



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 51 – 25th MARCH 2021

GREETINGS:

Well, Day 365 - we've made it for a solid year of the Great Pandemic... We can all give ourselves a round of applause... But - Brace for a stricter lockdown as the Easter weekend approaches... More allegations that people linked to Health Minister Zweli Mkhize benefitted from a R82 million Covid-19 communications tender... Oh, by the way, Minister Mkhize, (in case you hadn't noticed) the Eastern Cape's health system has collapsed... "Jacob stole your money and your dreams"... in his giggling, dancing, innumerate oversight of syndicated looting. King Zwelethini laid to rest... CJ Stander enters the Rugby annals to the strains of "Simply the Best"... SAA nears takeoff? – well, yes, sort of, if that means the grandstanding vaccine trip to Brussels... Joburg in (another) water crisis... Undertrained, underequipped SAPS explains "Why we shoot"... Dali Mpofu's disrespectful "Shut Up" reverberates in the Courts and Media... You just couldn't script this stuff... In UK, Nicola Sturgeon's survival and the other secrets of the universe... SAS to disrupt Russian meddling... Boris to extend draconian Covid rules... Statue of Dame Vera Lynn planned for the White Cliffs of Dover. In USA, Prince Harry gets a job... The Duke of Sussex has a new job with a Silicon Valley startup, where he intends to "create impact in people's lives." Prince Harry, 36, has been named as chief impact officer of BetterUp Inc, a coaching and mental health firm. Ah, yes. "I have hardly anything in common with myself and should stand very quietly in a corner, content that I can breathe." — Franz Kafka

REMEMBERING DONALD CAMPBELL:



The Royal Air Force has marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Donald Campbell CBE with a flyover of Coniston Water as his family hold a service of remembrance. A pair of RAF Hawks from, IV (AC) Squadron based at RAF Valley in Anglesey flew over the ceremony that took place on Coniston Water, near to where he died in his jet-powered Bluebird boat. Members of the family gathered for a short service and flower laying on the jetty to mark his what would be his 100th birthday and to pay tribute to his achievements, they then retired to a service of remembrance at the Campbell Memorial at Coniston Cemetery where he is buried. His daughter Gina who laid a bunch of flowers in the lake said: "I am touched by the RAF's mark of respect and their act was a fitting tribute to my father who would have been thrilled by the gesture."

"I cannot thank the RAF and the crews who flew today enough for their thoughtful tribute, especially Flight Lieutenant Eddie Craig who led the fly-past from, IV (AC) Squadron at RAF Valley." She added "My father is buried in Coniston, but it is also his spiritual home and every year thousands of people visit the Ruskin Museum to learn more about his incredible journey through life, gaining speed records on both land and water." Mr Campbell was holder of eight world speed records in the 1950s and 1960s in the Bluebird cars and boats. On 4th January 1967, he attempted a water speed record in the Bluebird K7 at Coniston Water with the target of 300mph (480km/h). After numerous attempts, the Bluebird boat reached a speed of 328mph (528km/h) but shortly afterwards it somersaulted, breaking in two and plunging into the water. Shortly after his death, a Royal Air Force Vulcan from 12 (B) Squadron made an impromptu tribute, flying over Coniston Water and conducting a wing wave as a mark of respect. *(RAF News)*

RIVETING STUFF...

AN RAF surveillance aircraft has taken part in a major US-led exercise designed to beef up NATO firepower in the Baltic. The Waddington-based 51 Sqn RC-135W Rivet Joint teamed up with American and Dutch forces to conduct two warfighting scenarios. The manoeuvres are part of the US National Defence Strategy and test and demonstrate NATO's ability to integrate command-and-control procedures in the air, at sea, on land, and in cyber and space activities, to rehearse for possible future operations. ISTAR Force Deputy Commander Gp Capt Jim Beldon said: "It is very important to be able to integrate an RC-135W Rivet Joint aircraft into this exercise. "This system will merge information from a variety of sources, which enables commanders to react rapidly and decisively in dynamic operational situations.

