



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

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BRYANSTON 2021

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## RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 53 – 9<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2021

### GREETINGS:

Day 379 and counting...Well, the whole country enjoyed an Easter break where we were able to travel, and many accommodation establishments and restaurants enjoyed some trade at long last. Others had to be discouraged by SAPS from holding "superspreader" street parties... as fears continue of a "third wave"... Predictably, traffic was horrible on the main routes and the road death toll at 100 plus and counting. Some things don't change; Jacob Zuma appears to long for the apartheid system where the judiciary was subservient to Parliament... Contributes 23 pages to Ramblings...The SA Revenue Service (SARS) has uncovered a tax-dodging racket in which (entrepreneurial) foreign diplomats buy large volumes of alcohol at duty free retailers and sell it locally....Mauseless Gigaba doesn't want his ex-wife to testify at the Zondo Commission...Wonder why? An ecological burn of an area in Tokai by SANParks went seriously wrong when an unexpected temperature inversion caused respiratory problems for residents, threatening wildlife and the Constantia grape harvest, enough already!

"Ace (Magashule) in the Hole" is a grenade with the pin out... with 30 days' notice... already preaching division.... keep watching this space...

Amnesty International alleges that Covid has been "weaponised" by governments to suppress dissent and democratic processes.... Vaccine wars continue... The IRA at it again in Belfast... In UK, No end in sight as PM says 'normal' is some way off.... Traffic light holidays ahead.... Did the Government "use covert tactics" to manipulate the public and foster that sense of fear? Captain Sir Tom's walks were fueled by 'Hobnobs and Coca-Cola'... Unmasked guests enjoying clandestine champagne meals in upmarket Paris restaurants..... IVF clinics 'exploiting pandemic with eye-watering fees'

"South Africa is a 'miserable' country: 5<sup>th</sup> on Top Ten of S&P ratings agency" And we are 56 out of 56<sup>th</sup> in Road Safety.... Ja, Wel, No fine.

A Free Press is like electricity - the public will only miss it when it's gone.

### SAD NEWS: BOB ALLISON

News was received from Mark Allison that his Dad, Bob Allison, one of our RAFOC members, passed away on Sunday 4 April. Bob joined RAFOC some years ago. He had a long and distinguished career in Air Traffic Control, and Members who fly will remember that he was regularly our AFIS at many EAA Events including EAA Convention fly-ins, Tail draggers and Sun 'n Fun. Bob was a consummate gentleman who's calm and measured voice and manner over the air reassured many an amateur aviator and contributed to maintaining a high level of safety at flying events.



An “Officer and Gentleman” in every sense, immaculate in bearing and behaviour, he enjoyed attending lunches and was good, knowledgeable table company with a wide range of interests and stories. Karl Jensen messaged: “Dear Bob, may you rest in peace in that big Control Tower in the sky. Our condolences to Di and Mark and all their family and friends. Uncle Bob, you made a difference and made our flying safer.”

Other colleagues commented:

“RIP. Bob was of the legendary blokes back in the old days on 119.5 when AFIS actually worked for a living. Also one of the last guys you may have actually learnt something from when doing your RT licence”.

“RIP Bob, had many good flights with you in the Cranach. Always came to the gliding club, dressed with a cravat. Absolute gentleman.”

“I remember this gentleman well he also did Sterling work as ATC at NAMPO. RIP Bob!!

“A lovely man, gone to his reward”.

Karl Jensen will advise of any memorial arrangements once these are known...

## MEMBERS NEWS:

**Priscilla Henwood:** Dear friends and family of Priscilla, This is her son Dennis writing. Sadly and if you are not already aware, Priscilla suffered a stroke on last Wednesday 31 March in the morning and has been incapacitated since then. She is peaceful in her bed and no pain and very restful. Her left side is paralysed, but she holds our hand and shows some reaction or acknowledgement of our presence and what we say, including reading the many messages that have come in. The family has rallied around her with a 24hr/7 vigil, and apart from that she is having absolute loving professional care from the staff here. Kind regards from Dennis.

**Bruce Prescott:** Congratulations! Bruce writes: “Not sure if this may be of relevance or interest to RAFOC but I was extremely chuffed to be advised that I was awarded the Royal Aeronautical Society’s 2020 “Distinguished Service Award” by their Council after having served 20 years +/- on their Southern Africa Division Council and served 3 terms as president which included 3 years on their HQ Council in London and 5 years on their External Affairs Board as the Southern Africa delegate. I joined the RAeS in 1968 as A Graduate Member and worked my way up through the ranks to Fellow by 1986”.

