



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 273 19th SEPTEMBER 2025

GREETINGS:

“Joburg’s housing crisis mirrors the corruption eroding our state”... Madlanga Commission kicks off - Mchunu has big questions to answer as Mkhwanazi starts spilling the beans... PEPFAR funding cut hits vulnerable children with AIDS... 57 crooked SAPS cops reinstated... Leigh Matthews’s family outraged at killer’s parole bid... SANDF DR Congo allowance issue not yet settled... If you want to keep your job, get off social media... Cyril, don’t praise the DA... ANC members bristle after Ramaphosa admits South Africa’s best-run municipalities governed by DA... famous victory for Springboks against NZ...

Charlie Kirk’s assassination reverberates... Pomp, Parades and Flypasts for President Trump’s visit to UK... furious Tory row at State visit reception... Chaos in Commons - Starmer on a thread - admits he knew about Epstein emails before defending Mandelson... The whole world can see that the Chagos giveaway is ‘nuts’ and its architects are ‘fools’... Labour’s staggering incompetence is an embarrassment to Britain... Sadiq Khan’s London ‘is an investment no-go zone’... Spymaster Wirecard boss living in Moscow... Republicans threaten to cancel anyone who disparages Charlie Kirk... Anti-Trump influencers flood White House’s new TikTok account... World recorded 61 conflicts in 2024 – highest since 1946... time stands still at 10:43 in New Zealand... Dodo one step closer to returning from extinction...

SPIRIT OF BATTLE OF BRITAIN CAPTURED ON 1940S FILM:



A father and son are on a mission to recreate historic Battle of Britain photographs, using an original uniform and a WW2 camera.

Stephen Huntley and his son Scott are visiting hangars around the UK to capture a realistic picture of a Battle of Britain pilot.

Over the years, Stephen has been collecting original uniform items and WW2-era film.

Stephen's efforts are part of a bigger picture.

"I wanted to recreate, as close as I could, photographs that you could mistake for the Battle of Britain period," he said. Last year he managed to win a Battle of Britain pilot's uniform in an online auction, which kickstarted the project.

"My photographic series is a homage to their commitment, dedication and sacrifice, encompassing the importance of their service throughout a vast timescale," he added. The 1942 Supermarine Spitfire used in the recreation never flew as part of that finest hour, but it stands in for the earlier Spitfire Mk I that did. But armed with a 1939 Leica IIIa camera with Ilford film that expired in the 1940s, Stephen is using his 23-year-old son as his pilot model.

Mr Huntley said his son Scott was ideal because the average age of a Battle of Britain Pilot was just 20 years old. Scott said "it feels a bit surreal" as he wears the uniform worn in 1940. When asked what he thought of his dad's project he said: "I wasn't surprised. I thought, that's a classic idea from my dad."

The pair have taken photos at the Imperial War Museum Duxford and the Shuttleworth Collection, which houses aircraft from 1909-1950. Full story and pics at: [In pictures: Spirit of Battle of Britain captured on 1940s film – 85 years later](#)

602 SQUADRON MARKS 100 YEARS OF SERVICE:



A service to mark the anniversaries of the Battle of Britain and the founding of 602 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force has been held in Glasgow. Serving personnel and veterans gathered in the city's cathedral to celebrate the squadron's centenary and 85 years since the battle. A series of commemorations of the pivotal aerial engagement of the Second World War are taking place across the country.

The Officer Commanding 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron RAuxAF, Squadron Leader James Martin, said: "Hugely important to mark the sacrifice that our airmen, airwomen and our pilots committed for us back in the day to secure our future and our security today.

"The young airmen and pilots of that day, they weren't to know the significance of the battle. And that went on to secure the subsequent allowing of the D-Day landings, assuring we were to secure Britain's shores." (*ForcesNet*)

OPERATION EASTERN SENTRY:

As Ian Fleming famously said, once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, and a third time is enemy action. The first time Russian drones crossed the border into Poland last Wednesday, it was termed an accident by senior Defence officials such as the former Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir

Tony Radakin. The second incursion saw Romania scramble jets on Saturday to respond to Russian drones in its airspace.