CAPTAIN SCOTT STEWART RCAF:

A Canadian exchange pilot is following in his grandfather's footsteps by serving with the RAF in Africa. Chinook Captain Scott Stewart is flying with RAF Odiham-based 27 Sqn in Mali supporting the French counter insurgency campaign. His grandfather Robert Brown served with the Desert Air Force during the North African campaign in World War II. Capt Stewart said: "My grandfather was so excited that I was going on this exchange. He was so proud of his RAF service, and now here I am serving in Africa as well." Robert, from Carstairs in Lanarkshire, joined the RAF as an 18-year-old airman in 1940. After the Battle of Britain, he took part in the bomber campaign in support of the Desert Rats and became a radar technician in Burma, before joining Devon Police after being demobbed. Capt Stewart added: "After my grandfather's retirement from the police in England, he and my grandmother moved to Canada to join us in British Columbia. "He told us his fondest memory was of seeing elephants in Burma during the war. The elephant features on the squadron crest of 27 Sqn – he would have like that." After Capt Stewart's second tour to Mali he will be posted to 450 Sqn RCAF to fly the Canadian CH-47F Chinook from Petawawa Air Base in Ontario. Capt Stewart said: "Coming from the CH-146 Griffon, it was challenging to learn a new aircraft, SOPs, accents, places, plus all the RAF rules and regulations in a short time. "This was compounded by constantly being teased for my 'Proud to follow my Desert Rat grandad North American accent,' being a Griffon pilot, love of ice hockey, and withdrawals from real Tim Hortons coffee." He said his tour highlights were taking part in Ex Saif Sareea in Oman, embarking on HMS Queen Elizabeth, and battling the flood emergency at Whaley Bridge dam. "My wife Viktoria and I will always remember being invited to The Queen's Buckingham Palace Garden Party and introducing the RAF to moose milk." Moose milk is a traditional Canadian cocktail made with whiskey, vodka, or dark rum, Kahlúa coffee, milk, cream, condensed milk, eggnog, or vanilla ice cream, maple syrup or sugar, nutmeg and occasionally cinnamon. Right On! *(RAF News)*

WHITE FROM WRONG:



A WW2 Royal Air Force pilot baled out into German-occupied Guernsey after mistaking greenhouse reflections for the white cliffs of Dover. With his fuel running low Sgt Robert Stirling chose to leave his plane over what he thought was the English Coast, landing on the uninhabited Lihou island off Guernsey's west coast. The 23-year-old pilot turned himself in to police and the German military after being sheltered overnight by a couple. More details of the tale were pieced together by tour guide Tim Osborne. Sgt Stirling, from Glasgow, was pursuing a Luftwaffe Bomber on a routine patrol in his Hawker Hurricane on 11 April 1941. During the night-time chase, the young pilot realised he was dangerously low on fuel and attempted to return to Exeter where he was stationed. Unfortunately for Sgt Stirling, his compass was broken and during his attempt to navigate back to base he believed the reflection of the island's thousands of greenhouses was the south coast of England. At the time Guernsey had an extensive horticultural industry, with significant swathes of the island's landmass covered in glass. More on Tim Osborne's story and Pics at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-guernsey-56200207> (Via Gordon Dyne)

