



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 49 – 12th MARCH 2021

GREETINGS:

Well, TWTWTW – Day 350 of the Great Deception...and International Women's Day.... In UK Chancellor Sunak's freezes raise tax burden to largest since 1960s Indeed, the Chancellor's announcements were so dramatic that even Jeremy Corbyn felt he had a case to accuse Mr Sunak of stealing the economic policies of his hard-Left Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell. Nicola Sturgeon has condemned the "infuriating and disgraceful" celebrations in Glasgow as she urged Rangers FC to ask people to go home. Thousands of fans flouted the coronavirus lockdown to gather in the streets and celebrate Rangers winning the Scottish Premiership – their first top-flight title in 10 years. (Have some sense, woman!) The French billionaire and politician Olivier Dassault has died in a helicopter crash in Normandy. The 69-year-old rightwing MP was the grandson of Marcel Dassault, who founded the iconic aircraft manufacturing company Dassault Aviation. The 'Free World' celebrated the 85th anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire - 5 March 1936. A date that should be remembered by everybody and we should all give thanks to R.J. Mitchell and those brave young men who flew those Spitfires, many never to return, to preserve the freedom which is so disgracefully being abused and trashed today. In SA, the Post Office collapsing... Students rioting on the streets of Braamfontein.... Multichoice supports calls for a household 'TV tax' in South Africa (they would, wouldn't they?)... The Crime Intelligence (CI) division has been asked to cease illegal surveillance and interception of a News24 journalist following a series of reports detailing ructions in the top echelons of the police. And you can't make this up either: - Police "lost" about 8 million pieces of evidence after the computer system that helped detectives keep track of forensic samples collected at crime scenes was shut down due to a dispute over non-payment. - "It appears as if the SA Police Service laboratories have not processed a single forensic exhibit this year, and that the backlog amounts to 172 787 cases." (*City Press*) Zuma's "Deadline day" for filing answering affidavits to Contempt of Court charges came and went... The ANC says, "the meeting went well", but all indications are that the former leader will continue to cold-shoulder the Zondo Commission. And then Monday evening brought the almost incredible "double-header" of the Ace Magashule: "Press Conference" after the allegedly all day Zoom meeting with Zuma, and Oprah Winfrey "interviewing" Harry and Meghan Markle. JJ Thabane summed up the ANC/Zuma issue: "Zuma told them to bugger off and he would do just what he wanted to do." That would be good advice for Meghan.... Her Majesty said the Royal family is "saddened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years have been for Harry and Meghan." Piers Morgan was considerably more forthright.... 'If you ain't the lead dog, the scenery never changes'. (*Lewis Grizzard*)

A TRAINER TRANSFORMED:

A new jet trainer that transforms itself into a jet fighter by switching its engines and wings is being developed for the RAF. Suffolk-based firm Aeralis has been given £200,000 to develop a modular aircraft it says would be the first fully developed in Britain since the Hawk in 1974. The two-seater aircraft will have at least three variants based around the same fuselage – a basic trainer, a fighter-style jet, and a reconnaissance model. “This is a disruptive and innovative approach to design, modelling and certification processes in military aerospace,” said Air Cdre Jez Holmes of the RAF’s Rapid Capabilities Office. The aircraft will mainly be used for basic training to “Top Gun style” combat exercises but will not replace the current Hawk fleet, a spokesman said. It could feature longer wings for surveillance and operate as an unmanned fast-attack drone. Aeralis has been given three years to develop the idea. Air Marshal Richard Knighton said: “This private aircraft company is adopting an innovative approach that I have not seen before in the combat air sector. “Its ingenious and innovative use of modularity offers the potential to break the capability cost curve that has dogged military fast jet programmes for many generations.

OBITUARIES



Filter Officer **Winifred Joan Potts** RAF has died aged 102. Known as Joan, she joined the newly formed Women’s Royal Air Force in June 1940. After basic training she was mustered as a “Clerk Special Duties” – a highly classified role and the trade name for all airmen and airwomen employed on operational duties within the secret “Dowding System.” Joan was posted to the subsidiary Filter Centre at RAF Rudloe Manor in late July 1940 as the Battle of Britain was starting.

