ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

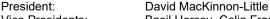
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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 32 - 13th NOVEMBER 2020

GREETINGS:

ORCE OF

Yet another remarkable week, and in SA day 232 of the "Bekkersdal Marathon." More widespread heavy rain and localised flooding in Gauteng.... There was little gunpowder this Guy Fawkes, but plenty of "treason and plot". Over the past few months, we have witnessed the NPA making the first big moves against corruption. What started with the arrests of seven people involved in the asbestos saga culminated in the news of the arrest warrant for ANC secretary general Ace Magashule issued on Tuesday, 10 November. The shock waves are reverberating through the ANC.... The "State of Disaster" extended for another month. Surprise, surprise.... In the UK, the "confusion, chaos and unfairness" culminates in another national lockdown for another month. All eyes still on the US election process: Biden an apparent winner, but the legal challenges to election rigging are mounting.... As Joe Stalin said - it's who counts the votes that matters. "Too soon to tell." And the waves of misinformation and fearmongering, like the Mississippi, just keep rolling along from the evangelists of the "new normal."

REFLECTIONS: THE PANDEMIC, THE PROPAGANDA, THE POLITICS....

This year, in particular, has been harrowing for all of us. The Covid-19 pandemic has dominated our news despite the best efforts of gender-based violence, police brutality, the rise of populism, the fall of our economy, the continued corruption (how is there more?), the looting of PPE funds and the Zondo Commission (someone give that man a Bells) to jostle for headline position. AD 2020 has tested us all and it has asked too much of humanity. We've lost a lot of it. Collectively, as the human race, we are exhausted. We're desperate for it all to end. The pandemic, the propaganda, the politics. We're desperate for a better future and for something to look forward to. (Daily Maverick OpEd 5 Nov)

LEST WE FORGET....



Originally known as Armistice Day, November 11 has expanded over the years to remember all the fallen men and women who have lost their lives in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping efforts. Ceremonies marking Remembrance Day 2020 have taken place around the world, with dignitaries laying wreaths, but only small crowds allowed due to the pandemic. On this day, there are usually ceremonies and parades at war memorials, cenotaphs and churches throughout the UK, as well as abroad.

The Royal Family and top politicians gathered at The Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, for a memorial service. This year, like most things, Armistice Day was a little different because of coronavirus. There was a small ceremony at the London Cenotaph and a Service honouring the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. People were encouraged to watch it on TV at home. The Prime Minister's official spokesperson said: "It's important that the country can continue to come together to remember the sacrifice of those who have died in the service of their country and we will ensure that Remembrance Sunday is appropriately commemorated while protecting public health." This year, as well as wearing a poppy, support can be shown by using a digital poppy on social media sites, or by colouring in a downloadable poppy picture and displaying it. As Gordon Dyne poignantly comments further on in these Ramblings: "What a shadow of its former self. No crowds and none of the usual 10,000 veterans who march so proudly. Many of the older vets may not see another year and would have been seriously stressed to miss it. My heart went out to them." Apart from our own RAFOC Armistice Day lunch and fly-past last Friday, there were many Services in towns and cities all around SA, including that at the Cenotaph in Johannesburg, organised by the SA Legion, at which most Military Veterans and Regimental Associations including RAFA, RAFOC and SAAFA participated and laid wreaths. This year's special Centenary Service was conducted by our Chaplain, Rev Trevor Slade, and Chairman of SAAFA Johannesburg. Plenty footage on YouTube and Web.

EXERCISE CRIMSON WARRIOR:



The largest military exercise to be run by the Royal Air Force in the UK for many years has finished after three weeks of complex air activities. Exercise Crimson Warrior involved personnel and aircraft from the Royal Air Force as well as the Royal Navy, British Army, United States Marine Corps and United States Air Force. Fast jets, multi-engine aircraft, helicopters and Unmanned Air Systems operated from Stations across the country. A development of the regular "Cobra Warrior" exercises with the addition of missions to support the work up of F-35B Lightnings and helicopters that will form the Carrier Strike Group Air Wing during next year's operational deployment of HMS Queen Elizabeth. Incorporating large scale tactical training, the Exercise began on 19th October and involved over 70 aircraft completing a range of missions. The Exercise also marked the end of the long and demanding Qualified Weapons Instructor Courses (QWIC), which train selected personnel to be expert practitioners in their individual warfare specialty or aircraft. The inclusion of the F-35B into Exercise Crimson Warrior challenged and tested the UK Lightning Force and their USMC counterparts in a complex air environment, exploiting the capabilities of the advanced 5th generation aircraft. In addition to the fast jets, the Exercise incorporated a huge number or aircraft conducting Qualified Multi-engine Tactics Instructors, QWI Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and Qualified Space Instructors Courses. Flying out of RAF Brize Norton, Voyager aircraft conducted

routine Air-to-Air Refueling (AAR) sorties extending the reach of each mission and providing a vital battle planning consideration.