ICONIC AIRCRAFT that played key roles in the Falklands War are to be featured in a new £1.7million centre at the Islands' museum. They include one of the former 29 Sqn Phantoms which provided air cover for Harrier operations during the conflict and defended the overseas territory, and the last Search and Rescue Sea King used by the RAF in the South Atlantic. However, plans are under threat from huge rises in shipping costs caused by the pandemic, leaving museum chiefs facing a £450,000 shortfall. Andrea Barlow, Director of the Falkland Islands Museum and National Trust, said: "We have raised just over £1.2 million but the Covid pandemic has seen shipping costs increase by 68 per cent." The new complex builds on the historic Dockyard Museum opened in 2014, which famously linked up with its honorary patron – former Monty Python star Sir Michael Palin – who researched his book, *Erebus*, there. He said: "The Historic Dockyard Museum is a well-designed, well run, friendly place with an awful lot of history to learn about and enjoy. "I found the staff exceptionally helpful when I was researching my book on HMS *Erebus* and I felt that they were working to an ambitiously high standard." The current museum is cramped, has no available storage, and can show only a selection of the smaller items from its extensive collection, with reserve items kept in cardboard boxes stacked up in a rented building not fit for purpose. The new building will showcase large vehicles of significant importance including the ex-RAF Sea King, a Sea Harrier and Lynx helicopter recently pledged by the Ministry of Defence. It will feature exhibitions dedicated to the Task Force and the effects of PTSD. So far £1.2 million of the £1.7m cost of the project has been raised with £750,000 from the Falklands Islands Government and £200,000 from the Friends of the Falklands Islands Museum.

- To donate to the appeal, visit www.givengain.com/c/fimnt/about

ANTIQUÉ AIRSHOW:

Restorers have borrowed rare parts from a Canadian museum to repair the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Lancaster. The news comes as the MoD was reported to have agreed a £1.4m contract to engineer and build a new tail plane for the 75-year-old bomber. BBMF deputy chief engineer Wg Cdr Andy March said: "This project represents a huge technical challenge. No Lancaster tail planes have been built since the 1940s and many of the original materials and drawings are no longer available." The parts are subject to a finite fatigue life and should be replaced at 6,330 flying hours from new, which the BBMF Lancaster is now approaching. A set of tail planes from a Canadian museum aircraft have been borrowed to be used as patterns where there are no original drawings and at the end of the project they will be returned. The work is being done in close collaboration with BAE, the successor to the Lancaster's original manufacturer Avro, and airframe experts from defence contractor QinetiQ. "Some of the construction techniques, such as plug riveting, are unique to Avro designs of this era and will require technicians to employ their considerable experience of aircraft restoration projects," said Wg Cdr March. The work is likely to take up to 18 months with the new tail planes scheduled to be fitted next winter. The Lancaster is currently with the Aircraft Restoration Company at Duxford undergoing routine scheduled in-depth maintenance and should be back at Coningsby this summer. (*RAF News*)

AVIATION RECOVERY PREDICTED:

The aviation industry, rocked by a global pandemic, will recover, just as it did after other crises such as 9/11 and the Great Recession and when it does, the demand for pilots will return, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University President P. Barry Butler, noting that the aviation industry has hit the pause but not the stop button, wrote. "The 2020 Boeing Pilot and Technician Outlook, updated in October, projects that 763,000 new civil aviation pilots and 739,000 new maintenance technicians will be needed to fly and maintain the global fleet of aircraft over the next 20 years," In addition, Butler said, "some equipment manufacturers for the US Defence Department never saw a reduction in the need for talent, the military continues to need not only pilots but aviation leaders, whilst even grounded aircraft require regular care by aviation maintenance technicians."

BRAVE NEW BANK:

TymeBank, the digital-only bank indirectly controlled by Patrice Motsepe, restated its plan to make a foray into lending – a market dominated by SA's five largest banks. With most sectors of the economy now open under eased lockdown regulations and more market watchers striking an upbeat tone about SA's economic recovery, TymeBank is ready to revive its lending strategy. The lending market is warming up after the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. With 85% of SA households over their heads in debt, this is a brave move. Maybe Patrice knows something we don't... (*Business Day*)

TROUBLE AT T'MILL:

The Lockheed Martin F-35A is in trouble again. The U.S. Air Force is openly considering more affordable alternatives, including a clean-sheet design for a new fourth-generation fighter. A repair bottleneck, meanwhile, is choking the supply of engines, which threatens the operational fleet with groundings and restricted operations. And promised cost savings could still fall short of an ambitious target. Hundreds of orders by the Air Force for F-35As far into the future could be at risk, starting with the size of the President Joe Biden's first budget request to Congress for fiscal 2022.

