



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

BRYANSTON 2021

info@rafoc.org

www.rafoc.org

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| President: | David MacKinnon-Little | |
| Vice Presidents: | Basil Hersov, Geoff Quick | |
| Chairman: | Bruce Harrison | bruce@jbharrison.co.za |
| | | Cell: 083 325 0025 |
| Vice Chairman: | Jon Adams | bookings@rafoc.org |
| | | Cell: 082 450 0616 |
| Hon. Secretary: | Colin Ackroyd | Cell: 082 800 5845 |
| Hon. Treasurer: | Jeff Earle | Cell: 083 652 1002 |
| Committee Member: | Geoff Fish | Cell: 083 660 9697 |
| | Russell Swanborough | |
| Web Master: | Hanke Fourie | Cell: 082 553 0210 |
| Almoner: | Rob Tannahill | Cell: 082 806 6779 |
| Bank Account: | Nedbank - Melrose Arch | Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063 |

RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 277 17th OCTOBER 2025

GREETINGS:

AI is not funny, SA is a joke, and a perfect storm is brewing... SA faces tough questions after its tech surfaces in Russia's war machines (no joke)... new mafia hijacking South Africans across the country... prepaid electricity meter trouble in South Africa... Lucky Montana's tax woes and the R4.5bn Prasa State Capture scandal... court order attaching ANC bank accounts - national operations at 'an abrupt and complete standstill'... It's back! La Niña has formed, raising rain hopes for SA farmers... Yes, it's all going down in South Africa today...

Peace in our time?... Israeli hostages released in (sort of) peace deal in Gaza (Hamas conspicuously absent)... Hamas says "all reachable hostage bodies recovered" amid Israel threat to resume fighting... US-backed international force to go into Gaza to stabilise security... Charlie Kirk awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom... Madagascar military coup – President flees... A leaked memo, a MAGA-style hat and a trail of broken pledges – it's Labour's great housing betrayal... 'Theatre is an elitist artform for privileged people'... six ways Gen Z are ruining the workplace for everyone else...

BATTLE OF BRITAIN: STILL SHAPING OUR FUTURE:

2025 commemorates the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, a crucial moment in World War II when the Royal Air Force bravely defended the United Kingdom against the might of the then Luftwaffe.



On 15th September 1940 the German Luftwaffe launched a massive assault in the skies over the southeast with the aim of obliterating the Royal Air Force. It was a day of heavy fighting, and the Luftwaffe suffered significant casualties. It was a decisive defeat for the Luftwaffe, and since then this date has been celebrated as 'Battle of Britain Day'. At its zenith, the RAF had only 749 fighter aircraft available compared to 2,550 available to the Luftwaffe. It really was a battle to save Britain.

Defending our skies came at a significant cost, with 544 RAF aircrew killed during the Battle of Britain. 312 RAF personnel were killed on the ground. The indomitable bulldog spirit shone through as many thousands used their skill, judgement and tenacity to safeguard their homeland.

Now in the 21st Century, the RAF has built on 85 years of innovation to remain at the forefront of the United Kingdom's defence. Today, Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) operations at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire and RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland ensure the nation's airspace is monitored and defended 24/7. Modern Typhoon aircraft, equipped with advanced radar, sensors, and precision weapons systems, can intercept potential threats in minutes – a stark contrast to the Hurricane and Spitfire fighters of 1940, which relied on visual spotting, radio communication, and less sophisticated navigation. *(RAF News)*

PRINCESS OF WALES VISITS RAF CONINGSBY:



The Princess of Wales performed a loop-the-loop in an RAF Typhoon jet simulator as she met pilots on the frontline of the UK's air defences.

Catherine flew into RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, where she was shown around one of the fighter aircraft on stand-by to respond to any threats to national airspace, before stepping into a state-of-the-art simulator.

She later told waiting children how her son Louis wanted to be a pilot and apologised to some of the youngsters for not wearing a dress for her visit.