RAF POSEIDON MRA1:

Britain's new subhunter landed at its new home for the first time following the completion of £75 million runway improvements to Lossiemouth. The first of a fleet of nine Poseidon MRA1 aircraft -ZP802, named the 'City of Elgin' - touched down and parked outside a new £132m centre at the Moray base, which houses pilots, engineers and personnel. RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander Gp Capt Chris Layden said the arrival ushered in a new era for the base in delivering combat air power and maritime patrol operations. "This is just the beginning of our expansion and modernisation as one of the RAF's most strategically important stations in the UK," he said. The first Poseidon landed on British soil in February and CXX Sqn crews have been conducting operational missions ever since. Meanwhile, 54 Sqn has been training new pilots and weapons systems operators – part of the 400 additional military personnel who will transfer to Lossiemouth to fly and operate the nine aircraft. Resurfacing the base's runways and operating surfaces began in January and included stripping and strengthening taxiways and dispersals. From July, both runways were out of use and the station's Quick Reaction Alert Typhoons temporarily moved to Leuchars Station in Fife, while Eurofighter training continued at Kinloss Barracks. All Typhoon and Poseidon operations are now back at their permanent home and a further £400m is being invested to future proof the station, including possibly the world's first digital air traffic control tower on a military airfield.

COMAIR - What a CONTRAST TO SAA...

Lift Airlines, the brainchild of Gideon Novick, the founder of kulula.com, has confirmed that it will be ready for the expected year-end tourist traffic between the JHB to Cape Town route. The announcement was made when the winners of the name the airline competition was announced. The name 'Lift' was selected from more than 25,000 suggestions. The eight people that had suggested Lift will share the main prize valued at R480,000. Lift Airline's website is live and prospective passengers can sign up for flight alerts. Comair's business rescue process navigated past two important milestones this week as the investors secured the required credit approval from various lenders of debt funding, as well as approval from various regulators necessary for their investment in Comair to proceed.

JUST AIRLINK:



Airlink, the privately-owned airline, has officially changed its company name from "SA Airlink" to "Airlink", as part of its strategy to distinguish itself as a totally independent airline. Earlier this year, Airlink ended its 23-year franchise agreement with South African Airways and began operating and issuing tickets on its own "4Z" code and designator. This has liberated Airlink and enabled it to forge commercial ties with other international airlines that carry passengers and cargo to and from destinations across Southern Africa. It has subsequently signed collaborative "interline" agreements with Qatar Airways, Emirates, British Airways, KLM, Air France and United. In addition, Airlink flights are now sold on www.flyairlink.com and no longer via SAA's website. "The subtle, but significant, name change is a key element of our repositioning, recovery and growth strategy," said Airlink CEO and Managing Director, Rodger Foster. "It should be seen together with recent commercial developments, including the interline agreements, the launch of our own mainline South African domestic services and new regional routes linking Johannesburg with Maputo and Windhoek.

Airlink plans to announce additional new and reinstated routes in the coming weeks and months," he explained. Airlink's new Johannesburg-Cape Town and Johannesburg-Durban services, which are South Africa's domestic trunk routes, enable Airlink passengers to connect with our other domestic, long-haul and regional flights on a single ticket. Airlink's modern training and maintenance facilities ensure the airline's self-sufficiency for pilot and cabin crew training as well as for keeping its fleet safe and in prime working condition. More strength to your elbows, Rodger Foster and Airlink Team!

