



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 56 – 30th APRIL 2021

GREETINGS:

Day 400... This week got off to a crashing start with an overturned gas tanker blocking the N1 and M1 at Buccleuch in the Friday afternoon traffic... SA celebrated Freedom Day whimsically in a state of lockdown and dictatorship... President Cyril Ramaphosa had to move his Freedom Day Address from the Free State town of Winburg to the metropolis of Thaba Nchu due to public demand on Tuesday... then he was in the hot seat at the state capture inquiry on Wednesday, the first of four crucial days of testimony.... 'massive system failure in how the boards of SOEs were appointed'... 'Give us specifics' – Justice Zondo, after Ramaphosa offers scant detail on state capture corruption.... Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane has unreservedly apologised for wrongly accusing Judge Suleet Potterill of deliberately omitting words of the Executive Ethics Code... Malusi Gigaba's estranged wife spills all about cash, Gupta appointments, Dudu Myeni orders and death threats... SA Red Cross at war with itself... Vax the Beloved Country - the risk of a serious blood clot from the AstraZeneca jab has doubled in a fortnight, Julius threatens to go it alone with vaccines... Julie, don't go!... Mango grounded – at least for a day.... Total declares Force Majeure and pulls all its people from Afungi gas plant in Mozambique... Greatest naval fleet since the Falklands to leave UK in May... PM thunders he "paid for refurb" amid 'major sleaze' jibe... Greta Thunberg dubs herself a 'bunny-hugger' after Boris Johnson's climate remarks... People could get Covid passports for foreign travel by 17 May... Support for Scottish independence has fallen... Sturgeon still can't answer same old questions... In SNP Scotland, do the facts matter anymore? After Super League circus, Arsenal owner won't sell... 100 days - Biden is failing to dismantle Trump's legacy... China has delayed releasing its once-a-decade census results that could reflect the first population decline since 1950s famine.... Battle of the tech titans: Mark Zuckerberg and Tim Cook have traded insults for years, but Apple's latest assault on Facebook may just be the start.... Chinese telecoms equipment supplier Huawei was able to monitor all calls made on one of the Netherlands' largest mobile phone networks KPN

FREEDOM ISN'T FREE – ITS NOT A GIFT OR AN ENTITLEMENT _ IT'S A RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of the people to ensure that those who govern do so in a constitutionally compliant fashion. This responsibility does not involve a law degree; it involves using the machinery provided to exact accountability from those who govern. Wise use of the vote is required, not blind loyalty to those who loot. Both in her contribution to the 'Defend Our Democracy' virtual rally on

Sunday, 18 April and again in her Daily Maverick interview with Janet Heard published on the following day, Professor Thuli Madonsela makes the point that the people of South Africa do not feel well served by their newfound democratic order. It is true, most are not well served. Rampant corruption, failures in service delivery and incompetence rather than democracy is the true culprits for the disenchantment. The learned professor, advocate and former public protector highlights the plight of a poor Stellenbosch resident who confided in her: “She said: ‘Now that we have this thing called democracy, which is not what we asked for. I don’t want democracy; I want the freedom that I fought for.’” The message from Ms Palesa Mosa, who remained poor and could not afford to properly educate her children, was clear: what pass laws achieved during apartheid was now achieved by poverty in democracy.” The undeniable endemic poverty in SA is now largely attributable to the efforts of kleptocrats and looters who have managed in recent years to make the country more than a trillion rand worse off than it would have been if democracy had brought freedom instead of corruption. The stratagem of blaming apartheid for current ills becomes ever more threadbare as time passes. The ruins of Germany and Japan were repaired in less time than has passed since the demise of apartheid. All over Africa, the struggle for freedom from the yoke of imperialism, colonialism and apartheid has somehow managed to morph into a struggle by “Big Men” for power over their fellow citizens. They seek opportunities to loot public purses and repurpose the states of Africa to their own nefarious agendas. The people’s struggle for freedom has itself transmuted into a struggle to keep at bay those intent upon enjoying their “turn to eat” rather than using public office, often corruptly attained, to serve the interests of the people in the spirit of ubuntu and batho pele.