## RAAF CENTENARY:

HM the Queen this week attended a small ceremony at the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede to commemorate the Centenary. Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston KCB CBE ADC represented the RAF. The event was attended by the Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency the Honourable George Brandis QC who was joined by representatives of the RAAF serving alongside RAF colleagues on exchange. At the start of the ceremony the RAF Aerobatic Team, the Red Arrows, overflew the event. (RAF News)

## THE REAL COST OF COVID: SA’s SMME Emergency:

Specialist management consultancy Redflank conducted the BeyondCOVID Business Survey between July 2020 to March 2021, surveying nearly 4 500 companies, more than half of which were micro to small businesses. The Survey paints a bleak picture for the future of South Africa’s small business sector one year on from when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country: 26% of SMMEs report being forced to close their doors, 7% permanently, with forecasts that they expect to lay off a collective 1.2million staff over the next six months. Small businesses are also 26 times more likely to close than their corporate counterparts and will require a hefty R1.1 trillion in relief funding if they

have any hope of staying open over the next 12 months. BeyondCOVID, as a registered non-profit company is stepping up to the plate, setting itself the ambitious target of developing an enabling and supportive framework for the creation of SMME opportunities for scale and employment.

(Railways Africa) <https://www.railwaysafrica.com/news/sas-smme-emergency-beyondcovid-business-survey-reveals-that-small-businesses-plan-to-retrench-1-2million-staff-over-the-next-six-months>

## ATA:



THE MEN and women who volunteered for the Air Transport Auxiliary carried out invaluable work in the Second World War. The civilian organisation was tasked with the collection and delivery of military aircraft from factories to RAF and Royal Navy stations. Famous ATA girls include Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo from London to Australia; Diana Barnato Walker, the first woman to break the sound barrier; Elsie Davison, the first female pilot killed on active service; Joan Hughes – at 21 the youngest female pilot to join in 1940; and Pauline Gower, who was in charge of the organisation's women's section. "Men who joined the organisation had to be exempt from having to undertake wartime military service due to health or age, but other than that there were very few restrictions on who could join, which accounted for one-legged, one-armed, one-eyed and shortsighted pilots being accepted," said Stephen Wynn, author of a new book *Air Transport Auxiliary At War* (Pen & Sword Aviation), that celebrates the 80th anniversary of ATA's formation. The book also features some of ATA's less well-known members, such as Belgian millionaire Pilot Officer 'Bobby' Lowenstein; Chang, the son of Chiang Kai-shek, the former leader of the republic of China; and flight engineer John Gulson. Gulson was awarded the George Medal in July 1944 for saving the crew of a Halifax bomber that crashed at White Waltham in Berkshire, the organisation's headquarters. At first, only men were allowed to work for ATA. "By December 1939, British authorities were persuaded by Pauline Gower (the daughter of Sir Robert Vaughan Gower, a wartime Conservative MP, and an accomplished pilot in her own right), to establish a women's section of the Air Transport Auxiliary, of which she was put in charge," said Wynn. "The first eight women were accepted in to the service, but it would not be until 1943 that its male and female members received the same pay." He added: "By the end of the war 147 different types of aircraft had been flown by the men and women of the Air Transport Auxiliary, including Spitfire fighter aircraft and Lancaster bombers. "These brave pilots were not just British, but came from 28 Commonwealth and neutral countries and their efforts sometimes came at a price: 174 Air Transport Auxiliary pilots, both men and women, died during the War. (RAF News)

## ISIS SPRING:



RAF and other coalition planes last month engaged in the biggest air raids against Isis in two years, in a 10-day mission that attacked up to 100 cave hideouts in Iraq and is likely to have caused dozens of casualties. The attacks concluded on 22 March, the Ministry of Defence said. British and other nations' forces are fighting an estimated 10,000 Isis guerrilla fighters operating in Syria and Iraq, nearly seven years after the war against the terror group began.