ZAR SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

When told of ongoing delays in the manufacture and delivery of new infantry combat vehicles for the SA Army (Project Hoefyster), Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo used words including "unthinkable", "unacceptable", adding it was "simply a disaster". Industry association AMD has painted a bleak portrait of the South African defence industry, as exports, research and development and employee numbers decline, but the association believes problems can be fixed through interventions such as streamlining export processes. In a presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence last week, Sandile Ndlovu, Executive Director of AMD (SA Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association) and CEO of the AMD Export Council (SAAMDEC) outlined how the local industry has been declining over the last five years. SAAMDEC's presentation stated that industry revenue declined from R19.5 billion in 2016/17 to R12.5 billion in 2019/20; exports declined by almost half from R12 billion to R6.5 billion; and research and development spend dropped from R1.7 billion to R500 million. The number of people employed in the defence industry has also dropped, going from 15 000 in 2016 to 12 500 in 2019. For comparison, revenue stood at R31 billion in 1990, when R6.1 billion was spent on research and development and the industry employed 130 000 people. Thirty years ago, there were some 3 000 companies active in the South African defence industry - that stands at about 120 today. Defence acquisitions have also declined, going from R26.2 billion in 1990 to R11 billion in 2018/19. However, exports grew from R873 million in the mid-1990s to R6.5 billion in 2019/20. Ndlovu pointed out that exports have been declining since 2016/17, which is a concern as the industry is reliant on exports to survive. "As a country we need to reinforce our ability to export as the local client is not in a position to consume even half of what we are producing as industry." (Defence Weekly)

REMEMBER WHEN:

In contrast to this "tale of woe", Bruce Prescott recalls some memories of the heydays of the SA Aviation industry, and the origins of AMD: "I had invited the President of The Royal Aeronautical Society, Dr Hugh Metcalfe, to come down here to deliver the opening address at one of our Royal Aeronautical Society and the SA Institute of Aeronautical Engineer's conferences held at the CSIR auditorium. His message to us was to establish an organisation on the same lines as the SBAC. Consequently, four of us, two from our Southern Africa Division of the RAeS [Noel Potter and myself] and two from the SAIAeE got together and decided to organise a conference at which this concept was put to heads of SA aviation [e.g. SAA, Comair, the SAAF, Fields Aviation, CAASA, etc. which included Piet van Hoven, Gert van de Veer, Dave Kemp, etc.] for discussion and voting for the establishment of such a representative organisation. Cor Beek opposed this as he said we would be stealing his annual air show, but I pointed out that CAASA did not represent military aviation. A vote was taken and the majority voted in favour. This led to the establishment of the AMD? [I don't remember its exact name - memory lapse] which over the years evolved into what was known as the AAD which as you know held the annual exhibition and air show which attracted many of the foreign Air Forces and major aerospace companies, including Russia. There was Boeing, Airbus, Eurocopter and numerous others. I remember having a close look at the SU30 noting the poor quality of its manufacture, e.g. overlapping panels, round head rivets, etc. I was told that it is a fighter aircraft and hence has a very short life, so why bother with construction details? I recall that in 1998, CAASA and AMD – amalgamated to become "Aerospace Africa". Down here in sleepy town Howick, together with Arrie de Klerk and John Withers we have established the Midlands Aviation Society which has

attracted some 60 members. Our current task is to renovate the Goodman Household Memorial site in the Karkloof. Over and out for now, waffling too much. No doubt there will be some errors in my stories above but put that down to Old Timer's Disease".

CANADAIR C.4 ARGONAUT - ROYAL RHODESIAN AIR FORCE:



A newly painted Canadair C.4 "Argonaut", its four Merlin engines recently overhauled, freshly painted in the livery of the Royal Rhodesian Air Force in front of the BOAC building at London Airport in February 1960. These aircraft were Canadian licence built Douglas DC4s with Rolls Royce Merlin Engines and served with many airlines of those days. With the old BOAC registration G-ALHH still on the tail RRAF181 is ready to be ferried off to New Serum Air Base south of Salisbury in Rhodesia. This was one of four Argonauts bought by Rhodesia to bolster the lifting capabilities of RRAF's 3 Squadron which also flew Dakotas. The C.4s only stayed with the RRAF for four years before they were returned

To BOAC (after the breakup of the Central African Federation) and eventually scrapped. While with the RRAF, however, they performed well in virtually all their allotted tasks. They were used for VIP travel, particularly when Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, visited in 1960. Later that same year they were used for humanitarian relief, evacuating refugees fleeing during the Congo emergency. Their main role was trooping, working as part of Rhodesia's commitment to both the Commonwealth and the Central African Federation.