(Paul Hoffman in Daily Maverick)

Full article: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2021-04-27-freedom-isnt-free-its-not-a-gift-or-an-entitlement-it-is-a-responsibility/?utm_source=Ince_FirstThing

EARTH DAY:

Friday 23 April was Earth Day and, ahead of a virtual climate summit between world leaders, the UK committed this week to some of the steepest carbon emission reduction targets of any major economy. The pledge to cut emissions 78 per cent, compared to 1990 levels, by 2035 will require significant technological advances, but also major lifestyle changes. The implications of what it means to you, the consumer, range from commercial flights to your domestic boiler.

SAAF WORKING ON FIRE:



The SA Air Force’s (SAAF’s) Western Cape-based 22 Squadron, with pair of Oryx medium-transport rotorcraft, contributed in no small measure, alongside other disaster management elements, to bringing raging fires in the Table Mountain National Park (TMNP) and adjacent areas under control in spite of bad weather conditions.

Working on Fire (WOF) helicopters were first to be dispatched to combat the fire that started on the mountain on 18 April and was spread by strong winds. These aircraft were forced to land by

prevailing strong winds and low cloud which severely limited visibility. When weather conditions allowed, the pair of Oryx's joined other rotorcraft on Tuesday this week. According to the SAAF: "AFB Ysterplaat dispatched two Oryx helicopters following a distress call by the Provincial Disaster Management (PDM) to assist in extinguishing raging fires in and around the Table Mountain area. Aircrews attacked the blazing fires from north-east of Table Mountain towards Vredehoek through to the north-western side of the mountain." 103 Bambi buckets and 206 000 litres of water were dropped. Aircrews flew a total of 9.4 hours using 3 552 litres of fuel. The Oryx helicopters landed safely at 13h35 and remained on standby until 18h00. The SAAF Board commended AFB Ysterplaat, especially the involved aircrew from 22 Squadron, for their prompt response to the fire.

SMITING THE UNGODLY:



Israel has dramatically expanded air strikes on suspected Iranian missile and weapons production centers in Syria to repel what it sees as a stealthy military encroachment by its regional arch-enemy, Western and regional intelligence sources say. Capitalising on a long-time alliance with Syria, Iran is moving parts of its advanced missile and arms industry into pre-existing underground compounds to develop a sophisticated arsenal within range of Israeli population centers, according to Israeli and Western intelligence sources and Syrian defectors. Israel tolerated the entry of thousands of Iranian militia fighters from Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan into Syria to fight alongside President Bashar al-Assad against insurgents seeking to topple his authoritarian family rule. The only Israeli intervention earlier in Syria's conflict consisted of sporadic air strikes to destroy arms shipments to the Iran-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, and prevent militias setting up bases in southwest Syria, close to Israeli territory. But with Assad having all but snuffed out the decade-long insurgency with the crucial help of Iranian and Russian forces, Israel has turned to targeting Iran's penetration into Syria's military infrastructure, three Israeli security officials and two Western officials familiar with the matter said. Israeli army Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi said in December that more than 500 Israeli missile strikes in 2020 alone had "slowed down Iran's entrenchment in Syria...But we still have a long way to go to reach our goals in this arena." A dozen Syrian military and Western intelligence officials said that topping Israel's hit list has been any infrastructure that could be advancing Iran's effort to produce more precision-guided missiles that could erode Israel's regional military edge, rather than any existing Iranian-linked military asset. Developing precision-guided missiles under cover in Syria is seen as less vulnerable to Israeli attack than ferrying them in overland or by air from Iran, these officials said.

PAT PATTLE: "ACE OF ACES"

Eighty years ago, on 20th April 1941, South African born (Butterworth, Transkei) Squadron Leader Marmaduke Thomas St. John Pattle, D.F.C. and Bar, Royal Air Force, commanding No. 33 Squadron, was killed in action during the Battle of Athens when his Hawker Hurricane fighter was

shot down by two or more Luftwaffe Messerschmitt Bf 110 fighters while coming to the aid of a fellow pilot. Pattle's airplane crashed into the sea near the Port of Piraeus, southwest of Athens. Squadron Leader Pattle may have been the highest-scoring Allied fighter ace of World War II. The exact number of enemy aircraft destroyed cannot be determined precisely because records were lost or destroyed during the Battle of Greece. The last officially acknowledged score was 23 aircraft shot down, mentioned in The London Gazette with the notice of the award of a Bar to his Distinguished Flying Cross. It is widely acknowledged that he shot down many more, and on at least two occasions, shot down five enemy aircraft in one day. Authors who have researched Pattle's combat record believe that he shot down at least 50, and possibly as many as 60 aircraft. For those that attended the Christmas lunch at Randpark Club in December will recall Jon Adams talk on him and his achievements.

