he was knighted. In the 1930s he was seconded to the Egyptian government as Director General of Aviation, returning to a staff appointment at the Air Ministry in 1937. Appointed AOC 10 Fighter Group in June 1940, He supported AVM Keith Park in using smaller groups of fighters which were more quickly and easily deployed against incoming German formations. He later took over as Air Officer Commanding No 20 (Training) Group. After retiring in 1943 he lived in Surrey before moving to Rhodesia in 1950. He farmed at La Rochelle near Umtali (now Mutare) His chiShona-speaking work force couldn't get their tongues around "Sir Quintin" and called him "Squinty" by which nickname he was thereafter popularly known in Rhodesia. His nephew, Squadron Leader Richard Brand served in the RRAF and commanded No1 Squadron RRAF, flying Hunters. He was also SA Radio-Controlled Aerobatic champion for several years – and went on to run Casinos in the USA!

Original composed for the South African Legion by Peter Dickens

SPITFIRE SUMMER:



ROYAL AIR FORCE AIR SEA RESCUE: “THE SEA SHALL NOT HAVE THEM”



This unit played a very important role during the Battle of Britain and was responsible for the saving of many air crew lives, both British and German, operating mainly in the coastal areas and the English Channel. The unit in 1940 was equipped with fast motor boats and minimum armaments, and “Walrus” flying boats manufactured by Supermarine. The crews on the boats were all RAF personnel whereas the Flying Boats were fleet Air Arm. One of the classic rescues is detailed in the book “The Last Enemy” which was written by Richard Hilary. He survived the Battle of Britain but was killed later in the war as a Squadron Leader. He served on 603 Squadron and was shot down in the channel in 1940 and bailed out of his burning aircraft with his hands and face badly burned. He spent some hours in the sea and was rescued by an Air Sea rescue launch. He was transferred to a hospital and he became one of the “guinea pigs” This was a club of patients of Sir Archibald McIndoe at Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, Sussex, who had undergone experimental reconstructive plastic surgery, including facial reconstruction, generally after receiving burns injuries in aircraft. The club remained active after the end of the war, and its annual reunion meetings continued until 2007.

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the thirty-first weekly Newsheet - “Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings” - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest (preferably not on the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact through the lockdown. Thanks again to all those who have contributed, and continue to do so! We will use contributions

progressively as we move upwards and onwards.... Rick Peacock-Edwards' book "Rate of Climb" is available from www.loot.co.za for convenient local collection at Clicks.

Scully Levin's new book "Punching Holes in the Sky" is also now available – and nearly sold out. Karl Jensen says. "The books are on limited offer at R250 and are all signed by Scully personally." Karl has stock and has very kindly agreed to handle local orders: karlpix@icon.co.za or WhatsApp 082 331 4652

Take care – we've made it so far - keep safe in these troubled times, use your PPE, and remember that all this, too, shall pass... We'll keep you posted on further developments at Wanderers as negotiations progress.

So, let's hear from you...Please send your suggestions or contributions to bookings@rafoc.org

TAILPIECE:

Beggar's Bowl: Sub-Saharan African states contributed less than 1% to global GDP in 2018 but collected \$50-billion in foreign financial aid, which was a 1/3 of the worlds' donor fund flow, according to World Bank data.... makes you think, doesn't it?.

The SA economy needs a heart transplant, but we can only afford a pacemaker – So, we're spending the money on penis enlargements....

Once more, men are suffering the most compared to women. No more Lads, no more restaurants, no more pubs, no more football... While women can still live their normal lives: cleaning, ironing, cooking, washing dishes and clothes, tidying and whingeing...

The day I stop drinking is when VAT 69 turns 70, Captain Morgan puts his foot down, and Johnny Walker reaches his destination.

A Russian Spy, an IRA supporter, and a racist walk into a pub... Barman says: "What can I get you Mr Corbyn?"

Pastor: "I now pronounce you man and wife. You may now elbow-bump the bride"

Just saw a Facebook status : "Lonely man seeks wife..." He had 265 replies, all of them saying "You can have mine!"

What was washed most in 2020? Hands or brains?

MATT



'Gunpowder? No, I'm stockpiling loo roll'

MATT



'Every day in the UK there are 4,000 new experts on the electoral college votes in Pennsylvania'

When bartenders find new jobs after all the bars close down