MEMBERS WRITE:

Gordon Dyne: "I watched the Remembrance service from the Cenotaph in London yesterday on Sky news. What a shadow of its former self. No crowds and none of the usual 10,000 veterans who march so proudly. Many of the older vets may not see another year and would have been seriously stressed to miss it. My heart went out to them. The march past should have gone ahead even if the onlookers were not allowed".

Priscilla Henwood: To the Committee, My 'scribe' continues to read to me the "Rafoc Reminiscences and Ramblings" which we both enjoy immensely. As Telkom have still not transferred my phone from Studio 10 to Room 57, also in Health Care at Helderberg Village, it is not easy to send emails. So, this is my record of great appreciated for these inspiring stories and memories of the RAF. Just hoping to send you a proper email when Telkom cooperate with a phone for my new room. Yours with gratitude, Priscilla – with a PS from Julia: "To the Committee, I cannot tell you how much joy I get out of reading all the RAF news to Priscilla, as her chronic eyesight precludes her from reading them herself. As I am not in any way affiliated to the RAF – only through Priscilla – reading all sorts of historical stories, memories and up to date progress of the RAF is, and has been, so much pleasure. I have learnt quite a number of facts as well – like how 'tetchy' Douglas Bader could be and that the NSRI was founded by a woman in Simon's Town. Just 2 of the snippets that have stuck with me. Each story has merit and great interest to me though. So, thank you to all who submit the contributions – and to those who compile Reminiscences and Ramblings". From a very grateful Julia Clegg

Andrew Muttitt: I was particularly interested in the piece on RAF Air Sea Rescue in the latest Ramblings. This is a very good documentary featuring one of the preserved launches, which might be worth screening at a future lunch. https://youtu.be/SDsS9BgYV1A The Type Two HSL was a 63

ft high-speed launch craft made by British Power Boat Company (BPBC). The craft were used during the Second World War for air-sea rescue operations to save Allied aircrew from the sea. Powered by 3 Napier Sea Lion engines each of 500 HP, they could reach 36 knots. A low-set cabin contained the wheelhouse, chart room and a sickbay. For defence against enemy aircraft, on top of the cabin were two aircraft-style turrets made by Armstrong-Whitworth initially with a single .303 in Vickers K gun or Lewis gun. The mahogany hull was of the hard chine, planing type. Designed in 1937 by George Selman, Chief Designer and Naval Architect of the BPBC, which was founded by Hubert Scott-Paine at Hythe. Scott-Paine had previously owned the Supermarine Aviation Company, later builders of the Supermarine Spitfire and several flying boat types.

WANDERERS UPDATE:

Club Chairman Colin Warner, writing in his half-yearly report records inter alia: "Even before the Government implemented the first lockdown in March very few members came to the Club because of the Covid threat and conferencing and banqueting came to a complete standstill. Circa Events at the deck on the "B" rugby field has been unable to host a single event during this financial year as a result of the impact that the lockdowns have had on social gatherings and spectator sports. F&B has been far and away the biggest casualty among our revenue streams with a nominal R27 913 accruing to the Club as compared to a budget of R2 660 278. There is little prospect of anything changing in that regard during this calendar year and a similar outlook applies to banqueting and conferencing in the clubhouse. Despite these difficulties we are confident that the structural changes that are in progress in the clubhouse together with a fresh approach and new energy by the recently appointed food and banqueting service providers will help us to take the Club a further step towards sustainability. This has been a tough year for the world at large and the Club has not escaped the financial damage that Covid-19 has brought with it. The Club's balance sheet remains strong as a result of the receipt of the money from the Golf Club, the prudent decisions taken by past and present trustees of the Development Fund and the assiduous work carried out by the Committee and management. We look forward to the reopening of the clubhouse and to welcoming back our members and quests".

TASSENBERG - THE LEGEND:

The SA wine industry may be in dire straits as a consequence of Covid 19 restrictions. However, "Tassies" (to most of us) - may be regarded as a cheap everyday plonk to most people, but the iconic wine has played an important role-and won many friends in the South African wine world. For generations of students, Tassies was the drink that introduced them to the world of wine. Tassies was traditionally consumed in substantial quantities on float-building night, which is why so many of the students on board the floats on Rag Day appeared serenely calm, Comatose even. For years Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery (SFW) sponsored popular inter-varsity tasting competitions under the Tassenberg banner. Winemakers at SFW confessed that they took more care over the blending of Tassies than they did with any of the company's more expensive brands. The reason was simple. A good Cabernet Sauvignon could be expected to vary from vintage to vintage and connoisseurs accepted this. But Tassies drinkers expected the same wine year after year. It took skillful blending to ensure that each vintage matched the previous one. One year the marketing people at SFW decided to include Tassies in their Kellerprins range, with a new, streamlined label to match the other Kellerprins wines. Sales plummeted. Nobody liked the new "improved" Tassies. This is not real Tassies, the fans said. "We want our dear old Tassies back." Fortunately, the marketing people quickly realised their mistake. I was a young wine writer at the time and was sent a smart wooden box containing a bottle of Tassies with the original label, plus a stick of excellent kudu biltong and a wooden-handled pocketknife with which to slice it. There was a note to say Tassies was back. Real, original, Tassies. Years later I was asked to present a wine tasting to the Naval Officers' Club in Simon's Town. I decided to do a little test and bought six ordinary boxed wines (three red and three white), which I decanted into elegant and expensive cut-glass decanters and served in fine crystal wine glasses. I donned a dress suit for the occasion. The officers decided to show their sophistication

by displaying their wine knowledge and suggesting this one was probably a French Chardonnay and that one was most likely a Barolo from southern Italy, or possibly a Rhone blend based on Syrah. Then one of the tasters sipped a red wine and announced: "This is Tassies. You can't fool me." The others hushed him and told him to behave. This was a serious tasting, they reminded him. At the end of the event, I pronounced the Tassies man to be the Taster of the Evening and presented him with the rest of the Tassies box as his prize. He opened it immediately and shared it among his fellow tasters and the evening quickly developed into a party. I have no idea how I found my way home that night, but it taught me an important truth: you don't have to be rich, or sophisticated, to discover there's a world of fun in every bottle (or box) of wine you open.

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

This is the thirty-second weekly Newssheet - "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, but that may change with senior ANC members being arrested!) 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 onwards and upwards....

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:

"Is 200 Zeros a lot?" "Depends on their position. If they are after a decimal point, No. If they are above Pearl Harbour, Yes!"

If I tell you a Coronavirus joke now, you'll have to wait two weeks to get it....

The World Health Organisation has just announced that dogs cannot get Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can be released. To be quite clear, WHO let the dogs out...

Trump just had the full 2020 experience. He caught Covid, lost his job, and will be evicted from his house....

It was a lot more fun being 20 in the 70s than being 70 in the 20s!

A positive takeaway from last Monday's Brackenfell protest...there are at least 30 EFF members who can now claim they have been to high school.....

The Pope was over in Ireland recently, and paused to bless the faithful in Ballymun. He had been doing miracles on his tour. Young Sean asked His Holiness if he could help him with his hearing. The Pope put both his hands on Sean's' ears, prayed and said: How's your hearing now?" Our Sean says "I don't know. It's not until next Tuesday."

THERE IS A MEDICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN GUTS AND BALLS. We've all heard of people having Guts or having Balls. But do you really know the difference between them? In an effort to keep you informed, here are the definitions:

GUTS - Is arriving home late after a night out with the guys, being met by your wife with a broom, and having the Guts to ask: 'Are you still cleaning, or are you flying somewhere?'

BALLS - Is coming home late after a night out with the guys, smelling of perfume and beer, lipstick on your collar, slapping your wife on the butt and having the Balls to say: 'You're next, Chubby.' I hope this clears up any confusion on the definitions.

Medically, speaking there is no difference in the outcome. Both are fatal.

CHURCH LADIES WITH TYPEWRITERS: They're Back! Those wonderful Church Bulletins! Thank God for the church ladies with typewriters. These sentences actually appeared in Church bulletins or were announced at Church Services: (Sent in by Rob Garbett)

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water."

The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again", giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

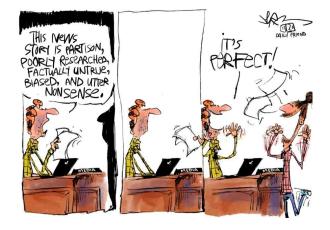
The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

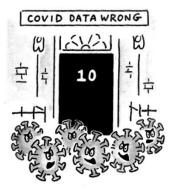
The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side.





MATT



STOP THE COUNT, STOP THE COUNT ...'

MATT



'It's so depressing. I could be stuck in a bunker, swearing at my golf ball and trying to snap my club in half'