



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 42 – 22nd JANUARY 2021

GREETINGS!

"Double, double toil and trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble" - SAs cauldron is certainly bubbling as we reach the milestone of Day 302 (and the 21st day of the 21st year of the 21st Century) of the Great Plague and totalitarian rule in the ongoing "State of Disaster." Is this the "New normal"? – Curfew, liquor banned, restrictions on movement, the Army deployed in the townships, while most international flights are cancelled, and the major land ports of entry closed. Police harassment of restaurateurs and para-surfers now reaching Leon Schuster-esque proportions.... The scramble to procure Covid vaccines....Government, apparently, do not have the budget to pay for the vaccines SA requires... here comes another tax... Sound familiar? Legitimate businesses ruined, but the illegal tobacco and booze industries booming.... Government warned about 'huge' Covid-19 vaccine theft risk: (Watch this space!) B-EEE companies lining up... The more things change in SA, the more they remain the same.... Cyclone Eloise in the Mozambique Channel. Zuma says Zondo Commission Cost Order is "wrong and unfair" (He would, wouldn't he?) UK back to yet more confusion and harder lockdown; Churches pitch to reopen as "Essential Services" in this time of national emergency. Brexit demonstrators bring fishy business to central London... Air corridors closed. HSBC and other UK Banks ban cryptocurrency deposits. Sport battles on as Covid makes further inroads into 2021 schedules... Will Trump be impeached? No less than 40 000 National Guardsmen deployed in Washington to guard the Presidential Inauguration. Antifa hard at work behind the scenes.... The spectre of Kamala Harris becomes an awful reality for USA...

"If cats looked like frogs, we'd realize what nasty, cruel little bastards they are. Style. That's what people remember." - Terry Pratchett

DESERT STORM – OPERATION GRANBY:



The 17th January marked the 30th anniversary of the first British air strikes carried out by RAF Tornados against the Iraqi Air Force as part of the US led Multi-national Coalition's actions to liberate Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion on 2nd August 1990. The air campaign was to last for 43 days until the ceasefire on 28th February. The Coalition fielded 2,300 aircraft with the British contribution to the strike force comprising RAF Tornado, Jaguar,

and Buccaneer aircraft. The first objective was to destroy the Iraqi Air Force (IAF) air defence capability and its ability to launch fighters. This ensured Allied air supremacy, and the disruption Iraqi command and control systems. On 24th February, with the IAF immobilised, the attention turned to supporting the short ground offensive. The British military contribution to the Allied Coalition to remove the Iraqis from Kuwait was codenamed 'Operation Granby.' The UK's contribution to the coalition saw 53,462 members of the Armed Forces deployed to the Middle East. In August 1990, the first RAF aircraft arrived in Saudi Arabia alongside the United States Air Force just nine days after the invasion of Kuwait. Over 2,000 sorties were carried out by the RAF between 2nd August 1990 and 16th January 1991 to limit further Iraqi expansion. During the early phases of air campaign, RAF Chinooks and Pumas from the Helicopter Support Force conducted sorties to land British Special Forces behind Iraqi lines and in the aftermath of the conflict delivered food and aid to displaced refugees. Support was also provided by RAF Victor Tankers, Hercules, Tristar and VC10 supporting logistics for the RAF and other militaries as well as the Nimrod MR2 assisting Naval operations. During the campaign eight RAF Tornados were lost, five during operations and three during sorties prior to 17 January Air offensive. A total of 47 British personnel were killed, five during the Air campaign.

HISTORY OF DRINKING:

Those who are struggling with the ban on the sale of booze in SA, an unprecedented prohibition, may find some nostalgic solace in a book just released in the UK. From claret-sipping Edinburgh worthies to the frequenters of unlicensed, debauched shebeens, the Scots' relationship with premises licensed to sell alcohol is both long and complicated – as Tony Cooke's new book shows.



'The Scots have long had a problematic relationship with alcohol,' writes Tony Cooke at the start of *A History of Drinking – The Scottish Pub since 1700*, a wise account that should inform the perennial debate on booze in Scotland. The ritual of gathering under one roof to drink and make merry has always troubled the authorities and provoked endless questions: 'What were folk doing unsupervised? Why weren't they in church? Were they up to mischief? Were women involved?' The role of women is well covered in the book.