The princess arrived in a helicopter at the base for her first visit as its Royal Honorary Air Commodore, and was briefed about recent RAF operations, including supporting NATO in Poland.

She was then shown around a fully armed Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon, which is ready to react to any threat facing UK airspace within minutes of an alert.

Wing Commander Luke Wilkinson, a pilot, gave the princess a tour of the aircraft before she climbed the stairs with him up to the cockpit.

The royal visitor then moved to the newly opened Typhoon Future Synthetic Training facility, where she took the simulated controls of the fast jet. The Princess of Wales told instructor Geraint White that she had flown a helicopter simulation before but never a plane. The princess 'flew' around the Lincolnshire countryside with the North Sea ahead and, at one point, appeared to perform a loop-the-loop manoeuvre.

Catherine met some of the pilots in training and asked about their time at RAF Valley, in Anglesey, where she lived with the Prince of Wales when he was in training as a search and rescue pilot.

She then moved on to visit a communal space called the Lounge, where she accepted the offer of a cup of tea and chatted to members of RAF Coningsby's welfare team. QRA provides a 24/7 interception response based at RAF Coningsby and RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland. *(RAF News)*

INDUSTRIAL SCALE LOOTING:

Addressing the Joburg Mining Indaba on Thursday, Transnet CEO Michelle Phillips bemoaned the exorbitant security costs that account for a large portion of overheads and deprive the group of much-needed revenue and profit. In a horror story that almost beggars belief, she revealed that Transnet customers are losing 4.5-million tonnes of goods due to infrastructure theft despite the state-owned rail and ports company spending R4bn annually on private security.

HKGK:

Authorities in South Africa have launched an investigation after locally made technology was discovered in Russian drones used to attack Ukraine.

- South Africa is investigating the presence of domestically manufactured components found in Russian drones used against Ukraine.
- Lightware Optoelectronics Ltd., a South African company producing civilian laser range finders, denied any involvement in military applications.
- Concerns arose because of export compliance laws potentially breached by resold or repurposed civilian equipment.
- This incident has put South Africa's foreign policy neutrality during the Ukraine conflict under scrutiny.

The government of South Africa has launched an investigation into how locally manufactured electronic components were discovered in Russian drones used in attacks against Ukraine, a revelation that risks complicating Pretoria's delicate diplomatic balance between Moscow and the West.

According to Bloomberg, the component in question is a laser range finder produced by Lightware Optoelectronics Ltd., a company based near Pretoria that specializes in precision measurement tools.

The device, while designed for civilian applications such as surveying and robotics, was reportedly found inside Russian drones recovered by Ukrainian forces. Kyiv's special envoy for sanctions, Vladyslav Vlasniuk, revealed on social media that the equipment could be used to calculate distances and trigger detonations. Lightware, in a statement, denied any deliberate military involvement, insisting that its products are not intended for weaponization.

The company blamed what it described as "unscrupulous purchasers" who may have re-exported or repurposed the equipment without authorization. "We do not sell or design products for military use," Lightware said, emphasizing that it adheres to international export compliance laws.

(BusinessTech)

LIBYAN ARMS EMBARGO:

At least four Gazelle helicopters have been exported from South Africa to Libya, where they have joined the Libyan National Army (LNA) commanded by General Khalifa Haftar.



South African weekend media reports have it the rotorcraft were “quietly exported” from Lanseria International Airport over the past few months aboard chartered flights. They were apparently going to the Mediterranean Sea port city Benghazi.

Darren Olivier, African Defence Review Director, confirmed four Gazelle helicopters were exported from South Africa to Libya adding it was “unclear” if there are export controls on the rotorcraft or that the aircraft carrying them to North Africa had their transponders switched off.

Flight plans obtained by Sunday newspaper Rapport have it the Gazelles exited South

Africa over the past two months from Lanseria with Amman in Jordan listed as their destination after a stop – presumably for refuelling – in Nairobi. The most recent flight was that of a Transavia Export Airlines Ilyushin Il-76 on 18 September into Lanseria, departing the next day. Transavia is based in Belarus and the Il-76 involved is registered there.