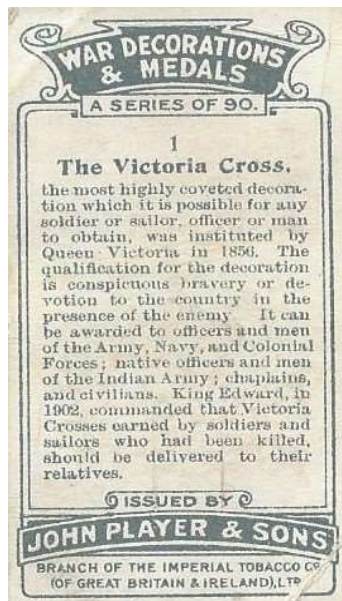
Air Commodore Simon Strasdin, who leads the UK air attacks, said he “could not give an exact timeline” for when the long-running war would end but insisted it would be “winnable through the Iraqis being able to stabilise their country.” Iraq has been embroiled in conflict almost continually since the 2003 invasion by US, UK and other international forces, a situation that developed further with the emergence of Isis in the country and neighbouring Syria from around 2013.

The exact number of casualties in the latest operation is unknown; the cave complexes remain to be cleared out by Iraqi ground forces.

Strasdin said: “We went after, as a coalition, a number of these targets every night for circa 10 days.” It amounted “to between 50 and 100 of the targets and complexes.”

It is probable that dozens died. Strasdin predicted that the UK would be involved in operations during 2021 that would lead to more people killed than the 67 whom the UK said died fighting British forces during 2019 and 2020. (*Guardian*)

## MEDALS: ELIZABETH WEBBER HARRIS VC



Looking through some old tins I came across a set of cigarette cards, collected by my parents in years gone by (although I never saw them smoke) there was a full set of medals and why they were awarded and so I thought that it may be interesting to have a series in the Ramblings.

The Victoria Cross is the highest award 'FOR VALOUR' and up to 1919 could not be awarded to females, however in 1869 a Gold replica was awarded (with the permission of Queen Victoria) to Elizabeth Webber Harris for her "Pluck" in a cholera outbreak in India where she nursed soldiers from the 104th Bengal Fusiliers.

To date she is the only female to be awarded the VC

*Contributed by Jon Adams*

## MAAK VOL EN BETAAL....

Fellow South Africans, we pay significantly more at the petrol pumps from last Wednesday (7 April), with fuel price increases and new taxes taking effect.

A large portion of South Africa's petrol price is made up of levies, with the General Fuel Levy (GFL) and the Road Accident Fund Levy (RAF) taking up the biggest chunks.

Increases to these taxes were announced by Finance minister Tito Mboweni in his February Budget speech, with the levies charged on every litre of petrol sold.

With effect from 7 April 2021, the Fuel Levy in the price structure of petrol and diesel will therefore amount to 393.0 c/l and 379.0 c/l respectively.

The Road Accident Fund Levy in the price structure of both petrol and diesel will amount to 207.0 c/l on the same day.

There is also an increase in the transport tariff taking effect – ranging between 0 cents and 2.8 cents per litre – which averages to an additional 1.2 cents per litre added to the price, the department said.

A breakdown of the taxes (for 95 Petrol), according to the department is as follows:

Fuel levy: 393 cents per litre

Road Accident Fund levy: 218 cents per litre

Customs and excise: 4 cents per litre

Demand-side management levy: 10 cents per litre

Other levies: 1 cent per litre

Together these costs mean that around R6.26 per litre will go to some form of tax or levy when buying petrol from Wednesday – around 36% of the retail price.

Using this current data, filling a 50-litre tank of fuel (95 octane) will cost R866 and R855 for 93 octane. This means that you will effectively pay R313 towards taxes every time you fill up in South Africa.

Other costs associated with the petrol price include transport costs (from the harbour to inland areas), customs and excise duties, retail margins paid to fuel station owners, and secondary storage costs. (*Businesstech*)

### **“YOU PAYS YOUR MONEY AND YOU TAKES YOUR CHOICE”:**

All of South Africa’s major retail banks have entered into rewards partnerships with service stations, giving their customers cash back or point as a reward for filling up with preferred brands. With fuel prices hiking sharply and no relief in sight, it’s worth looking at what you get – none of which, as it happens, are a great deal...

**CAPITEC:** Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank using this reward would give you R11 back. The normal V+ reward would be R8.25.

**NEDBANK:** Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank using this reward would give you R13.75 back in rewards.