In early 1941 she was commissioned as an Assistant Section Officer and in April 1941 as a Filter Officer. She went on to serve at 13 Group, Newcastle, Fighter Command, HQ RAF Northern Ireland, and RAF Bawdsey. Promoted to Flight Officer in 1944 she was appointed Filter Officer, responsible for the accuracy of the production of the tactical air picture – the highest-level operational job a WAAF could do. Joan stayed in the WAAF after the war, serving at RAF Hawkinge, Charter Hall, Acklington, 57 Maintenance Unit and the WAAF Recruiting Centre at Wilmslow before transferring to the reserves in June 1947. She was recalled to service on a Short Service Commission of five years active service and four years reserve service in the Secretarial Branch. She served at RAF Duxford until July 1950 then on Combined Operations duties until being transferred to the reserves. She relinquished her reserve commission in March 1958. Joan married Archie Potts, one of the Bawdsey radar scientists, in 1951. He served as Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence from 1964-1974. She died on February 6 after a short illness.



One of France’s last remaining French resistance heroes, Daniel Cordier, has died aged 100. One of only two remaining Compagnons de la Libération, an honour awarded by France’s exiled wartime leader, Charles de Gaulle, to those who risked their lives to liberate France from Nazi occupation, Emmanuel Macron said there would be a national ceremony to honour his memory. “When France was in danger, he and his compagnons took every risk so that France remained France.

We owe them our freedom and our honour,” Macron wrote in a tweet. Cordier was secretary to the French resistance leader, Jean Moulin, who was killed by the Gestapo in 1943. Born into a wealthy family in Bordeaux, Cordier admitted he was a monarchist and in his own words “fiercely antisemitic” before the war when he was a member of the ultra-nationalist Action Française. He was parachuted into France in 1942, aged 22, with the codename Bip W, and ordered to make contact in Lyon with a man known only as “Rex”. The man he made contact with was, in fact, Moulin, who had organised and unified the Conseil National de la Résistance (National Resistance Council). For a year he was Moulin’s right-hand man, drafting his correspondence and liaising with other resistance leaders. Moulin died after he was arrested by the Gestapo in July 1943, having been betrayed to the Nazis and tortured. He died onboard a train to Germany. Cordier continued to rally and organise resistance fighters while dodging the Germans himself, finally fleeing over the Pyrenees where he was arrested and interned before being transferred to London in May 1944.



Doctor Valérie André - SALUTE!

Doctor Valérie André is a medevac helicopter pioneer and the first woman to fly a helicopter in combat. For her service in Vietnam she was decorated with the Legion of Honour, the National Order of Vietnam and the Croix de Guerre for valour in foreign operations. She is the first woman to become a general in the French military. She evacuated 165 wounded in the Indochina War and 350 during the Algerian War by helicopter. During WW2 she was a member of the resistance, a qualified paratrooper, a neurosurgeon, the first woman to pilot a helicopter in a combat zone, the first female member of the military to reach

the rank of General Officer and is a founding member of the Académie de l'air et de l'espace etc. Over the course of her long career André was awarded the Croix de Guerre five times, the Cross of Military Valor twice, the Aeronautical Medal and the Volunteer Combatant’s Cross for her service in World War II. In 1987 André was the first woman to receive the Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit. In December 1999 she was awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, the highest honor in France and a distinction bestowed on only eight other women, including a 2014 presentation to her Indochina War contemporary, nurse Geneviève de Galard, the “Angel of Dien Bien Phu” at the 1954 battle that ended French rule in Vietnam. Valérie will reach the age of 99 on the 21st of April 2021.