The single-engined French designed and built Gazelles are reported as being former British and French army aircraft. When removed from service, the report has it, the four now in Libya were among Gazelles demilitarised, brought to South Africa and registered with “some changing hands several times before a private company allegedly buying them recently and then sold them to Haftar”. Refitting armour protection and a door-mounted machine gun brought at least some former British and French Gazelles back to semi-gunship standard with South African registered Gazelles also operating in Mozambique some years ago in the hands of private military contractors.

Two weeks ago, four Gazelles were seen taking part in a flypast in Benghazi. The South African registrations on the helicopters were covered with Libyan flag stickers. “The helicopters are, however, still clearly recognisable due to the unique colours in which some are painted,” Rapport has it, adding, “the suspicion is that Jordan is being used as a front to obtain official flight documents”. The Russian air transports reportedly deviate from official flight plans to deliver their cargoes in Benghazi.

The South African Department of Transport (DoT) is reported to be “reviewing” all Il-76 flights this year with a spokesman quoted as saying this will determine how many Gazelles “may have ended up in Libya in a similar manner”.

Inquiries regarding the flights were not responded to by South Africa’s Border Management Authority (BMA).

WHY IN THE WORLD DID BOEING MERGE WITH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS?

Boeing merged with rival US plane maker McDonnell Douglas almost three decades ago in a massive \$13 billion deal, combining the capabilities of both companies into a single entity. With revenues exceeding \$66 billion in 2024, Boeing is now the world's second-largest aircraft manufacturer behind European firm, Airbus, which recently leapfrogged Boeing into the number one spot.

In the 1990s, Boeing ruled as the world's largest plane maker and was enjoying great commercial success with its in-production Boeing 737, 747, 757 and 767 family of aircraft. European rival Airbus

was making significant progress with its Airbus A300, A320, A330, A340 families, but it was still a long way from toppling Boeing's market dominance.

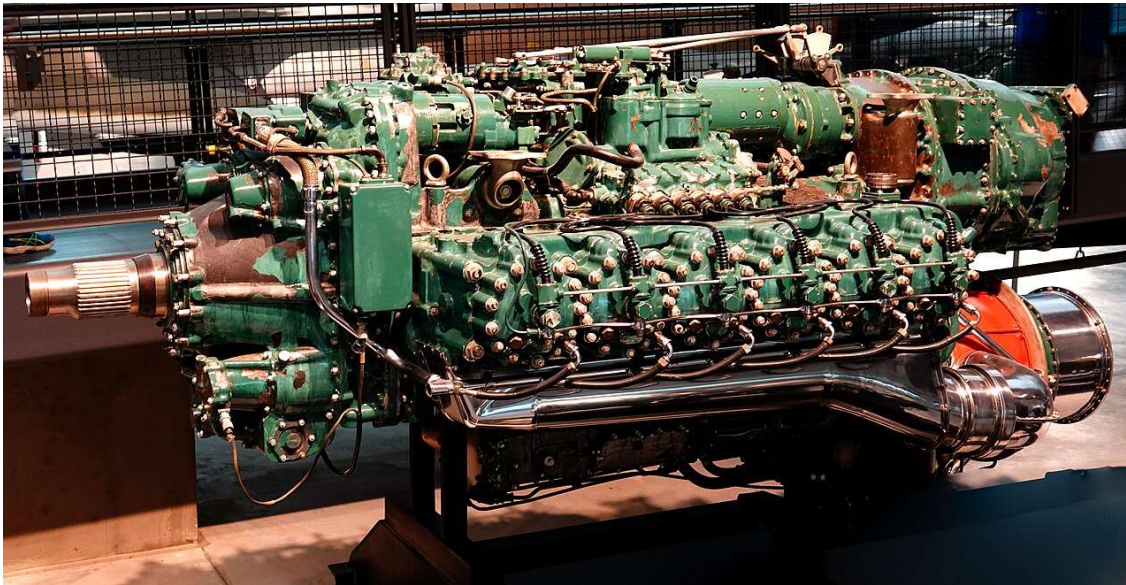
On the contrary, US manufacturer McDonnell Douglas was struggling to keep up in the commercial market and increasingly relied on defense and space contracts for its survival. Its commercial aircraft portfolio was showing its age, and efforts to modernize its product line did not prove successful. Its MD-90 was introduced in the mid-1990s as an updated version of the MD-80, but secured fewer than 120 orders. On the widebody front, it had also failed to pull out a winner with its flagship MD-11, which didn't attract much interest as a passenger jet.