RAF Typhoons will carry out round-trip air defence missions over Poland to counter aerial threats from Russia, including drones, as part of NATO's Eastern Sentry mission.

Royal Air Force Typhoons will join allied forces, including Denmark, France, and Germany, helping to defend the eastern flank.

It comes just days after a reckless and dangerous incursion by Russian drones into Poland's airspace, and a further breach of Romanian airspace over the weekend.

Tensions have remained high across Europe since Poland accused Russia of entering its airspace, the most significant violation of NATO airspace by President Putin to date.

The incident led Poland to invoke Article 4, which allows NATO members to bring any issue of concern, especially related to the security of a member country, to the table for discussion with the North Atlantic Council, the principal political decision-making body.

Following the talks, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Alexis G Grynkeiwich announced the launch of Operation Eastern Sentry. It will involve the deployment of equipment on the border with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine to deter potential Russian aggression. *(ForcesNet)*

CAS AIR CHIEF MARSHAL HARV SMYTH TAKES OVER:



Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth has started work as the new head of the Royal Air Force. He succeeds Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, who is moving on to the role of Chief of the Defence Staff, head of the UK's military. Born and educated in Northern Ireland, ACM Smyth joined the RAF in 1991 and spent 15 years as a frontline Harrier pilot and weapons instructor, having flown hundreds of operational missions over Bosnia, Kosovo,

Serbia, Iraq and Afghanistan. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his service during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. He retrained as a Tornado pilot in 2013 and became Station Commander at RAF Marham, helping deliver operations in Afghanistan, West Africa, Iraq and Syria. He has held a range of command positions since being promoted to Air Commodore in 2015 and was recently the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff for Military Strategy and Operations. The RAF celebrated ACM Smyth's appointment in a post on X, accompanied by several images of Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton with the new Chief of Air Staff. "Welcome Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth, and thank you, Sir Rich Knighton," the RAF said. "Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth succeeded Sir Rich Knighton, who will next week take over as the new Chief of Defence Staff for the UK's Armed Forces." *(ForcesNet)*

SHOOTING DOWN THE SHAHEDS:



The Iranian-designed Shahed has seen extensive use by Russia

The UK and Ukraine have announced a major new partnership to develop and mass-produce interceptor drones - with one of Kyiv's leading drone-makers also revealing plans to build a factory in the UK. The announcement comes a day after 19 Russian drones entered Polish airspace during overnight attacks on Ukraine, some of which were shot down by Polish and NATO forces.

At London's DSEI defence trade show, Defence Secretary John Healey is expected to confirm the launch of Project Octopus, a joint programme to design, build and deploy advanced interceptor drones.

Project Octopus uncrewed aerial vehicles have already seen action in Ukraine and are said to be highly effective against Russia's Iranian-designed Shahed one-way attack drones, despite costing just 10% of the price. Under this new tech-sharing agreement, thousands of Octopus drones will be manufactured in Britain every month, with Ukraine providing frontline know-how and design expertise

Earlier this week Moscow carried out its largest aerial assault on Ukraine since the war began, launching 823 drones, including hundreds of Shaheds. Symbolically, it was also the first time Russia had attacked government buildings in the heart of the Ukrainian capital. (*ForcesNet*)

THE LONGEST FLIGHT:

A new milestone in air travel will be set this December, as China Eastern Airlines launches a direct flight between Shanghai and Buenos Aires, set to become the longest non-stop route in history by both duration and distance. Nearly 30 hours in the air. The new route spans more than 19,000 kilometres and takes around 29 hours to complete. Scheduled to launch on 4 December, the service will claim the record for the world's longest direct commercial flight, according to *Express.co.uk*.

Although the aircraft makes a stop in Auckland, New Zealand, passengers will not be required to leave the plane or change aircraft. The outbound journey from Shanghai lasts approximately 26 hours, including a two-and-a-half-hour layover in New Zealand, while the return leg stretches close to 29 hours.



China Eastern's flight beats the previous record by a wide margin: the current leader, Singapore Airlines' Singapore–New York flight, takes “only” 18 hours. The previous longest nonstop flight between Beijing and São Paulo (which no longer operates) also pales in comparison to the current one with its 25 hours, according to *Drive.hu*.