AIRING THE DENEL BURSARIES:

The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) is pursuing implicated officials at Denel and attempting to recover money from 43 Air School over the improper awarding of bursaries to three student pilots in 2017. In 2018 it emerged the company had the year prior approved a R1.1 million plus bursary to the son of North West premier, Supra Mahumapelo, for him to become a pilot. Bursaries were also awarded to two others. In a 3 March presentation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) on its investigation into Denel, lead SIU investigator Zodwa Xesibe said it was alleged that certain officials breached Denel’s Study Scheme Benefits Policy or duty of care and/or duty to always act in the best interests of Denel for their irregular awarding of bursaries to three individuals for their studies at an air school for the sums of R801 927, R793 308 and R1 156 378. Mahumapelo’s bursary was in breach of Denel’s study scheme, which limits funds to R100 000 per student. Mahumapelo was issued with a termination letter after exclusion from 43 Air School in June 2018 by which time Denel had paid R881 000 and out of this R559 000 was credited to his study programme. The

balance of R321 000 was credited to Sanele Ndlovu, another bursary holder, without approval from Denel. Full report at: <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/aerospace/aerospace-aerospace/siu-pursuing-air-school-former-denel-employees-over-pilot-bursaries/>

THE TYMES THEY ARE A'CHANGING:

Banks globally act as the "lubricant" for industry and other corporates to function. Without an efficient banking industry, the world would grind to a halt. But in recent years a number of disruptive technologies have arrived in the banking sector and wreaked havoc with traditional banks. This is due mainly to banks not keeping up with the latest, most consumer-friendly technologies but more importantly keeping their transaction fees inordinately high. SA banking costs are now so high that the poorer segment of society frankly cannot afford them. The new players - the disruptors - have used technology to their advantage and in the process have managed to entice many customers away from the traditional banks. A classic example is the ease and speed of "onboarding" new clients. In banking-speak, all this really means is performing all the necessary regulatory checks to ensure that a customer is genuine and that the risk of bringing that person on board is not great. Traditional banks vary in the time taken for this type of task but it is unlikely to occur in less than a few working days. By contrast, "new kid on the block" Tyme Bank can onboard new customers in around five minutes. The same goes for Discovery Bank. All that is required for proof of identity is a scan or photograph of a driver's licence or passport or some other acceptable form of photo ID. Once on board, a Tyme Bank customer can then go to a Tyme Bank kiosk at Pick n Pay and print off a debit card. It's as simple as that. The disruptors are able to keep their costs low because they don't employ legions of parasitic layers in their businesses, only those who can demonstrate cost-effective capability. Tyme Bank's customer base is approaching 3 million customers and this remarkable feat has been achieved in a little over two years. With such rapid growth in Tyme's customer base, the traditional banks, such as Absa, FNB, Nedbank and Standard should be worried. So much so that many of them are cutting their banking charges, hoping this will be enough to persuade their existing customers to stay. But there is a limit to how much the traditional banks can do, saddled as they are with bloated infrastructures and often outdated technology. As Citibank analyst Charles Russell said at a Tyme Bank presentation a couple of years ago "It's difficult to put a digital skin on a legacy bank". Russell further stated that "Legacy banks often have data that is stuck in multiple silos supported by core banking technology that was literally built in the era of black and white television. Manual intervention is high, which slows down operating speed, reduces flexibility, increases costs, and ultimately degrades efficiency and experience." (*InceConnect*)

BRIZE GOES GREEN...

Brize on a charge for green motors - a trio of new e-vehicles are being put through their paces by ground crews at RAF Brize Norton as the Oxfordshire station bids to cut its carbon footprint. The new vehicles can be preset to limit speeds across high-risk areas of the station and feature collision avoidance technology to improve safety near aircraft. Meantime, in SA, electric cars are on offer: the cost of recharging 4 of the models below at charger-equipped forecourts, of which there are now a few around the country, and the cost of a Joburg - Cape Town trip. By report, recharging is a lengthy process:

BMW i3 –	R248	Trip R	1008
Jaguar I-PACE –	R529		1576
Mini Cooper SE –	R192		1142
Porsche Taycan Turbo S	R549		1866

There is no suggestion of how the stations might be protected from the "isinyoka"...