While Boeing had always had a strong footing in the defense market dating back to World War I, McDonnell Douglas had been outperforming it in that sector with notable contracts like the F-15 Eagle, F/A-18 Hornet and C-17 Globemaster III, along with major NASA contracts in the space sector. Boeing was heavily dependent on its commercial business, which itself was vulnerable to market fluctuations.

However, defense contracts were a much more stable source of income, offering fixed and long-term revenue that was less vulnerable to the whims of the market. This became particularly important for Boeing following the early 1990s recession, which had forced the company to layoff tens of thousands of workers and sell hundreds of its aircraft at cheaper prices just to attract customers. By 1997, Boeing had posted its first annual loss in decades, and its merger with McDonnell Douglas was finalized in the same year. (*SimpleFlying*)

THE NAPIER NOMAD:

The Napier Nomad is a British diesel aircraft engine designed and built by Napier & Son in 1949. They combined a piston engine with a turbine to recover energy from the exhaust and thereby improve fuel economy.



Two versions were tested, the complex Nomad I which used two propellers, each driven by mechanically independent stages, and the Nomad II, using the turbo-compound principle which coupled the two parts to drive a single propeller. The Nomad II had the lowest specific fuel consumption figures seen up to that time. Despite this the Nomad project was cancelled in 1955 having spent £5.1 million on development, as most interest had passed to turboprop designs.

The compressor and turbine assemblies of the Nomad were tested during 1948, and the complete unit was run in October 1949. The prototype was installed in the nose of an Avro Lincoln heavy bomber for testing: it first flew in 1950 and appeared at the Farnborough Air Display on 10

September 1951. In total the Nomad I ran for just over 1,000 hours, and proved to be rather temperamental, but when running properly it could produce 3,000 hp (2.2 MW) and 320 lbf (1.4 kN) thrust. It had a specific fuel consumption (sfc) of 0.36 lb/(hp·h) (220 g/kWh).

The prototype Nomad I is on display at the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune Airfield in Scotland. *(Facebook via Chris Goldman)*

OUTENIQUA CHOO TJOE:

The Outeniqua Choo Tjoe, South Africa's cherished steam train and one of the Garden Route's best-known tourist attractions, is officially set to return to service. According to Tourism Update, Alan McVitty, CEO of Classic Rail and the Outeniqua Choo Tjoe, has confirmed that all contracts and funding partners are now secured to rebuild the historic railway line between George and Knysna. The relaunch aims to restore one of South Africa's most scenic and nostalgic travel experiences. "We plan to open the line in two phases: Knysna to Sedgefield and Sedgefield to George. We expect the first phase to take about 12 months to complete," McVitty said.



The phased approach ensures the project's momentum while allowing restoration and safety assessments to happen thoroughly and responsibly.

Locomotives are currently undergoing repairs in Gauteng, while passenger carriages are being refurbished in George. A dedicated steam workshop is also planned along the route to support long-term maintenance and operations.

Full article: Beloved South African train steams towards a comeback

BADGER BUST:



The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has still not received any Badger Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFVs), despite first signing a contract with Denel in 2007 and paying a total of R7.7 billion so far. This was revealed in a recent Parliamentary response by Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Angie Motshekga to a question posed by Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament (MP) Nicholas Myburgh.

The Badger Infantry Fighting Vehicle was intended to replace the Ratel IFV, which was designed in the 1970s by Springfield Büssing and manufactured by Sandock Austral.