RAF TYPHOONS IN ROMANIA:



Royal Air Force Typhoon jets, based at RAF Lossiemouth, have arrived in Romania to begin the UK's pre-planned NATO Air Policing mission. Four Typhoons from IX(B) Squadron flew into Mihail Kogalniceanu airbase on the Black Sea coast near Constanta, Romania where they will carry out the NATO enhanced Air Policing (eAP) mission for this summer's deployment. The mission enhances the national Air Policing conducted by the Romanian Air Force as part of the NATO collective air defence system. Wing Commander Lamping is the Commanding Officer of 121 Expeditionary Air Wing (121 EAW); the unit that arrived in Romania ahead of the Typhoon and is responsible for operating the RAF aircraft. This RAF deployment is the third time the United Kingdom has deployed on this Air Policing mission. During the deployment the RAF will be demonstrating NATO's collective resolve and assurance for our eastern allies, as well as showing that the United Kingdom remains a leading NATO member that is committed to NATO operations. 121 EAW has deployed to conduct this important NATO mission despite the COVID-19 pandemic and all necessary measures have been taken to ensure that both UK and Romanian mandated precautions are being followed. (*RAF News*)

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (IWM):

Gordon Dyne regularly sends in updates on the IWM, the latest being: "We look forward to welcoming you back to IWM London, IWM North and IWM Duxford from Wednesday 19 May. To help us ensure we maintain social distancing across our museums and avoid long waits, we recommend all visitors book a time slot in advance. An opening date for Churchill War Rooms will be confirmed very soon. HMS Belfast will not be reopening for visits just yet, but look out for future announcements on when you can come on board again this summer." We will publish some of their aviation articles in Ramblings from time to time. But no need to wait - the IWM site offers a wealth of historical interest – visit them at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/>

BIGGEST ROYAL NAVY DEPLOYMENT SINCE FALKLANDS:

Britain's biggest deployment of UK naval and aerial military firepower since the Falklands war will set sail next month in a 28-week voyage which will be closely watched by China. This move, which includes the first operational deployment of the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, will see Britain use its power to bring other nation's forces together such as the US and Netherlands. The £3 billion warship, with eight RAF F35B stealth fighter jets on board, will depart for Asia accompanied by six Royal Navy ships, a submarine, 14 naval helicopters and a company of Royal Marines. The Carrier Strike Group (CSG), which will carry out visits to India, Japan, South Korea and Singapore, will include the US destroyer USS The Sullivans and the Dutch frigate HNLMS Evertsen. It comes after Iceland became the 10th nation to join the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), a defence group of northern European countries intent on maintaining the security of the region. A squadron of 10 US Marine Corps F35B Lightning II jets will also be embarked on the carrier in what the Ministry of Defence (MoD) is describing as the "largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation." Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who will reveal details of the deployment to Parliament, said: "When our Carrier Strike Group sets sail next month, it will be flying the flag for Global Britain - projecting our influence, signalling our power, engaging with our friends and reaffirming our commitment to addressing the security challenges of today and tomorrow." The entire nation can be proud of the dedicated men and women who for more than six months will demonstrate to the world that the UK is not stepping back but sailing forth to play an active role in shaping the international system of the 21st century." During the 28-week deployment, ships from the Carrier Strike Group are expected to visit more than 40 countries and undertake more than 70 engagements, including sailing alongside the French carrier Charles De Gaulle in the Mediterranean. The work is expected to be watched closely by China, the US and its allies. The deployment has been organised as part of the "UK's tilt to the Indo-Pacific region" in a bid to "bolster deep defence partnerships" as well as to take part in an exercise to mark the 50th anniversary of the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. Accompanying HMS Queen Elizabeth will be a surface fleet made up of Type 45 destroyers HMS Defender and HMS Diamond, Type 23 anti-submarine frigates HMS Kent and HMS Richmond, and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's RFA Fort Victoria and RFA Tidespring. The Royal Navy Astute-class submarine will also be deployed, armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles. As well as the stealth fighters, four Wildcat maritime attack helicopters, seven Merlin Mk2 anti-submarine helicopters and three Merlin Mk4 commando helicopters will be embarked - the greatest quantity of helicopters assigned to a single UK Task Group in a decade. Prior to leaving the UK, the CSG will take part in a major exercise, Strike Warrior, off the coast of Scotland before departing for the Mediterranean. *(Telegraph)*