<https://topauto.co.za/features/6610/how-much-it-costs-in-rand-to-charge-an-electric-car/>

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE ROLLS ROYCE MERLIN ENGINE:

Rolls Royce actually approached Henry Ford in Detroit before talking to Ford Manchester with a view to mass producing the Merlin. Henry called a meeting to which he invited a number of engine manufacturers so that Charles Sorensen (Henry's mass production king) could give a dissertation on how he planned to produce this engine. Charles Lindbergh was also invited (since he flew across the Atlantic in 1927 he was considered an authority on aero engines). When Sorensen finished his presentation, Henry turned to Lindbergh and said, "Well Charles, what do you think?" to which Lindbergh replied "I don't think it is a very good engine. The Germans already have engines of twice that power". This was not quite true. Herrmann Goering had proudly shown Lindbergh around the German aero industry the previous year, and Messerschmitt had produced a cropped, shortened, madly souped up Me 109 which exceeded 470mph. Supermarine had also produced the S6B which had a RR engine producing some 2350 bhp. But these engines were for breaking records and were rated for not much more than half an hour before they broke. Henry turned down the Merlin, saying he would stick to the Pratt and Whitney radial air-cooled engine. Then Alvan Macauley, the boss of Packard, asked if he could take this engine to his factory for his guys to look at. This was approved. The Packard boys liked the Merlin and reckoned they could do it well.... Until they came to the carburetor. Then they all fell over backwards laughing. A float chamber fed, motorcar type carb, in an aircraft that must do aerobatics and be able to fly upside down!!! This proved to be a problem later in the Battle of Britain. Eventually, all Merlins were fitted with the Bendix-Stromberg carburetor which was not affected by any G-forces and was a rather complex version of the Stromberg carb used on the sportier British cars in the '50s and '60s. Packard produced 55000 odd Merlins, of which they subcontracted about 20000 to Continental, who were engine builders only. I have also read that Rolls Royce first arranged for William Morris to mass produce the Merlin engine. He knew more about mass production than anyone else in the UK. Morris set up the production line but then RR came up with a modification which necessitated some reorganisation of the line, which annoyed Morris. When RR came along with the third modification Morris told them to take their blasted engine out of his factory and never come back. Negotiating with Uncle Willie you had two chances: it was his way or his way. When the Americans brought their Mustangs to Europe, later in the War, their Merlins were running on 150 octane fuel, while the Germans ran the Messerschmitt's with 34 litre engines on 95 octane. It would be interesting if any reader knows what octane rating Spitfires and Hawker Tempests were using by 1945? Dickon also mentioned the incredible waste of ammo in WW2. It is a fact that, in WW2 aerial combat, only ONE bullet in 1800 fired reached its target. Up to the end of 1943, only 3 percent of the allied bombs dropped on German occupied Europe came within five (5) miles of their targets.

Len Ward published in the Crankhandle Chronical www.crankhandleclub.co.za (Sent in by Jon Adams)

Ed: Following provided to and acknowledged by Crankhandle Club:

Of the total 168,176 Merlins produced, Rolls-Royce produced 82,117 in three factories, Packard built 55,523, Ford (Manchester) made 30,428, with small numbers built by others, including Continental in the USA. Essential to the continuous increase in Merlin power output was the increase in boost pressure and the development of increased fuel octane ratings. At the start of the war the engine ran on the then-standard 87 octane aviation spirit and could supply just over 1,000 hp from its 27 litre displacement compared to 1,100 hp from the 34 litre Daimler-Benz DB 601. From June 1940 small quantities of 100 octane fuel, initially imported from the US, became available and the Merlin IIIs were found to be capable of running on it. This process continued, with later versions running on further-increased octane ratings, delivering higher and higher power ratings. By the end of the war the "little" engine was delivering over 1,600 hp in common versions, and as much as 2,070 hp in the Merlin 130/131 versions used on the de Havilland Hornet. The Merlin was running on 150 Octane fuel by the time it was used in the Lancaster bomber. This high octane rating required the use of large quantities of lead anti-knocking agent.