South African state-owned aerospace and military technology company Denel was selected to design the replacement, and a contract was signed in 2007.

At the time, the project, known as Project Hoefyster, involved the state-owned entity designing and delivering 264 vehicles.

In her reply, Motshekga said the contract agreed to produce five different vehicle variants: a section variant, a fire support variant, a command variant, a missile variant, and a support variant.

This would have included the logistics, ammunition, and simulators for the vehicles, with the development agreed to cost just over R1 billion, with order amendments increasing this to R1.2 billion.

The contract's first phase was supposed to be fulfilled by May 2012. However, Denel was unable to meet the deadline.

This was supposed to be followed by phase two of the project, which involved the industrialisation and production. (*DefenceWeb*)

SEX SHOP FOR SALE:



After more than 30 years as a quirky cultural icon and must-visit watering hole, the world-renowned Ronnie's Sex Shop is officially up for sale – marking the potential end of an era for one of South Africa's most recognisable roadside bars. The asking price? R17.9 million, which includes the legendary pub, a coffee shop, gift shop, deck seating, and over 230 hectares of land near Barrydale, nestled along the scenic Route 62.

Unfortunately it's too far away for a RAFOC club

house purchase!!!!

CHEERS FOR NOW:

In addition to being die mooiste, mooiste maand, October is turning out to be a big month for enquiries into what happened to the money, with the ongoing Madlanga Commission into allegedly corrupt police tenders, the spat between Lucky Montana and SARS, and the Road Accident Fund hearing currently in Parliament...

Your Editor is still enjoying this Oktober maand in some beautiful parts of SA, namely the Southern Drakensberg, Griqualand and the North and South KZN coasts. Currently again enjoying the rural peace and quiet near Howick in the KZN Midlands. Readers will understand if this edition of Ramblings is again somewhat shorter or less focussed than usual.

Our next lunch will be on Friday 7 November 12h30 for 13h00, (nearest to Armistice Day 11 November) and will be preceded by a wreath laying at the Wall of Remembrance facing the carpark. We hope to have an appropriate military speaker, subject as always to "the exigencies of the Service"

TAILPIECE:

MATT

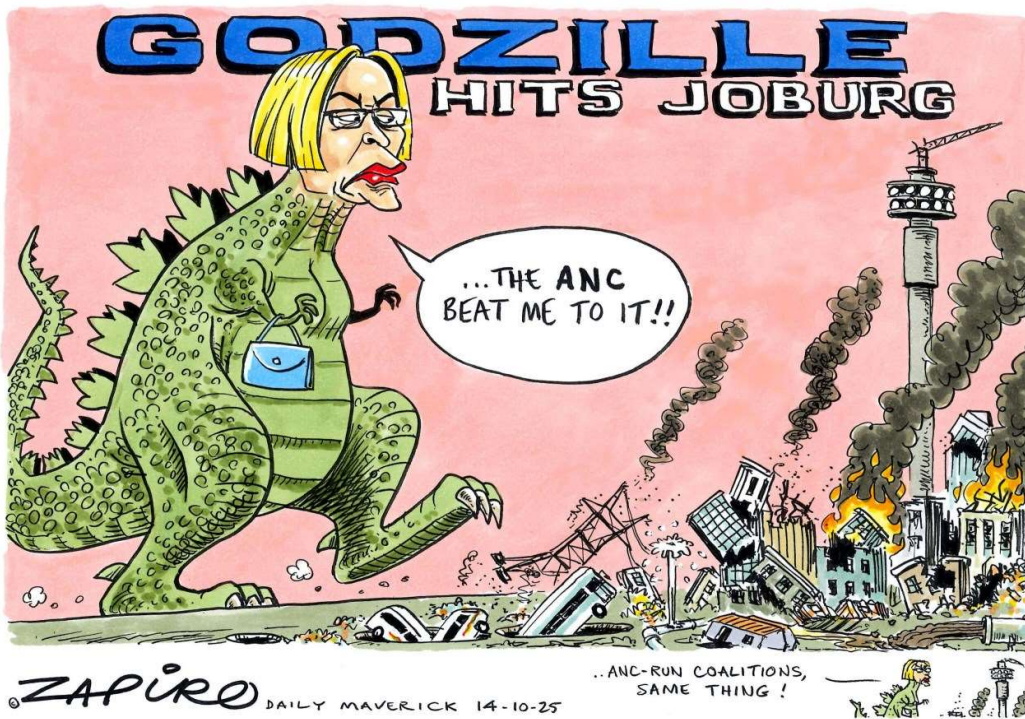


'No, I will not be the French Prime Minister!'