The ultra-long-haul route will be operated using a Boeing 777-300ER, an aircraft specifically designed for extended flights. Travellers will have a choice of First, Business, or Economy class.

More:- <https://dailynewshungary.com/china-eastern-new-longest-record-flight/> | [DailyNewsHungary](#)

JOHN HANNAH VC:

On this day, 85 years ago, September 15, 1940, 18-year-old Sergeant John Hannah, Royal Air Force, flew as wireless operator and air gunner for No. 83 Squadron in a Handley Page Hampden bomber. That night, his crew attacked enemy barges at Antwerp. The plane was battered by violent anti-aircraft fire and a projectile exploded in the bomb compartment, unleashing a torrent of flames and smoke that filled the wireless operator's and rear gunner's cockpits.

The aircraft was in mortal danger, both petrol tanks were pierced, fire raged near the ammunition stores, and the crew was forced toward escape hatches as the blaze grew. With the rear gunner already forced out and escape possible, Hannah refused to abandon his pilot. He grabbed two extinguishers, dived into the inferno, and battled the flames for ten minutes, smoke blinding his eyes, heat melting cockpit aluminum, ammunition exploding in every direction.

When the extinguishers ran dry, he beat at the flames with his logbook, fighting for survival and fighting for the crew. Oxygen burning in his lungs, blinded and burned, Hannah kept at it. Only after he won did he crawl forward, passing maps and logs to the pilot. Alone with the pilot, Hannah's courage kept the crippled plane airborne long enough for a safe return to base. Sergeant John Hannah was awarded the Victoria Cross, announced in the London Gazette on October 1, 1940, recognizing the “most conspicuous bravery”—the youngest airman ever to win the VC for aerial operations in the Second World War. Hannah suffered severe burns to his face and lungs. He survived the war, but his injuries left him weak, vulnerable to illness. He died of tuberculosis on June 7, 1947, at age 25. He is buried at St James Cemetery in Leicester.



We salute his memory, and We Will Remember Him!

**AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR KEITH RODNEY PARK, GCB, KBE, MC & BAR, DFC
(15 JUNE 1892 – 6 FEBRUARY 1975)**



Sir Keith Park was in command of the RAF fighters which defended London and the South East during the Battle of Britain. A New Zealand-born officer of the Royal Air Force (RAF). During the Second World War, his leadership of the RAF's No. 11 Group was pivotal to the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain.

Relatives of the man in charge of protecting south-east England during the Battle of Britain have led a memorial service to mark its 85th anniversary.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park took charge of Fighter Command's 11 Group in April 1940, with the unit tasked with defending the region from German air attacks.

Sir Keith's great nephew, Brian, his great nephew Alex Neill, and great niece Susie Hunt, took part in the ceremony at the National Memorial in Capel-le-Ferne, which features a bust of Sir Keith.

Ms Hunt told the BBC they were "proud and honoured" to be related to Sir Keith.

The first decisive battle in history to be fought in the air began on 10 July 1940 and reached its climax on 15 September, which became known as Battle of Britain Day.

Fighter Command's 11 Group bore the brunt of the Luftwaffe attacks throughout the spring, summer and early autumn of 1940.

In August 2023, Sir Keith's name was added to the list of "The Few", which referred to service people from the RAF, the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Navy who fought during the Battle of Britain.

Following the Act of Remembrance members of Sir Keith's family laid a wreath at his bust. Fourteen flags from other countries were flown to recognise the Allied efforts in securing a victory for the battle.

Mr Neill said: "He played a significant role in the outcome of the battle. It's about remembrance, not celebration for those who suffered and died. There's a sense of satisfaction that his position in the battle has been recognised, history is telling the true story now."

CAPTAIN QUENTIN MOUTON:



Sad news on the passing, this week, of Captain Quentin Mouton. With an illustrious career as a SAAF pilot, senior Captain with South African Airways, then a stint overseas, ending his career, late in his life, as Chief Pilot of Mango Airlines, Quentin will be fondly remembered and revered by many on this group as he makes his final flight westbound.