Though they were the original ale-wives or brewsters who brewed the beer, their presence was banned in Scottish taverns in 1699 for being 'a great snare to the youth, and occasion for lewdness and debauchery.' The sexual revolution, right down to the provision of female toilets, took a long time coming to the Scottish pub. Pubs came in many guises. At the top of the pile were the Taverns and Inns where Glasgow tobacco barons could slurp rum punch while Edinburgh worthies espoused the Enlightenment over jugs of claret. Further down the scale were the Ale Houses which, by the late 18th century, were more into whisky than beer. Then came the tippling houses and dram shops, and finally the unlicensed shebeens. The drunken depravity of the shebeen, where the cocktail of choice was whisky and meths, induced a prurient fascination among the Victorian middle classes. Today the Scottish pub is something of an endangered species, if you believe reports in the media. Thanks to the smoking ban, tougher drink-drive laws, and a slowness to adapt, it is drinking 'in the last chance saloon', according to "Scotland on Sunday."

Then again, they said that about cinema in the 1980s, and that has bounced back – so maybe there's hope yet for the great Scottish boozier.

A History of Drinking – The Scottish Pub since 1700. By Tony Cooke, Published by Edinburgh University Press, £19.99.
Review by Tom Bruce-Gardyne.

NEVER SAY DYE:



Sharpshooter Cpl Phil Dye is hitting new heights after being crowned the RAF's best photographer. The talented 35-year-old topped a public poll with his stunning shot of a winchman – and was brought in to capture high-altitude images of the recent solar eclipse and the super-iceberg in the South Atlantic. His winning picture of a medical evacuation drill with 84 Sqn crews in Akrotiri netted thousands of votes to win the annual RAF award while his images of the trillion tonne ice monster have been seen across the globe.

Speaking about the challenges of capturing his winning shot he said: "I had been flying with 84 Sqn many times and had got to know the crew well enough to suggest we try something different after the exercise had ended. I laid flat on my back whilst battling the downwash from the rotor blades and had the challenge of the sun directly behind both subjects. I was reliant on the winchman being able to get super close to me as I was operating with a wide-angled lens. He must have been just inches away from me." Cpl Dye was deployed to the Falklands late last year, flying sorties with the RAF's A400M Atlas crews from Mount Pleasant. He launched two high altitude missions when British scientists called in the RAF to capture images of December's eclipse and track the titanic iceberg A68a threatening the coast of South Georgia. The 'berg is so large it can only be fully seen from space. Cpl Dye added: "We were operating at 30,000ft for those. I had numerous adventures with the Atlas flying down to South Georgia. There are so many opportunities for a photographer in the Falklands. "Working in a Tri-Service environment gives a real insight into the challenges of maintaining an overseas station. (RAF News)

SA GLOBAL MILITARY STANDING:

Military website, Global Firepower, has published its military strength ranking for 2021 featuring 138 countries, with the ranking utilising more than 50 different factors to determine a given nation's PowerIndex. South Africa is ranked as having the 32nd greatest military strength in the world – behind Egypt (13th) and Algeria (27th) in Africa. According to the ranking, South Africa has 66,500 active personnel and 15,000 reserve personnel. It also estimates that the country has around 14,025,000 citizens who would be fit-for-service should it enforce conscription laws. Notably, South Africa stands out for its land power, but has fallen behind other nations in recent years when it comes to air and naval power. In November 2020, the Department of Defence published its annual report for 2019/2020, with the data painting a bleak picture of South Africa's military capabilities. The department warned that the country's defence force has lost a number of capabilities owing to successive budget cuts, noting that its core military capabilities "have been in decline for many years. This is largely due to severe and crippling cuts to its baseline funding allocation and the resultant erosion of both the capital and operating budgets of the Department of Defence," it said. The department said that not only has this led to inadequate maintenance, repair and overhaul of the largely obsolete equipment inventory, but has also led to a significant reduction in the prime mission equipment renewal programme of the defence force with 'devastating effects' on South Africa's sovereign defence industry. It said that under the current funding regime, it has had very little room to manoeuvre and has had to continue where possible with the repair of its inventory. "In most cases, the main equipment that it uses is more than 40 years old and is largely obsolete, and with almost no spares and maintenance support available from the original equipment manufacturers." (Global Firepower)