MATT



'We're politicians fleeing France to avoid being made prime minister'





THE LEGEND: FRIK DU PREEZ:



Legendary Springbok rugby player Frik du Preez, who turns 90 next month, reckons he's achieved everything he wanted to in his life. D,u Preez played 38 Tests and 87 games for the Springboks, went on six Springbok tours and played 109 games for the Northern Transvaal – now the Blue Bulls.

He was also the founding member of the Blue Bull Rugby Trust in 1989, and the treasurer, who supported players who needed financial backing.

"I have been retired or unemployed for years, so now I just sit around. I have run around enough in my life.

My dream was to become a Springbok and farm – and I did both," he said. It's 51 years since Ex-Springbok flanker Frik du Preez's last game. In retirement, Du Preez kept cattle in the semi-Kalahari, in Bray. "It's the place in SA that's the furthest from the ocean," he says.

He first went to the ocean aged 23, when he played rugby for the army's first team. "They flew us to Cape Town. It was the first time I flew in an aeroplane and the first time I saw the ocean. Two years later, I was standing on a boat as a Springbok, travelling the world," he said.

Du Preez said they didn't get paid to play for the Springboks in those days. "Money cannot buy my rugby or the experiences I have," he said. Du Preez also said it was hard to pinpoint a game that stood out. "I haven't played rugby in 51 years. When I decided to stop playing, I stopped.

"I don't keep myself smart on the side of the field. I tried coaching for some time, but I got so 'de moer in.' I don't know anyone who makes a mistake on purpose. Red cards will kill the game," he said.

Du Preez says the one thing that irritates him about rugby is the change of rules.

"The guys playing rugby today wouldn't make it into our team back in the day, because they can't scrum. They toss the ball out everywhere." But he said local rugby was in a better place than it's ever been because Rassie Erasmus understands rugby. "People don't understand Rassie."

Du Preez fondly remembers playing in England in 1971 as part of the Centenary Match between England and the President's Overseas XV (a World XV) and eating a Brussels sprout, which wasn't available in South Africa, for the first time in 1962.

He also remembers the night he met Nelson Mandela. "Mandela was speaking at the city hall that night and I was told that he wanted to meet me. I couldn't believe he knew who I was, but apparently, he was a big sport fanatic. The next moment, Mandela throws me a thumbs-up from across the room. I was so shocked I didn't know what to do, so I drank another brandy.

When someone tried to introduce me to him, Mandela said he knew who I was. He said, 'Hello Frik, I want to thank you for what you have done for rugby in South Africa'. "I asked him how he knew, because they never got to see us play and he said he used to listen to us play over the radio. Du Preez said the next moment Mandela told him he had heard he was very fond of Brussels sprouts. "Before I could stop myself, I asked him where the f**k did you hear that? And he laughed and said he had his contacts. Contacts se moer," he added.

After that, Du Preez got a parcel from Mandela's office. "At first I was scared because what if it's a bomb, but it wasn't. It was a rugby ball and a handwritten note in Afrikaans that read, Geluk met jou 70ste verjaarsdag, Madiba," he said.

Du Preez said he still had the rugby ball and the note in his bar area at his house in Silver Lakes in Pretoria, where he has been living for the past three years.

One of his favourite things about living in the capital is being close to Loftus and watching games from the presidential suite. Du Preez also said he was excited to see what Sacha Feinberg-Mngomezulu can do. "He is good," he said. (*Citizen*)