Fare thee well Sir; it was an honour to know you and to fly with you ! *(FlyAfrica)*

Classic story from the archives between SAAF Pilots and SADF Troops back in 1964. The pilot of the lead aircraft, Quentin Mouton, later Chief Pilot of Mango Airlines in South Africa, said the following about these pictures on a South African aviation forum: "We were 590 hr pilots at the time and the whole thing was illegal, stupid and needless to say, dangerous. The low flying limit was 200ft (or above, not below). I would have been court-martialled if the SAAF knew. Too late now. These pictures were taken 2nd October 64. I was the pilot. The pictures are original and not 'touched up'. The 'Pongos' were on a route march from Langebaan by the sea to Saldanha. The previous night in the pub one of them had said: "*Julle dink julle kan laag vlieg maar julle sal my nooit laat lê nie*" ("You think you can fly low, but you'll never make me lie down"). Hulloo!!!

I went to look for them on the beach in the morning and was alone for the one picture. I was pulling up to avoid them. In the afternoon I had a formation with me and you can see the other a/c behind me. *(piloted by van Zyl, Kempen and Perold)*

A friend by the name of Leon Schnetler (one of the pongos) took the pics.

The guy that said "*Jy sal my nie laat lê nie*" ("You won't make me lie down") said afterwards that he was saying to himself as I approached: "*Ek sal nie lê nie, ek sal nie lê nie*" ("I won't lie down, I won't lie down") and when I had passed he found himself flat on the ground". Memories from the past. Quentin Mouton (23,000 hrs, everything up to B747-400, latterly Chief pilot MANGO Airlines and still actively flying B737-800 at 68) We salute his memory!

(Source: Port Elizabeth SAAF Museum - Unofficial Page)

AIR PEACE (LIKE, COOL, MAN):

Wow. Both the pilots of the Air Peace Boeing 737 which bombed off the runway in Port Harcourt this past July were found to be under the influence of alcohol and some of their cabin crew were found to have recently used cannabis.

Here's the gaff - A preliminary accident report, signed by the NSIB's Director of Public Affairs and Family Assistance, Mrs. Bimbo Olawumi Oladeji, revealed that the Boeing 737 aircraft, operating a scheduled domestic flight from Lagos to Port Harcourt with 103 people on board, veered off Runway 21 after landing from an unstabilised approach.

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) has confirmed that two Air Peace pilots tested positive for alcohol and cannabis following a runway excursion at Port Harcourt International Airport on July 13, 2025.

A preliminary accident report, signed by the NSIB's Director of Public Affairs and Family Assistance, Mrs. Bimbo Olawumi Oladeji, revealed that the Boeing 737-500 aircraft, registration 5N-BQQ, operating a scheduled domestic flight from Lagos to Port Harcourt with 103 people on board, veered off Runway 21 after landing from an unstabilised approach.

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau states that the first officer made “at least one” go-around call before the captain, who was flying, proceeded to land.

Arriving from Lagos, at 07:46 on 13 July, the aircraft had been conducting an ILS approach to runway 21, which has a length of 3,000m (9,840ft).

According to the captain’s testimony to investigators, the 737 was stable on final approach at 1,000ft above ground, and the autopilot was disengaged at 500ft.

But the aircraft appears to have drifted above the glideslope, and the captain told the inquiry: “By the time I could realise it, I crossed the threshold at 200ft.”

The captain acknowledged that the first officer “told me to go around”, but the captain opted to continue with the landing.

After crossing the threshold at 200ft, the aircraft landed three-quarters of the way down the runway. While the cockpit-voice recorder was overwritten, flight-data analysis shows the aircraft touched down 2,264m from the threshold – some three-quarters of the way down the runway – and rolled for 945m.

It overran the runway by more than 200m and came to rest on grass. None of the 96 passengers and seven crew members were injured. The extent of damage to the aircraft is unclear.

The approach was carried out in daylight, with good visibility and calm conditions.

While the safety bureau is still investigating the overrun, it says Air Peace should “reinforce internal procedures” for determining crew fitness for duty, given the positive tests for “some substances” – including the presence of THC, a component of cannabis, in one of the flight attendants.