**DISCOVERY:** Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank using this reward would give you R180 back in rewards.

**FNB:** Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank using this reward would give you the equivalent of between R5.50 and R440 in eBucks, depending on rewards tier and other qualifiers.

**STANDARD BANK:** Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank would give you between R11 and R275, depending on card type and rewards tier.

Spending R900 to fill a 55 litre tank would give you between R4.50 and R270, depending on card type and rewards tier – or a flat R1.35 at fuel stations other than Sasol.

### **PALMIETFONTEIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:**



In the mid-40s, Rand Airport, Germiston, was unable to accommodate bigger aircraft due to begin operating on a new service to Great Britain, because of its short runway. A solution had to be found, and that choice fell on Palmietfontein, a wartime air force base with a much longer runway, therefore better suited for bigger planes to operate safely from there. Although this would be a temporary solution, as there were plans to build Jan Smuts Airport, in 1948 SAA moved its terminal to Palmietfontein, and it was used as the main airport till late 1952, when the new Jan Smuts Airport became operational. Palmietfontein International Airport had several historic flights terminating there.

Qantas Airways, flying an "Avro Lancastrian" aircraft, completed an unprecedented flight from Sydney in Australia to Palmietfontein, landing on the 20th November 1948 at 15H15, having been in the air a total of 41 hours 52 minutes, at an average speed of 340km. It had to make three stops before arriving in Johannesburg, with the first being in Perth, the second the Cocos Islands, and the third in Mauritius, before landing at Palmietfontein, establishing a viable air link between South Africa and Australia. The world's first passenger jet service, took place on the 3rd May 1952, when a BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) plane, a De Havilland Comet 1, landed from the U.K. Palmietfontein remains an important part of South African aviation history, from the "Lekker Old Days" but relatively unknown, to the majority of South Africans. *(History Portal)*

## **CHEERS! FOR TODAY:**

Now twelve months plus, 379 days since the start of the great panicdemic, this is the fifty-third weekly Newssheet - "Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings" - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest that will help us all to keep in contact and entertained through the lockdown.

We trust you all enjoyed the Easter break, and had safe travels or flights! With the Masters 2021 on the go at Augusta, for the avoidance of doubt and the preservation of domestic law and order, the attention of the Ladies is respectfully drawn to the Official Contract (2019, Carried Forward due Covid) in the Tailpiece...

Please plan to visit the SAA Museum – now the only operational part of SAA! They need our support - See flyer below - And please continue to take care – we've made it so far – let's hope we don't have to join the "University of the Third Wave" and that pubs and restaurants remain open – 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 and closer proximity gatherings are deemed to be safe by the Committee.

So, let's hear from you... Please continue to send your suggestions or contributions to:

[bookings@rafoc.org](mailto:bookings@rafoc.org)

## **STOP PRESS; CAPT ARRIE DE KLERK**

As we were "going to press" Karl Jensen advised that Capt Arrie De Klerk (SAAF and SAA) passed away at 06h45 this morning (Thursday). He sent this message to Carol and his daughter Madelein; "Arrie and I 1st met as Pupil Pilots on the same course at Dunnottar in 1962. We were both in SAA on parallel careers and I was a founder member of the incredible Harvard Club that Arrie founded. He was a big driving force in those fields and a man amongst men who has left a legacy in aviation. We hope to have a Silver Queen commemorative event this year to tie in with the Aero Club of SA Centenary and the SAAF Association. Arrie revitalised this event years ago and I will certainly ensure that his name is held high for this too. Our communications were regular and I have been so saddened at the mails while he was so ill and was shutting down. His park brake is set and his final Shutdown Checklist is complete. May he Rest in Peace and I send my love and condolences. Karl Jensen (aka Soutie by Arrie)"

## **TAILPIECE:**

I saw a formation being overtaken,  
By a guy who was quite badly mistaken,  
As he tried to join up,  
The leader said "Backup!,  
When we land your hide will be bacon."  
*(The Sherriff of Nottingham Road.)*

