



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 61 – 4th JUNE 2021

GREETINGS:

Day 435... Snow on the Berg, extended Eskom load shedding and water cuts in many residential areas... "My Fellow South Africans" Sure enough...on Sunday came the stricter Level 2 lockdown as MAC raised the alarm... SIU to freeze pensions of officials suspected of corruption: 'We must hit where it hurts most'.... 'I'm floating today like a butterfly' - Ace Magashule says ANC 'processes' must be allowed to happen... Four years on: McKinsey and Transnet released a joint statement. McKinsey is "paying back the money" – R870 million. A disingenuous attempt to distance themselves from a toxic relationship... and at a time when mis and disinformation about the pandemic was spreading faster than the virus itself and South Africans were experiencing the devastating knock-on economic effects of Covid-19, our Minister of Health during the Pandemic was benefiting from these funds for, you know, essential stuff like home renovations (where have we seen this before?) and a bakkie for his son.... And oh, yes, Experts warn that South Africa's NHI plan has a major flaw: it's not going to work... Eskom "rotational load shedding" sets in ... ****ing rotate, indeed! On Saturday, 5 June, a 45-man Springbok squad will be announced for the three-Test series against the British Lions in South Africa. (Can the Boks beat the battle-hardened Lions?)

Britons headed for the beaches in droves on August Bank Holiday.... "A dangerous cult now runs Britain" – the worshippers at the "Temple of Johnson"... Boris and Carrie married in a secret ceremony at Westminster – and a Catholic ceremony to boot... The crucial facts Cummings left out tell a very different story of lockdown... Bank holiday traffic ; Sun and Covid easing meant return of jams.... UK vaccine passport plans to be scrapped, while former Tory Leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith warned the Prime Minister not to copy Ms Sturgeon, adding: "Let her play her games." Channel migrants are threatening "mob unrest" over accommodation delays, "There is a mob mentality that takes over" warns the Border Force union (Echoes of Enoch ...)

SECRET SPITFIRES:

A major new memorial consisting of a life-sized replica Spitfire commemorating the production of 'Secret Spitfires' and the thousands of workers who built them will be unveiled in Salisbury on 9 July. This coincides with the placing of 11 plaques, marking the locations where Spitfires were secretly constructed in response to the bombing of the main Supermarine factory in Southampton. The iconic Spitfire is the most famous British fighter aircraft in history. They were critical in defeating the German Luftwaffe air attacks during the Battle of Britain in 1940, soon becoming a symbol of freedom. More Spitfires were built than any other British combat aircraft before or since World War Two and by July 1940, RAF Fighter Command had nineteen Spitfire Mk I

squadrons available. Thousands of workers consisting largely of unqualified young girls and women built over 2500 Spitfires in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Reading. They had to hide their activity from the enemy, working from within sheds, workshops, garages, bus depots and a hotel.

(RAF News) <https://www.secretspitfiresmemorial.org.uk/>



Crew girls of the secret factory, posing by the Spitfire wing they have finished.

THE MIRACLE OF IRON DOME:

Rolling thunder, raining rockets and prayer.... Most of us will have seen media footage of the Israeli "Iron Dome" defence system in operation recently. A webinar last Tuesday by Dr Ari Sacher gave a fascinating insight into the history, development and capability of this system and the "Purim Miracle" it represents. *(If you don't already know it, read the Book of Esther in the Old Testament to understand the significance of Purim).* Ari Sacher is an accomplished rocket scientist and has worked in the design and development of missiles for over 20 years. He is one of the developers of Israel's Iron Dome. He has briefed hundreds of U.S. Congressmen on Israeli Missile Defence, including two briefings on Capitol Hill at the invitation of the House Majority Leader. Ari delivers his message so that even laymen are able to understand "rocket science." A riveting speaker, he uses his experience in the defence industry that is simultaneously enlightening and entertaining. Iron Dome (Hebrew: *קפת ברזל*, *kippat barzel*) is a mobile all-weather air defence system, developed by Rafael Advanced Defence Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries. The system is designed to intercept and destroy short-range rockets and artillery shells fired from distances of 4 kilometres (2.5 mi) to 70 kilometres (43 mi) away and whose trajectory would take them to an Israeli populated area. Iron Dome was declared operational and initially deployed on 27 March 2011 near Beersheba. On 7 April 2011, the system successfully intercepted a BM-21 Grad launched from Gaza for the first time. On 10 March 2012, The Jerusalem Post reported that the system shot down 90% of rockets launched from Gaza that would have landed in populated areas. *(Purim Miracle)*. In late 2012 Israel said that it hoped to increase the range of Iron Dome's interceptions, from a maximum of 70 kilometres (43 mi) to 250 kilometres (160 mi) and make it more versatile so that it could intercept rockets coming from two directions simultaneously. In November 2012, official statements indicated that it had intercepted over 400 rockets. By late October 2014, the Iron Dome systems had intercepted over 1,200 rockets. In addition to their land-based deployment, it was reported in 2017 that Iron Dome batteries would in future be deployed at sea on Sa'ar 6-class corvettes, to protect off-shore gas platforms in conjunction with Israel's Barak 8 missile system. Iron Dome is part of a multi-tiered missile defence system that Israel is continuing to develop to protect the country from threats ranging from mortars to ICBMs and which includes Arrow 2, Arrow 3, Iron Beam, Barak 8 and David's Sling. In May 2021 it was estimated that Palestinian militant groups had an arsenal of about 30,000 rockets and mortar bombs in Gaza, potential targets, when fired, for Iron Dome. Range varies widely, and guidance systems are lacking, but accuracy has improved over the years. There are estimates of the numbers and types of rockets, and their range and payload. *(Webinar and various sites)*