SAAF TO THE RESCUE:

The South African Air Force (SAAF) used an Oryx helicopter to assist in the rescue of six people who had been trapped due to flooding close to their property, in Loch Vaal, Vanderbijlpark, along the Vaal river. Heavy overnight rains caused the people to become trapped by rising water, and they contacted the South African Police Service (SAPS) for help on the morning of 16 January, the South African National Defence Force said. Upon arrival at the scene, the SAPS found six people, including an 80-year-old gentleman and a 72-year-old woman with limited mobility. SAPS divers were able to assist four members and eight dogs to safety by helping them swim. For the elderly, however, help was sought from 17 Squadron members, who were called out from Air Force Base Swartkop in Tshwane. According to Jake Manten, National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) Vaal Dam station commander, "We launched our Discovery Rescue Runner, accompanied by Police divers, to attempt to rescue the couple from the house but submerged and semi submerged long farmland grass hampered efforts to reach them and the couple were unable to wade through the barely accessible flooded terrain." The SA Air Force was then requested to assist and a SAAF Oryx helicopter airlifted the couple to safety. They were medically assessed by paramedics and loaded into an ambulance and apparently transported to hospital as a precaution for treatment for shock. Apart from the SAAF, SAPS and NSRI, ER24 ambulance services, Netcare 911 ambulance services and Private Community Medical Services were also on the scene. (*Defenceweb*)

WINE, WINE, EVERYWHERE – AND NOT A DROP TO DRINK!



The local wine industry is sitting on a huge reserve of stock that couldn't be exported or consumed domestically during the course of the lockdowns last year. "At the moment we have the highest stock levels ever in 360 years" said the managing director of Vinpro, Rico Basson. "Half of the wine is exported; the other half obviously sold domestically but we've been in a ban now for 18 weeks - that's four and-a-half months! Every week that we don't sell, that's R300 million not coming to fruition to these wineries.

If you can't sell... other options would be to not make wine but rather take the juice and make concentrate or hand sanitizer and even things like industrial wine. But those aren't profitable options." At the same time the industry is preparing to harvest the next grape crop. To say the situation is dire would be an understatement, Basson told Bruce Whitfield on The Money Show. Wineries still have capacity to crush, but unless they can start clearing the existing stock in the tanks within a month, they will run out of storage space. The last resort, he says, would be to leave the grapes hanging in the vineyards. Most of the wineries still producing are small, with a turnover of less than R10 million. The strain on the system was severe in 2020 he says and 2021 will likely see foreclosures, mergers, and a switch to farming different produce. (*Winepro*)

MKAMBATHI:



Contrary to claims in a 2019 Daily Maverick article, Mkambathi on the Eastern Cape Wild Coast is neither being sold nor privatised. Quite the contrary: what is being negotiated is a lease of huge financial value to both the community and the government, with the private investor taking all the risks – and conservation being the winner. The simple reality facing Africa's parks and reserves today, Mkambathi included, is that unless wildlife and wilderness areas contribute meaningfully to local communities in cash and kind, the future of these great wildernesses is not guaranteed.

At issue is the Community/Public/Private Partnership (CPPP) being developed on the Eastern Cape's Wild Coast by the Mkambathi community in conjunction with Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Authority (ECPTA) and a private company, Mkambathi Matters. With government budgets being stretched, SANParks, Kruger National Park, CapeNature and many others have had to fund a large portion of their annual costs through similar lease and concessioning arrangements. Mkambathi goes one step further through community involvement and ownership in time and at scale that will result in Mkambathi becoming one of the better, true partnerships in a wilderness area between a community, government and a private investor and could well set the benchmark of all such future community partnerships in the country. Its lodge will also be one of the greenest ever to be developed in South Africa. Every single "ounce" of electricity, for instance, will be created by solar and wind. The reality is that the new tourism facilities at Mkambathi in the north will encourage and facilitate many more South Africans to visit and enjoy this magnificent reserve that up to now has only been able to host a small number of more robust travelers and hikers who will still be able to visit Mkambathi by booking into the self-catering cottages in the south.