“ASTUTE” CLASS:



BAE Systems launched "Anson", the fifth of seven Astute Class being built for the Navy, from its site in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, earlier today (21 April). The Astute class boats are the largest and most advanced attack submarines ever built for the Navy. Measuring 97m long, the boats can circumnavigate the globe submerged and produce their own oxygen and drinking water. Anson will

now begin the next phase of its test and commissioning programme, before leaving Barrow for sea trials with the Navy next year. The first four submarines in the class – HMS Astute, HMS Ambush, HMS Arful and HMS Audacious – have been handed over to the Navy, with a further two under construction in Barrow. Steve Timms, managing director of BAE Systems' Submarines, said: "The launch marks an important milestone in the Astute programme, and seeing Anson enter the water at such an advanced state is a tangible demonstration of everyone's hard work over the years. "Designing and building nuclear-powered submarines is a national endeavour and days like this bring a huge sense of pride for our workforce, our partners in the submarine enterprise and our UK supply chain, not to mention our communities. "We now look forward to a successful test and commissioning phase and working alongside Anson's crew to prepare the submarine for operations with the Royal Navy." Working alongside the Submarine Delivery Agency and Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems is also a member of the Dreadnought Alliance, helping to deliver the UK's next class of nuclear deterrent submarines. Two of the four submarines are under construction, with the first due to enter service in the early 2030s. Approximately 10,000 people work on the Dreadnought and Astute programmes at the Barrow site. BAE Systems said it expects to recruit more than 200 graduates and 1,500 apprentices over the next five years.

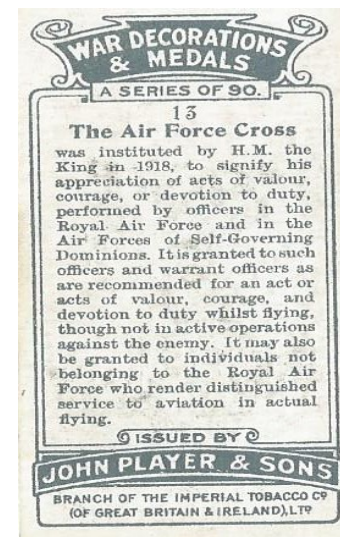
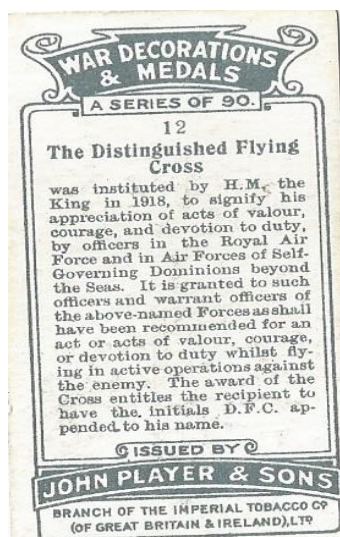
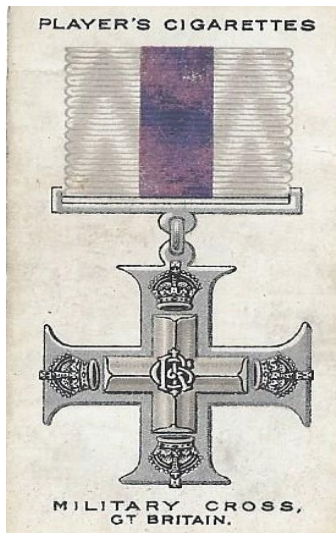
SHADES OF DUNNOTTAR:

Last week's black-out at the Dunnottar military base – the second in six months – due cut-off for non-payment - is not an unusual occurrence at SA National Defence Force (SANDF) bases and facilities, according to Kobus Marais. "Having no power at military facilities and installations is not on. They should be treated as national strategic facilities and should never be without power," the Democratic Alliance (DA) shadow minister of defence and military veterans told *defenceWeb*. Now in his second stint as the major opposition party's defence and military veteran's watchdog, Marais accepts he is a go-to for complaints about matters ranging from personnel through to the condition of equipment and lack of services, including electricity and water. In this regard he was on the contact list of SA National Defence Union (Sand) national secretary Pikkie Greeff when the lights again went out at the east Gauteng base. Understanding the importance of power at Dunnottar, as well as other sensitive bases where electronic intelligence is the order of the day, Marais went the personal rather than the official route and it paid dividends. Defence Works Formation (DWF) Chief Major General Joseph Ledwaba reacted and power was restored without Sandu having to go the legal route. (*DefenceWeb*)