TRIBUTES TO GEN DES BARKER AND COL RAMA IYER:



Wednesday, 17 March 2021, will go into history as a sad day for South Africa's military aviation fraternity, marked by the death of two top pilots in a crash while apparently attempting to land a one-off-type aircraft at AFB Swartkop in Centurion. The pilots were retired SA Air Force (SAAF) Major General Des Barker, widely known as having by far the most aircraft types of any SAAF pilot in his lengthy logbook, and former Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter pilot Rama Iyer. Before moving to the SA Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) Iyer was part of the SAAF Training Directorate and a regular visitor to the SAAF Museum where he was current on a number of aircraft, including the Patchen Explorer. This is the aircraft with himself and Barker aboard that crashed on approach to Runway 02, killing both. The Directorate: Corporate Communication of the national defence force, said: "The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Military Command is saddened to learn of the untimely death of two Reserve Force pilots as a result of a fatal Patchen Explorer aircraft crash during the scheduled General Flying day at the SAAF Museum in Valhalla, Pretoria. The fatal crash happened on Wednesday, 17 March 2021 at approximately 09:30am". It notes high level condolences to family, friends and colleagues of Barker and Iyer from Defence and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula; Deputy Defence and Military Veterans Minister Thabang Makwetla; SANDF Chief General Solly Shoke and acting CAF Major General Mzayifani Innocent Buthelezi. An investigation into the crash is, according to the statement, "currently underway" to determine its causes. An eyewitness told the Unofficial SAAF Website the single-engined, high-wing aircraft flew over his house "sputtering badly", possibly as a result of carburetor icing, and went in short of runway 02 on the oldest air force base in South Africa. A person who was on the base at the time of the crash said: "It was not a good day for flying. The cloud base was low, very low and there was steady rain at Swartkop since early." The Explorer, serial 2000, was one of the aircraft in the SAAF Museum historic flight. It was the only one of type ever built and came to South Africa in 1975 with plans to put it into production. (*DefenceWeb*)

"SA has lost one of its greatest pilots," said "SA Flyer" magazine editor Guy Leitch in a tribute to Barker. "He had an extraordinarily successful career in the SAAF. He was a pilot and leader of supreme capability. After flying Mirages, he became a test pilot flying extremely hazardous test missions, launching missiles at twice the speed of sound." Barker was the world's leading expert on air show aircraft accidents, said Leitch, a subject on which he had written two books and articles, including a regular column for SA Flyer.

During his career, Barker, the third generation of Barkers to serve in the SAAF, had commanded the fighter base at Louis Trichardt, later Makhado, as well as the Test Flight Development Centre (TFDC) at Bredasdorp in the southern Cape. He also served as SA's air attaché to the UK.

Later, while working for the Council for Scientific and Industrial research (CSIR), he played an instrumental role in the Aeronautical Society of SA (a division of the Royal Aeronautical Society),

presenting lectures, papers and arranging internationally acclaimed symposia and conferences, said Linden Birns of aviation consulting firm “Plane Talking”. Barker was recently awarded an honorary fellowship of the prestigious Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS), one of only two South Africans and 200 people worldwide to have received the honour in the society's 100-year history.

WELL, BAME ME DOWN...



The Royal Air Force has met its Government-set recruitment targets for BAME and female individuals. Royal Air Force Recruitment and Selection – in collaboration with key stakeholders - has been working extremely hard to make the RAF a more diverse organisation that is better reflective of the society it serves. Through targeted interventions, within a legal framework of Positive Action, across the attract, recruit and select space, a wide range of stakeholders have been engaged, including BAME and Gender Networks, to identify barriers to BAME and female recruitment.

CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

Now twelve months, 365 days since the start of the great panicdemic, this is the fifty-first 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 we won’t exclude them if they point out their failings, on the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact and entertained through the lockdown. We wait with bated breath to hear what new iniquities are to be foisted on SA before Easter.

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, and very far, but continue to keep safe in these incredibly troubled times: wash your hands, cover your face, make space, avoid gatherings (do not give the ungodly reason to persecute you further) 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:

Why are Government cars always in a hurry? That sense of urgency is not reflected in any way in the conduct of their official duties!