(Colin Bell) https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-01-18-mkambathi-development-is-a-win-win-outcome-for-the-local-community-who-own-the-land/?utm_source=Ince_FirstThing

MEMBERS WRITE:

Dave Evans, responding to last week's Ramblings, sends greetings to all and says: "Another excellent issue. You may wish to use this if you're short on content: Attached is a pic of my "Jaguar SS 100." Your obit of Gp Capt Rake reminds me of my father-in-law, Albert Mells. He was an officer in the army at the start of WW2 and went up to East Africa, where he had the misfortune to be in a building when the Italians bombed it. He was invalided back, with seriously damaged feet, which he suffered from for the rest of his life. When they were fixed enough for him to walk in a way that the damage was not too conspicuous, he enlisted in the air force, as he knew the army were aware of the foot issue and wouldn't have him back! Like Rake, he did so well that he was retained as an instructor, to his massive annoyance, and he spent the rest the war converting the trainees who were not going to be flying fighters, onto multi-engined Airspeed Oxfords in Bulawayo, (RAF Heany, I think) He died some 28 years ago, but he used to tell the story of losing an engine with a student on one occasion on takeoff – Oxfords were not famous for their single engine performance in any circumstances; very little was in those days. He obviously grabbed the controls and said to turn 'with the engine' – which, other things being equal, was the sensible thing to do, would have taken them over a school – 'against' the engine was over a sewage works! He said the family motto was 'semper in excreta' anyway, so he went the sewage works way and managed to limp round a very short circuit at zero altitude, and back onto the runway. He got some sort of 'mention in despatches' kind of thing for it, although I don't remember exactly what. The photo is a model with him in it – he's in the left seat as you look at it – complete with his RAF style moustache, although you can barely see him...!



Dave's Jaguar SS 100

CHIREDDI CROCODILE ROCK:

A crocodile reportedly got into a male ward at Chiredzi General Hospital this week, TellZim reports. TellZim alleged that the incident could be a result of flooding due to heavy rains and poor drainage that enabled the reptile to make its way into the hospital on Monday. "A crocodile got into a male ward at Chiredzi Gen Hospital today and people are waiting for the Zimparks team. The crocodile is understood to have followed the waterway from Ward 4 and got to the hospital in Ward 2. Heavy rains have caused a lot of flooding in the poorly drained town. ZimParks is yet to comment on the incident. Heavy rains are expected to hit parts of the country this week, while a possible tropical - Cyclone Eloise - is expected to hit parts of Limpopo and Beitbridge next week.

NO SANDF "ARMED FORCES" EVENT THIS YEAR:

The event is the single largest internal SA National Defence Force (SANDF) one annually and centres around 21 February, the day SS Mendi sank in the English Channel in 1917. SANDF Director: Corporate Communications, Brigadier General Mafi Mgobozi, confirmed to DefenceWeb this year's event, originally scheduled for Mpumalanga capital Mbombela, was off. "There will be no Armed Forces Day event this year," he told DefenceWeb telephonically, adding 21 February would "still be marked" with a decision yet to come on exactly how and where. His comments are in line with what this publication was told in November last year. Armed Forces Day 2021 is dependent on the status of COVID-19 prevalence and determination by government on where the country stands with regards to health protocols regarding large events the SANDF said then. Subsequently government's National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) extended the national state of disaster on the month-by-month basis with the level of lockdown regulations currently again at three. This prohibits public gatherings. (*Defenceweb*)

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

Ten months later, this is the forty-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 but if they are good then the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact and entertained 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....

Please continue to take care – we've made it so far - keep safe in these incredibly troubled times: wash your hands, cover your face, make space, avoid gatherings and remember that all this, too, shall pass....

We'll keep you posted on resuming lunches when we can, and further developments at Wanderers as negotiations progress.

So, let's hear from you...

Please continue to send your suggestions or contributions to: bookings@rafoc.org

TAILPIECE:

"Please cancel my subscription to 2021 - I've had the 7-day free offer and am not interested."

Owner (severely) to his dog: "I hear you have been chasing people on a bicycle." "No way!" replies the dog. "I don't even know how to ride a bicycle!"

If at the end of this current lockdown you could choose between a foreign holiday with your wife or pints and steaks with the lads, what would be your choice – Rare, Medium Rare, Medium or Well Done?

Musings on the Mona Lisa: The most dangerous animal in the world is a smiling woman sitting in silence....

Ek vra nou die dag vir n ou van Brakpan af: "Wie was die eerste – die hoender of die eier?"