DANCING THE DEATH DRILL:

“*A TRIBUTE TO A SHARED HISTORY*”, this play honors the brave souls who perished when the SS Mendi sank on February 21, 1917. This event is a critical part of South Africa's history, a story that deserves to be told and remembered. Through stunning choreography, emotive storytelling, and powerful performances, the play ensures the legacy of these men lives on. Playing at Johannesburg Theatre until 28 September. [SS MENDI Media Statement 15SEP.pdf](#)

TRIP TO PARAMOUNT:

"RAFOC has received an invitation from Lee Connolly, CEO of Paramount Aerospace Industries, for members to attend a tour of their premises at Wonderboom Airport. This is where the both AHRLAC and MWARI aircraft are built. The suggested date for this is 3 October. The tour would comprise :

- 09h00 Departure by bus from Wanderers
- 10h30 Arrival at the factory at Wonderboom:
- Welcome and refreshments;
- 11h00 Presentation in the auditorium;
- Tour of the manufacturing plant;
- 12h00 (or later) a light lunch. (This maybe a Braai, weather dependant)
- Return by bus to Wanderers Club late afternoon

In order to arrange the required security clearances, please your full names and ID numbers to the Hon. Secretary, email colin@ackroyd.co.za, by COB 19 September.

If sufficient interest is shown, we will confirm all arrangements. Please note there is no cost involved for this outing."

CHEERS FOR NOW:

Well, the Battle of Britain Memorial Services and celebrations have come and gone. The lunch at Wanderers was well attended by 35 members and guests, and this year we were treated to a flypast and Missing Man formation by three RVs. Special thanks to Scully and Sally Levin who organised and the pilots who flew the sortie. Our next lunch on 3rd October may be replaced by the Paramount visit above – watch for announcements.

TAILPIECE:

Department of Defence spent R110m on St George's Hotel lease in two years...

South Africans are being warned that criminals are increasingly targeting homes, galleries and institutions for valuable artworks...

This from Ace Jewell, Commander USN (retired), 88 years old, fighter pilot in 3 wars: "Drones will not be late to briefings, start fights at happy hour, destroy clubs, attempt to seduce other pilots' dates, purchase huge watches, insult other services, sing 'O'Leary's Balls, dance on tables, yell 'Show us yer tits!' or do all of the other things that we know win wars". "I see no future in them."



'I've now been advised that I shouldn't have taken those chips and I've referred myself to the ethics adviser'



'The UK wants £22bn of AI investment, so I have to haul a damn carriage round a castle'

When you see the mechanic who went with your car for a road test coming back on foot!!





RAMA BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES



"Nearly 1,000 children have died of severe acute malnutrition in hospital over the past 18 months in South Africa" D-G Department of Health, Dr Sandile Buthelezi.

AFRICAN PARABLE- Food For thought...

Inkomazi and Pap was breakfast served every morning in a mine hostel of 100 people.

Out of the 100, 80 didn't like it. They complained daily, saying they were tired and wanted something different.

But the remaining 20 were satisfied. They liked it just as it was.

To solve the issue, the mine manager introduced a simple rule:

Every night, everyone would vote for what they wanted to eat the next morning. The meal with the highest number of votes would be served.

So every night, the 20 who loved Inkomazi and Pap voted for it - with one voice. But the 80 who didn't like it were never united.

Their votes went in different directions:

- 18 voted for Bread and Tea.
- 16 for bacon and Eggs.
- 14 for fried Rice.
- 12 for noodles.
- 10 for bread with jam.
- 10 for Movite soft porridge.

Can u guess what the result was every single time?

Inkomazi and Pap kept winning, not because it was the best, but because the people who didn't want it were too divided to agree on anything else.

In Mzansi, many are tired of the same old hardship, bad governance and recycled corrupt leadership. We know who and what the real problems are.

But even those who want change are divided.

Some along tribal lines, others along party names, or personal interest, ego and ambition, whilst others follow individuals.

2026 and 2029 might seem far away, but it's already around the corner. If we don't learn from this story, we will wake up again to another bitter round of the same "meal" we've been served for ages, and the sad truth is that: If we miss 2026 local elections and 2029 national elections it will only get worse.

There Is a Moral here:

THERE'S POWER IN UNITY, NOT JUST IN NUMBERS.

A United Minority Is More Formidable Than a Divided Majority.