Imagine being a Democrat, and having to pretend that Joe Biden is competent, Hilary Clinton was innocent, and Barack Obama did a good job...

Only in SA...When there is a power outage, we don't check the DB Board first – we first check the neighbour's house...

Easter Sunday is defined as - the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Equinox. Now, Equinox 2021 was 09:37 Universal Time March 20, and the full moon will be 28 March 7.48pm. Another fact relatively unknown, is that no matter where you are on this Earth, at the equinox, the sun will rise due East and set due West. And the day and night are equally long - apart from the diameter of the sun! (*The Sherriff of Nottingham Road*)

There was a man, who was seen, disturbingly,
As his aerobatic manoeuvres are all vertically,
He pulls too much "G",
And he does it with glee,
And then lands again - safely and surgically.

Golden Words: If you want to change -
If you want to change the world, do it when you are a bachelor: After marriage you can't even change a TV channel...

Listening to the wife is like reading the website terms and conditions: You understand nothing, but still you agree...

Chess is the only game in the world which reflects the status of the husband: The poor King can only take one step at a time... while the mighty Queen can do whatever she likes...

All men are brave. Horror movies don't scare them...But five missed calls from the wife, surely does...

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Isn't it incredible how they can predict these "waves"?

Isn't it incredible how the "waves" are over Easter, which also happens to be the start of Flu season?

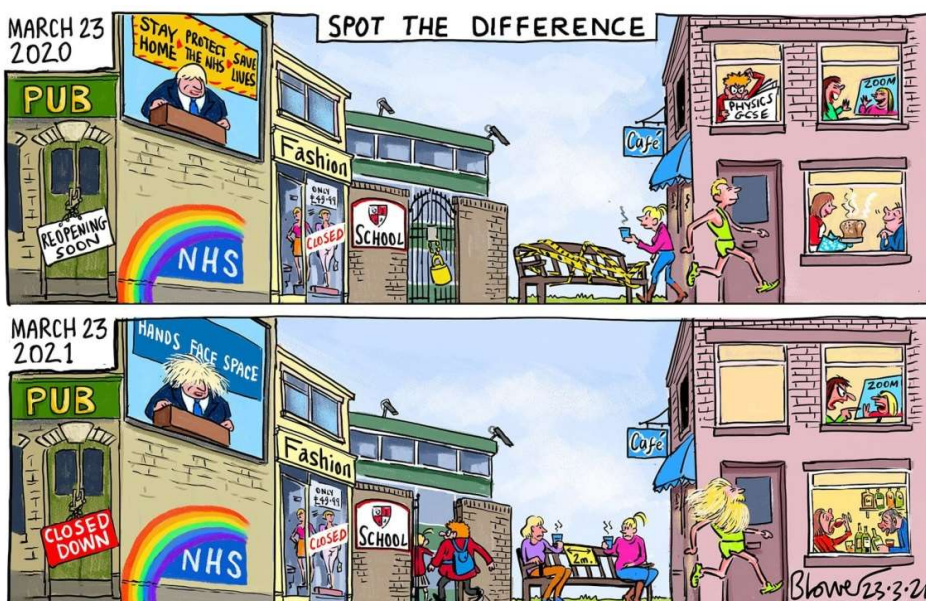
Isn't it incredible how they know which cities will get the "waves"?

Isn't it incredible how a year of lockdown and mitigation measures has made absolutely no difference to the "waves"?

Isn't it incredible how vaccination has made no difference to the "waves"?

Isn't it incredible how vaccinated people are still required to wear a mask and stand 1,5 metres away from others?

No, it's not incredible and guess why – it's an incredible con job....