DREADNOUGHT:



Another weapons system which continues to be developed by the UK is the CASD (Continuous At Sea Deterrence) The Dreadnought class of ballistic submarines for the Royal Navy is now being built. "Successor" was the name for the programme of delivering these submarines for the Royal Navy until the first boat was named in October 2016. This is the enduring commitment of the Navy's dedication to Continuous At Sea Deterrence (CASD) since April 1969, after the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent was transferred to the Royal Navy from the Royal Air Force at midnight on 30 June 1968. Begun in 1969 with the four Resolution-class submarines, this core tasking in support of UK defence has been sustained non-stop by the Royal Navy. With their advent in 1992 the role was handed over to the four Vanguard boats, which are due to stay in service until the 2030s. The Successor programme has begun the build of the hulls which will become the Dreadnought class of nuclear submarines and will take over the mantle of CASD in the future. On October 21 2016, the name of the first Successor boat was announced as HMS Dreadnought. Rear-Admiral Arthur Wilson VC, then Controller of the Royal Navy, has gone down in history as the officer who claimed in 1901 "[Submarines are] underhand, unfair, and damned un-English. ... treat all submarines as pirates in wartime ... and hang all crews!" In actual fact he had advocated the purchase of submarines the year before, and he was actually expressing a desire to continue the policy of discouraging foreign powers from building submarines while the Royal Navy developed its own in secret. The legend goes that in response to these top secret remarks of Wilson's made 13 years earlier Lieutenant-Commander (later Admiral Sir) Max Horton first flew the Jolly Roger on return to port after sinking the German cruiser Hela and the destroyer S-116 in 1914 while in command of the E-class submarine E9. In World War II it became common practice for the submarines of the Royal Navy to fly the Jolly Roger on completion of a successful combat mission where some action had taken place, but as an indicator of bravado and stealth rather than of lawlessness. For example, in 1982 returning from the Falklands conflict HMS Conqueror flew the Jolly Roger depicting one dagger for the SBS deployment to South Georgia and one torpedo for her sinking of the Argentinian cruiser General Belgrano. The Jolly Roger is now the emblem of the Royal Navy Submarine Service. *(Wikipedia and other sites)*

EAGLES EXTENDED:



In another US weapons system upgrade, the first two Boeing F-15EXs to be handed over to the U.S. Air Force have recently returned to their home base at Eglin AFB, Florida, following two weeks of participation in their first large force test exercise. The aircraft - which were handed over by Boeing in March and April - were part of a sizable contingent from the 53rd Wing that deployed to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) for Exercise Northern Edge 21.

Located in the outskirts of Anchorage, Alaska, JBER combines the former Elmendorf AFB with the U.S. Army's adjacent Fort Richardson. During the exercise, the F-15EX (now officially named Eagle II) was tested in a joint force, "operationally represented" environment that included threat elements such as "red air" aggressors. Among the aims of the F-15EX's participation was to test the performance and behaviour of the Raytheon APG-82 AESA radar, other new features such as the wide-area cockpit display, and the latest operational flight program (OFP, mission software). The F-15EX is currently loaded with the 9.1X edition. Also undergoing an operational evaluation was the BAE Systems ALQ-250 Eagle Passive Active Warning Survivability System, better known as EPAWSS. This is an advanced digital multi-spectral warning and jamming suite with numerous antennas distributed around the airframe. The system entered low-rate initial production in March 2021 and is intended for both the F-15EX and the F-15E Strike Eagle. US Air Force planning envisages an acquisition of up to 144 Eagle IIs to replace the aging F-15C/Ds that serve with the Air National Guard from 2024-25. While the service acknowledges that the F-15EX will not be survivable against sophisticated air defences beyond the late 2020s, the aircraft can offer great value for operations in more benign air defence environments and in the homeland defence duties that the current fleet performs. Moreover, the type is viewed as a platform from which hypersonic weapons can be launched at stand-off ranges well outside high-threat areas.