“ZOOM TOWNS”

Cape coastal towns such as Hermanus, Langebaan and Struisbaai/Agulhas are attracting remote workers. The Seeff Property Group said the trend to either moving to small towns or investing in a second home for the purpose of remote working (among others), especially along the coast has been a key driver of activity over the last year. These small towns and villages have become known as 'zoom towns', a phenomenon first coined in the US, but also trending across South Africa as the Covid pandemic drives people to look for a better quality lifestyle. Seeff said it is especially the small coastal towns which are within reach of a city and airport for commuting purposes which are benefiting from this trend. In Hermanus for example, almost a quarter of permanent residents are now under 35 years. In Langebaan, it is about one third and over forty percent in the Blouberg area. On the KZN mid-South and Hibiscus Coastal areas, some 20%-30% of buyers are from other areas. Traditionally 'older' areas such as Mossel Bay, Sea Point and Green Point are also seeing an influx of younger buyers.

#4 MEDAL SERIES:



CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

Now 400 days since the start of the great pandemic, this is the fifty-sixth weekly Newssheet - "Members News, Reminiscences and Ramblings" - items of Air Force interest, or greetings to the Club or any other happenings of interest (preferably not on the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact and entertained through the lockdown.

Please plan to visit the SAA Museum (after payday) at the end of next month - 29 May - now the only operational part of SAA! They need our support - See previous flyer for details - And please continue to take care - we've made it so far - 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:

"Back in the days of pennies and pounds
 When Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs
 When most of the families wore hand me down shoes,
 And when TV was not yet around.
 Back in the days of three pennies a ride
 when schools employed nurses to search for your nits.
 When cardboard slides on the dunes were fun
 and all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted.
 Back in the days of cold ginger beers,
 when children remained so for more than six years.
 When children respected what older folks said,
 and pot was a thing you kept under your bed.
 Back in the days of Listen with Mother,
 when neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.
 When cars were so rare you could play in the street.
 When Doctors made house calls; Police walked the beat.
 Back in the days of Milligan's Goons,
 when butter was butter and songs all had tunes.
 It was roast beef for dinner and trifle for tea,
 and your annual break was a day by the sea.
 Back in the days of cowboys and indians
 Parker pens and frozen flavoured lolly ice creams.
 When children had the freedom to roam
 and teachers all stood at the FRONT of their classes
 Back in the days of rocking and reeling,
 when mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling.
 When woodwork and home ec got taught in schools,
 and everyone dreamed of a win at the races.
 Back in the days when I was a lad,
 I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.
 Hopscotch, roller skates and ketties to lob.
 Back in the days of those pennies and pounds *(Author unknown)*
 There was a guy who fell far behind,
 And we wondered what was on his mind,
 So when we landed,
 He was actually quite candid,
 And admitted that he just felt disinclined. *(The Sherriff of Nottingham Road)*

I hate it when co-workers act like supervisors - Please Act your Wage!

I so enjoyed staying at home with my wife for these past 3 weeks... We've caught up on everything I've done wrong in the past 30 years...

Yesterday my husband thought he saw a cockroach in the kitchen, He sprayed everything down and cleaned thoroughly. Today I'm putting the cockroach in the bathroom...

I've finally reached the wonder years... Wonder where I parked the car... Wonder where I left my phone... Wonder where my glasses are... Wonder what day it is...

SOUTH AFRICA LEADS IN WIRELESS:

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, BRITISH scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 200 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more up than 150 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the Brits, in the weeks that followed, an AMERICAN archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet, and shortly after, a story published in the New York bulletin: "American archaeologists, finding traces of 250-year-old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network 50 years earlier than the British."

One week later, the Cape Bulletin, in SOUTH AFRICA, reported the following: "After digging as deep as 30 feet in his backyard in Thabazimbi (South Africa) Lucky Simelane, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely nothing (aiziko, fokol)..." Lucky has therefore concluded that, 250 years ago, Africa had already gone wireless."

Just makes you proud to be a South African!!!



MATT

MATT



'We've had nearly a year of lockdowns. When this is over, let's never go for a walk again'



"Interior decorators were in shock after Boris said 'Let the scatter cushions pile high'"