MATT



*'Another brandy,
General?'*

MATT



*'Insomnia? Let me give you
this: it's a 3am appointment
for a Covid vaccination'*

MATT



*'There's some corner of a
foreign field that is for ever
my AstraZeneca jab'*

MATT



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

A TIP OF THE HAT TO SOME SPECIAL LADIES:



LAURA KNIGHT created some of the most memorable images of World War II – from her famous 1943 painting “Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breech-ring” to “The Nuremburg Trials”, depicting 20 senior Nazis in the courtroom. She is probably the best-known female artist featured in the RAF Museum London’s online new exhibition *In Air and Fire: War Artists, The Battle of Britain and the Blitz*, a playlist showcasing various wartime women artists’ work in its collection to mark Women’s History Month this month. The exhibition also focuses on Eva Blacker, whose drawings made at Biggin Hill when she was a WAAF are the largest collection of work documenting activities at an RAF station, British-Chilean artist Olga Lehmann and Rachel Reckitt, described by a Museum spokesman as ‘a great modernist that time forgot.’ One of the leading artists of the last century, Dame Laura, a member of the Royal Academy, was also an Official War Artist.

Julia Beaumont-Jones, the Museum’s curator of fine art and medals, explained: “Women war artists were paid less for their work than their male peers, which dissatisfied Knight when, in 1939, she was appointed an Official War Artist, prompting her to speak up about it. “Following the establishment of the War Artists’ Advisory Committee by Sir Kenneth Clark and the Ministry of Information in autumn

1939, women artists comprised 13 per cent of officially commissioned war artists and only Evelyn Dunbar received a full-time salaried commission – the others were given short-term contracts, working from commission to commission, when many male artists benefitted from six-month renewable contracts.” Knight’s other notable wartime work includes her 1940 portrait of Cpl Daphne Pearson (IWM collection), who received the Empire Gallantry Medal (later the George Cross) for her bravery in saving air crew from a crashed British bomber at RAF Detling. In 1942 Knight was commissioned to produce a painting of WAAFs operating a barrage balloon, to encourage women to enlist as operators. Julia said: “From April 1941, WAAFs underwent training to replace male balloon operators so they could be transferred for other RAF duties. Whereas 10 men would usually operate a barrage balloon, now 13 women could take their place.” She added: “A Pathé newsreel of 1941, WAAFS and Barrage Balloons, less enticingly referred to desired recruits as ‘Sturdy types whom we habitually looked upon as cut out solely for gym mistresses, policewomen or mothers-in-law’. In 1943 Knight broke free from representing women exclusively to depicting the operations of Bomber Command when she was commissioned to paint a bomber crew flying Short Stirlings at RAF Mildenhall for Take Off (*IWM collection*).

Eva Blacker joined the WAAF in 1942 as a Motor Transport Driver. After her training, she was posted to Fighter Command at Biggin Hill where she eventually became the personal driver to the station’s chief intelligence officer. She later served at RAF Manston. “Blacker made the most of the opportunity her RAF service afforded, practicing as an artist in between her shifts, drawing RAF personnel in situ – after obtaining a sketching permit to do so,” Julia said. “Her output of some 200 works – mostly ink and pencil drawings, and watercolours – is today considered the most extensive artistic record of life on an RAF station.” She added: “To represent the goings on in London during the war, Olga Lehmann requested a sketching permit from the Ministry of Information – lest she be confused for a spy; this was the expectation from anyone who wished to draw public scenes. “One of her first wartime commissions was a mural for the Air Raid Precautions headquarters in Camden Town. A number of illustrative drawings in the RAF Museum collection which represent ARP demonstrations and civil defence activities were likely produced in connection with the mural commission.”

Rachel Reckitt was from a wealthy family in Somerset and during the London Blitz left the safety of her rural home to do relief work in and around Whitechapel in East London. Julia said: “Until then, Reckitt had never had to work for a living, relying on the wealth of her family to sustain her practice as an artist – which may explain her experimentation, unfettered by market forces within the art world, and the fact she had no impulse to undertake Official War Artist commissions during the war, but to produce art independently of the scheme.” The exhibition features a commentary by Reckitt’s niece, well-known author Dame Penelope Lively. Q See: In Air and Fire: War Artists, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz – Rachel Reckitt’s War Work on YouTube.