TWO LEARJET PILOTS LOSE JOBS AFTER INTENTIONAL ROLL:

The German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation (BFU) has recently released a report detailing an instance where pilots conducted an unauthorized roll of their Bombardier Learjet 31A air ambulance aircraft. No one was injured when the pilots of the aircraft performed the manoeuvre with two company employees aboard near Faro, Portugal, on Dec. 28, 2018. But both pilots were fired as a result of the incident. According to the BFU, the aircraft, which is operated by a German carrier, had taken off from London Biggin Hill on a flight to Faro. After about an hour into the flight, the pilot-in-command - who occupied the left-hand seat and was the pilot flying - asked the co-pilot if he agreed to fly a roll. The co-pilot maintains that he did not agree to such a flight manoeuvre. He further said, and flight data record data indicated, that the PIC had disengaged the autopilot at about 13,200 feet and flew the airplane manually. At about 11,500 feet, the aircraft entered two steep turns with a bank angle of about 140-degrees each, then the "PIC conducted the roll about the longitudinal axis of the airplane," levelling off 10 seconds later. The roll started as the airplane flew at 301 knots indicated airspeed, which decreased continuously and levelled off at 251 KIAS. According to the report, the Learjet reached a maximum load of +2.47 g during the initiation of the manoeuvre. The aircraft operations manual prohibits the use of aerobatic manoeuvres, BFU said. This manoeuvre was discovered in May 2019 during a routine read-out of FDR data, which showed "the exceptionally high roll angle." The occurrence was reported to the operator, which then inspected the aircraft but found no damage. The operator also "promptly released the PIC and the co-pilot from their flying duties and terminated the employment contract after the occurrence became known." The incidence followed a similar occurrence of a flight manoeuvre, but in that case, the aircraft, a Cessna Citation 550B Bravo, crashed and both pilots were killed. That incident, which occurred in 2010 Switzerland, involved a roll initiated at FL270. However, that crew lost control of the aircraft and it turned steeply toward the ground. The manoeuvre was prohibited by the manufacturer and the pilots were neither licensed nor certified to perform it.

(By Kerry Lynch - May 27, 2021, AINonline)

In 1977 or 1978 at the Lanseria air show a similar manoeuvre was performed by a Falcon on a climb out after a high-speed pass over the show. The crew got away with it. No comeback was heard from the CAA or the aviation industry. (I was there... Jon Adams.)

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEFENCE OF RAF HABBANIYA:



RAF Habbaniya has featured prominently in RAF Middle East operations, from October 1936 until 31 May 1959 when the British were finally withdrawn following the July 1958 Revolution. At the time that war was declared in Sep 1939, the majority of No 1 Armoured Car Company (1 ACC) were stationed at RAF Habbaniya in Iraq. Habbaniya lies on the River Euphrates 50 miles west of Baghdad, and through the Anglo-Iraq treaty of 1934 RAF aircraft had been based there since 1938. By 1941 Habbaniya, from the Arabic meaning 'of the Oleander Tree' had become a well-established RAF base. The airfield though strategically located, supported mostly pilot training, was considered difficult to defend from the ground, due both to its long perimeter and the large commanding 100-200ft high plateau just a few hundred yards to the south. By Apr 1941 the political instability in Iraq was worsening. Increasing anti-British sentiment in Iraq and early German successes in Poland, the Low Countries and the establishment of a Vichy French Government in Syria made the situation perilous. Iraqi government officials resigned and fled the country and a coup d'état saw Iraqi military power shift to align with the Axis powers. Driven by military intelligence, on the 2 Apr 1941, No 1 ACC had established an Observation Post (OP) on the plateau with one Rolls Royce Armoured Car (RRAC) and a wireless tender. The constant threat of airborne assault by German paratroopers necessitated increased patrols by 1 ACC sections and anti-aircraft and anti-paratrooper defences being established. Limited reinforcements were dispatched to RAF Habbaniya; however, 4 Iraqi Army Divisions from Baghdad were about to move against the vulnerable airbase, which they besieged. The siege was lifted by the units based at Habbaniya, including pilots from the training school, a battalion of the King's Own Royal Regiment flown in at the last moment, Number 1 Armoured Car Company RAF and the RAF's Iraq Levies. (*RAF News*)