Nadat hy lank gedink het, se he: "Nie fok, ek weet nie, ek het nie eers geweet hulle het gedice nie..."

Translation: I asked a guy from Brakpan the other day: "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" After he had thought for a long time, he said: "No, I don't know... I didn't even know that they were dicing..."

CATCHING WILD PIGS: A THOUGHT FOR TODAY.... *(Sent in by Karl Jensen)*

Karl Marx allegedly said, "Remove one freedom per generation and soon you will have no freedom, and no one would have noticed."

There was a chemistry professor in a large college that had some exchange students in the class. One day while the class was in the lab, the professor noticed one young man, an exchange student, who kept rubbing his back and stretching as if his back hurt. The professor asked the young man what was the matter. The student told him he had a bullet lodged in his back. He had been shot while fighting Communists in his native country who were trying to overthrow his country's government and install a new communist regime. In the midst of his story, he looked at the professor and asked a strange question. He asked: "Do you know how to catch wild pigs?" The professor thought it was a joke and asked for the punch line. The young man said that it was no joke. "You catch wild pigs by finding a suitable place in the woods and putting corn on the ground. The pigs find it and begin to come every day to eat the free food. When they are used to coming every day, you put a fence down one side of the place where they are used to coming. When they get used to the fence, they begin to eat the corn again and you put up another side of the fence. They get used to that and start to eat again. You continue until you have all four sides of the fence up with a gate in the last side. The pigs, which are used to the free corn, start to come through the gate to eat that free corn again. You then slam the gate on them and catch the whole herd. Suddenly the wild pigs have lost their freedom. They run around and around inside the fence, but they are caught. Soon they go back to eating the free corn. They are so used to it that they have forgotten how to forage in the woods for themselves, so they accept their captivity."

The young man then told the professor that is exactly what he sees happening in America & Canada. The government keeps pushing us toward Communism/Socialism and keeps spreading the free corn out in the form of programs such as supplemental income, tax credit for unearned income, tax exemptions, tobacco subsidies, dairy subsidies, payments not to plant crops (CRP), welfare entitlements, medicine, drugs, etc., while we continually lose our freedoms, just a little at a time.

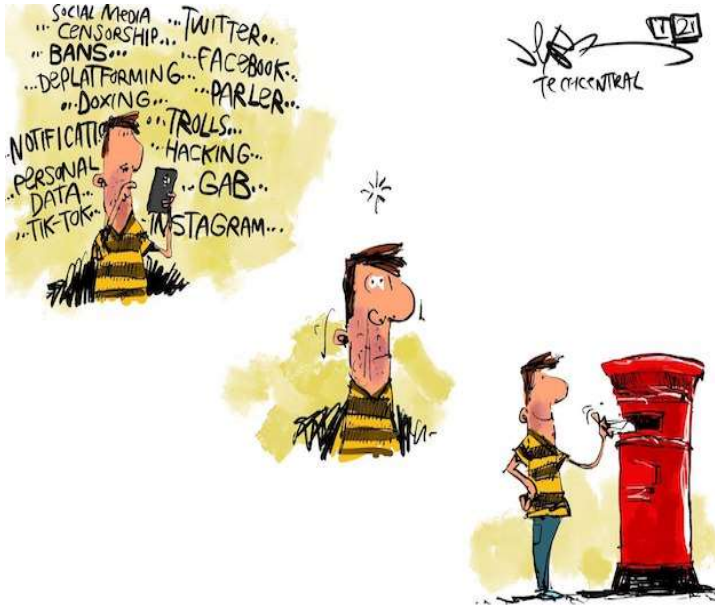
One should always remember two truths:

1. There is no such thing as a free lunch, and
 2. You can never hire someone to provide a service for you cheaper than you can do it yourself.
- If you see that all of this wonderful government "help" is a problem confronting the future of democracy in America & Canada, you might want to share this with your friends.

If you think the free ride is essential to your way of life, then you will probably not share this.

BUT - God help us all when the gate slams shut! Think about this:

Quote for today: "The problems we face today are there because the people who work for a living are now outnumbered by those who vote for a living."



MATT



Dear Colleague,
Just a quick note to say what
an excellent goal that was.

MATT



No, not a disco. This is a
24-hour vaccination site
for the elderly'