A distinguished young woman on a flight from Ireland asked the Priest beside her, 'Father, may I ask a favour?' 'Of course, my child - What may I do for you?' 'Well, I bought an expensive woman's electronic hair dryer for my Mother's birthday that is unopened and well over the Customs limits, and I'm afraid they'll confiscate it. Is there any way you could carry it through customs for me? Under your robes perhaps?' 'I would love to help you, dear, but I must warn you: I will not lie.' 'With your honest face, Father, no one will question you.' When they got to Customs, she let the priest go ahead of her. The Customs official asked, 'Father, do you have anything to declare?' 'Sure, from the top of me head down to me waist, I have nothing to declare.' Said the Priest. The official thought this answer strange, so asked, 'And what do you have to declare from your waist to the floor, Father?' 'I have a marvelous instrument designed to be used by a woman, but which is, to date, unused.' Roaring with laughter, the official said, 'God Bless ye, Father! Go ahead! Next!'

**MATT**

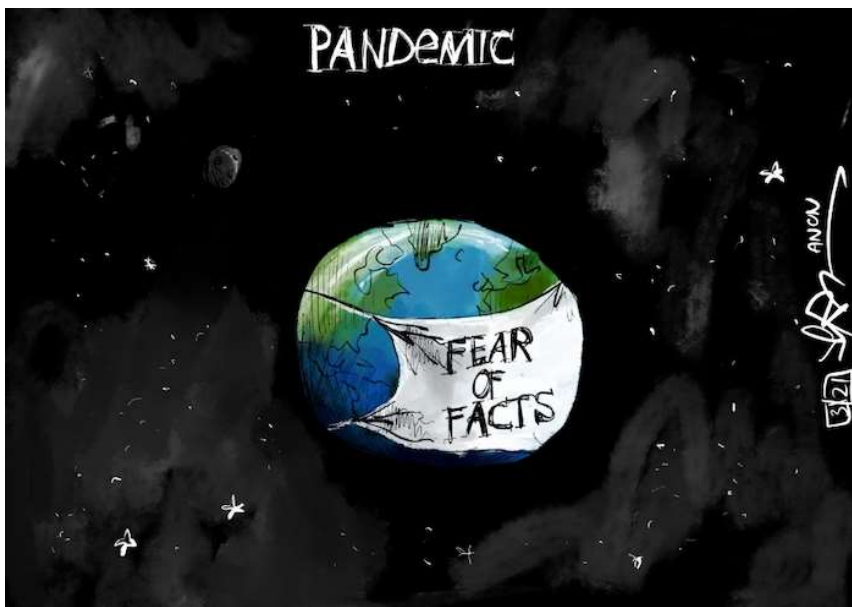


*'We're allowed ready salted crisps, but no cheese and onion till May 17th'*

**MATT**



*'I feel sick. I blame the AstraZeneca jab, even though I haven't had it'*







## SAA MUSEUM AIRLINE COLLECTIBLES FAIR

29 MAY 2021 09:00 TO 16:00

Book launch of the  
"SAA Boeing 747 Fleet History"



**BUY — SELL — TRADE**  
All types of Aviation Related Memorabilia

Experience Flight Simulator and Rolls-Royce Griffon V12 Engine runs

**Table hire R100.00**



**SAA MUSEUM**

DAKOTA CRESCENT, AIRPORT PARK, RAND AIRPORT, GERMISTON  
Tel: 076 879-5044

E-Mail: [info@saamuseum.co.za](mailto:info@saamuseum.co.za) Website: [www.saamuseum.co.za](http://www.saamuseum.co.za)  
Admission: Adults R40.00, Children R25.00

**REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE**

Includes entrance into museum display hall, aircraft park  
and Boeing 747 "LEBOMBO"



## OFFICIAL CONTRACT

*Failure to comply with these rules could result in a break up!*

- 1) From 11th - 14th April 2019, the TV is mine at all times.
- 2) Walking in front of the TV at any time is strictly forbidden.
- 3) The fridge must be stocked up with beer 24/7.
- 4) All love and affection must wait until after the daily Golf coverage has finished.
- 5) All other events that are scheduled between these dates are cancelled or you must go alone.
- 6) You must not ask me anything during live coverage of The Masters. Exceptions are: "Would you like a beer/snack?"
- 7) If you hear me shout your name, be ready to: grab me a beer/grab me a snack/get batteries for the remote.
- 8) On Saturday and Sunday I will be watching replays of the previous days coverage so I will not be available to do any jobs/chores around the house.

There is no signature required for this document. By physically seeing this agreement, you are agreeing to the above terms!