INFORMAL LUNCHES:

As we mentioned last week, a number of members are keen to get together for informal lunches. We will start holding such informal lunches (no pressure on those who prefer to avoid gatherings) at convenient (and open-air) venues such as Chariots at Wanderers, Morningside Country Club, Randpark Golf Club, Bryanston Sports Club, where we can either choose from the standard lunch menu, or negotiate a "Pensioners Lunch" deal if there are enough takers to warrant this. There have been a reasonable number of "takers" so the first such will be on **Friday 4 June 2021**, on the **Terrace at Wanderers** (Because we all know where that is....)

Please message Bruce on 083 325 0025 to warn-in so he can make Wanderers aware of the influx. Meet from 12:00.

RAF SQUADRON BADGES:



CHEERS! FOR TODAY:

Now 435 days since the start of the great pandemic, this is the sixty-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 on the antics of Ministers (various) or NCCC!) that will help us all to keep in contact and entertained through the lockdown. We're hanging in there...

"Thank you" to those who visited the SAA Museum on Saturday 29 May. They needed and deserved our support.

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 start by resuming informal lunches as above, and monitor further developments at Wanderers as they progressively resume services.

TAILPIECE:

Now I am told that the world is tapering off,
And it looks like the Yanks have all gone soft,
Gone soft in the head,
With Communists I dread,
So now we must wait for the 2024 runoff?
(The Sherriff of Nottingham Road)

So what if Armageddon is approaching? It's not the end of the world...

One day the pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the active runway while a DC-8 landed. The DC-8 landed, rolled out, turned around and taxied back past the Cherokee. Some quick-witted comedian in the DC-8 crew got on the radio and said, *"What a cute little plane. Did you make it all by yourself?"* The Cherokee pilot, not about to let the insult go by, came back with a real zinger: *"I made it out of DC-8 parts. Another landing like yours and I'll have enough parts for another one."*

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar,

ATC asked, *"What was your last known position?"*

Student: *"When I was number one for take-off."*

One Monday morning, Shane the mailman, was riding through the neighbourhood on his usual route, delivering the mail. As he approached one of the homes he noticed that both cars were still in the driveway. His wonder was cut short by David, the homeowner, coming out with a load of empty beer, wine and spirit bottles for the recycling bin. "Wow David, looks like you guys had one hell of a party last night," Shane commented. David, in obvious pain, replied, "Actually we had it Saturday night. This is the first time I have felt like moving since 4:00 o'clock Sunday morning. We had about 15 couples from around the neighbourhood over for some weekend fun and it got a bit wild. We all got so drunk around midnight that we started playing WHO AM I?" Shane thought for a moment and said, "How do you play WHO AM I?" "Well, all the guys go in the bedroom and come out one at a time covered with a sheet with only the 'family jewels' showing through a hole in the sheet. Then the women try to guess who it is." The mailman laughed and said, "Sounds like fun, I'm sorry I missed it." "Probably a good thing you did," David responded, "Your name came up 7 times."

Funny that when you hear a man's name, you can instantly work out his nationality:

Paolo – Italian

Pierre – French

Diego – Argentinian

Sven – Swedish

Klaus – German

Mohammed – British

A married couple were walking through a garden, when suddenly a dog ran towards them. They both knew it was going to bite them....

The husband lifted his wife to let the dog bite him rather than his sweetheart.

The dog stopped before them, unsure what to do, barked a little and ran away.

The husband put his wife down, expecting a hug and a few kind words of gratitude from her. But his wife screamed at him "I've seen people throwing stones & sticks at dogs, - this is the first time I've seen someone trying to throw his wife at a dog"