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

Eleven months, 350 days since the start of the great panicdemic, this is the forty-ninth 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 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 – enjoy the relaxation of prohibition and restaurants re-opening – but continue to keep safe in these incredibly troubled times: wash your hands, cover your face, make space, avoid gatherings (especially on the streets of Braamfontein) 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 they progressively resume services. So, let's hear from you...Please continue to send your suggestions or contributions to: bookings@rafoc.org

TAILPIECE:

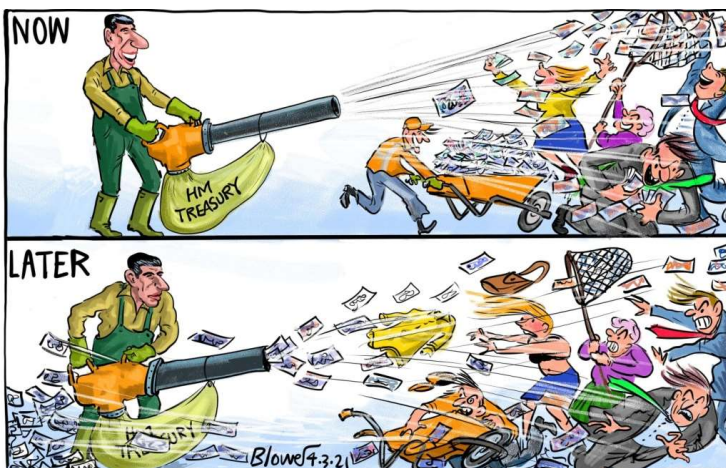
The SA Zimbabwe border at Beit Bridge is such a shambles that locals are calling it "Blight Bridge" Gqerberha is pronounced Porrellisbiff – just the spelling has changed...

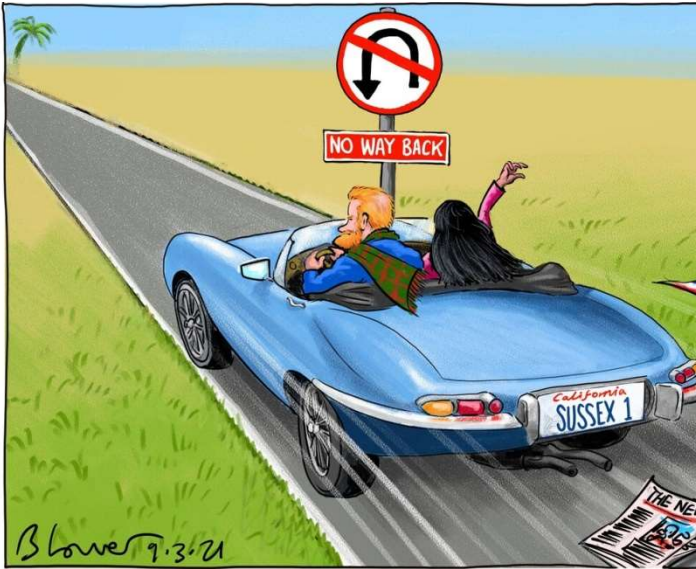
As I've grown older, I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but pissing everyone off is a piece of cake...

My grandfather told me that he had seen the Titanic, and that from the beginning he warned all the people that the ship would sink, but nobody listened to him... He was a brave man. He did not give up. He warned them again and again on several occasions.... until they kicked him out of the cinema.

How do these words end up together?

- 1) Found Missing
- 2) Open Secret
- 3) Small Crowd
- 4) Act Naturally
- 5) Clearly Misunderstood
- 6) Pretty Ugly
- 7) Seriously Funny
- 8) Only Choice
- 9) Original Copies
- 10) Foolish Wisdom
- 11) Liquid Gas
- 12) Working Holiday





MATT

MATT



'I've heard the Budget has some unpleasant side effects. I might refuse it'