Moral: No one else can *misunderstand* a Husband better than a Wife

MATT

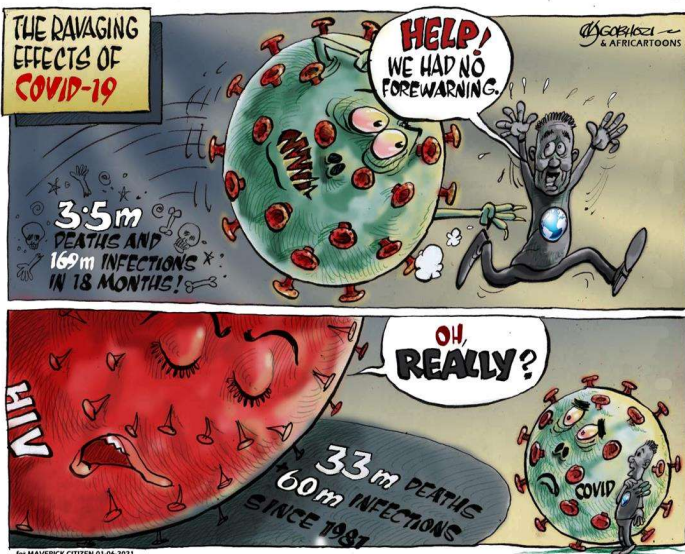


"Oh yes, Mr Cummings does mention us - 'The two useless idiots standing on the doorstep...'"

MATT



'It's the Covid Blame App. It sends an alert when Dominic Cummings calls for your sacking'



DEFENCE IN A COMPETITIVE AGE is a Ministry of Defence command paper which was released on 22 March 2021. It provided details on changes to the armed forces to meet the requirements of the Integrated Review which was published before it on 16 March 2021. The United Kingdom's recent defence and security review, and the Defence Command Paper *Defence in a Competitive Age* that followed it, aimed to identify and understand future threats and to invest in the capabilities needed to defeat them. The review process was shaped more by budgetary constraints than by military necessity and ended up imposing a series of cuts to force size, structure, and equipment.

The Royal Air Force was hit particularly hard, despite optimistic-sounding statements from senior officers. The Freeman Air and Space Institute, an initiative by London University's King's College, predicted that the review would follow the usual pattern: highlighting new technologies that would enable the UK to act as a major world power with smaller armed forces; before realizing that this was unaffordable without significant additional investment or scaling back ambitions; and then trying to fund the new equipment and capabilities by cutting force size and retiring existing equipment. The review committed to growing the UK's fleet of F-35B fighters beyond 48 aircraft, though this implies that this will fall far short of the UK's original commitment to 138 F-35s. Subsequent to the review, it was suggested that any additional aircraft would be to maintain the existing fleet size through to its out-of-service date, rather than to significantly grow it.

The Eurofighter Typhoon force will be reduced by 24 aircraft through the premature retirement of older Tranche 1 jets by 2025, though the review stated that the RAF would "continue to grow its combat air capacity over the next few years as we fully establish all seven operational Typhoon squadrons." This would seem difficult, with just 107 Tranche 2 and Tranche 3 Typhoons to equip test and training units, as well as the seven front-line units.

The RAF's fleet of E-3D Sentry AWACS aircraft (once seven-strong but depleted in recent years) will be retired this year, to be replaced by a fleet of just three Boeing E-7A Wedgetails from 2023, down from an original plan for five. The E-7As, to be based at Lossiemouth in Scotland, are unlikely to be available for expeditionary operations, and may struggle to fulfil UK quick-reaction alert (QRA) taskings.

Perhaps most surprisingly, the RAF will retire the C-130J Hercules transport aircraft in 2023, despite the aspirations for UK forces to be agile and deployable, and operating on the world stage. Some 13 stretched Hercules C.Mk 4s and a single short-fuselage C.Mk 5 presently fly about 5,500 hours per year—about the same as the A400M and the C-17A. The review says that the A400M Atlas force will "increase its capacity and capability", though there is no indication as to how an additional 5,000 flying hours will be generated, and there are, as yet, no firm plans for assuming the Hercules's Special Forces role.

About 36 Hawk T.Mk 1s used mainly for adversary training will be retired (replaced by virtual training), though the type will continue to be used by the Red Arrows display team. Nine of the UK's oldest Chinooks are to be retired, and the Puma helicopter will be replaced by a new type, which will also replace the remainder of the UK's disparate fleet of medium-lift helicopters, thus reducing four platform types to one.

Balanced against these cuts, more UK weapons are now expected to be integrated onto Lightning II and investment will ensure that its software and capabilities are updated in line with the rest of the global F-35 fleet. Money will also be made available to bring the upgraded Radar 2 and Spear Capability 3 deep strike weapon onto the Typhoon.

Nine Reaper remotely-piloted air systems will be replaced by 16 long-range General Atomics Protectors from 2024, while the Future Combat Air System will receive £2 billion of investment over the next four years, and development of the LANCA loyal wingman system will continue.

(AINOnline) Full Report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-in-a-competitive-age>