



ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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BRYANSTON 2021

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS – WEEK 292 20th FEBRUARY 2026

GREETINGS:

'You auctioned our country' - Malema tells Ramaphosa... Ramaphosa and Steenhuisen fiddle as they make South African farmers watch their cattle die... water throttling and electricity cuts continue unabated... Madlanga Commission fumbles on amid accusations and counter-accusations... former Ekurhuleni Manager Imogen Mashazi's glitzy London shopping spree and R3.5m private jet flit... Uber, Bolt may soon be illegal in SA... Bolt confirms brutally murdered driver wasn't registered... Dale College headmaster faces removal amid "reckless" financial mismanagement claims... Trumps new US Ambassador arrives in SA with relations frayed... unemployed's unending misery... Gold dreams spark illegal digging in Springs...

Yet another screeching about-turn from Sir Keir Starmer over elections... "fatally weakened Starmer will not be able to resist a wealth tax... The trans activism plaguing university campuses is akin to Stalinist purges... The BBC is letting itself be used as a propaganda outlet for Iran's regime... Jesse Jackson shuffles off... British man smashes check-in machines in airport rampage... Birmingham ward where convicted terrorist Shahid Butt is running for office... MPs call for Brazilian butt lift crackdown... How's that go, again?

EXERCISE HYPERION STORM:

As the UK prepares to assume leadership of NATO's Allied Reaction Force (ARF) Special Operations Component in July 2026, Exercise Hyperion Storm successfully validated the Royal Air Force's Special Operations Air Task Group's (SOATG) readiness for joint operational responsibilities.



Conducted over two weeks in January 2026 at RAF Leeming, the exercise used a small footprint of just over 200 personnel and tested the RAF's ability to support Land Task Group missions utilising Chinooks from 27 Squadron.

The support involved demonstrating special operations core skills: special reconnaissance, direct action and military assistance.

“The evaluation process is exacting and demanding; every detail is scrutinised. As a headquarters we had to meet over 850 performance measures to ensure complete validation for NATO. On this exercise we are here to support and ensure the success of the Maritime, Land and Air Task Groups as they seamlessly work together. This is the first time we have brought together the UK’s Joint Special Operations Forces for such an important leadership role in NATO. It demonstrates the versatility of the UK Commando Force, Ranger Regiment and Royal Air Force, both in support of our NATO Alliance partners and allies across the globe.” Colonel Phil, Deputy Commander of Special Operations Component Command

The culmination of two years of work for the Royal Air Force, SOATG based at RAF Benson and 27 Squadron at RAF Odiham, other support elements included: Joint Helicopter Support Squadron, 90 Signals Unit, Air Land Integration Squadron and II Squadron RAF Regiment. Together they have undergone major development to prepare for this exercise and the readiness period starting in July. “This has been a concentrated effort for the past two years to reach validation which, in collaboration with NATO and our sister Services has resulted in a successful Exercise.” Wing Commander Matthew, Commanding Officer of SOATG. (*RAF News*)

UKRAINE SHOOTS DOWN RUSSIAN KLIN KAMIKAZE DRONE FOR FIRST TIME:

Service members of Ukraine’s 118th Separate Mechanized Brigade, part of the 17th Army Corps, used an interceptor drone to shoot down a Russian Klin kamikaze drone in the Orikhiv direction. The brigade said the Klin is a Shahed-type drone equipped with an artificial intelligence-based guidance system. It incorporates elements of a canard layout, including a forward horizontal stabilizer. The Ukrainian-made General Cherry AIR drone was used for the interception.



The new Klin kamikaze drone. Photo credits: Sunflower Telegram channel

According to the brigade, this is the first confirmed interception of this type of drone, which Russian forces introduced about four months ago. The Klin UAV can independently detect and strike targets at a range of up to 120 km using a repeater, or operate as an “air minefield,” loitering for around 80 minutes. The drone has a takeoff weight of 13.5 kg and a flight speed ranging from 108 to 300 km/h.

The fuselage length is 1.6 meters and the wingspan is 1.9 meters. The maximum flight altitude is up to 2 km. The warhead weighs 5 kg. The UAV is equipped with an airburst system and can carry two types of warheads: shaped-charge and high-explosive.

Photos published in October 2025 indicate that some components of the UAV, including the optical module, were produced using 3D printing technology. In January, Ukrainian forces also used an interceptor drone to destroy a Russian Shtorm reconnaissance UAV. Little publicly available information exists about this relatively new Russian reconnaissance drone. (*Militarnyi*)

BLOOD ON THE BLUEPRINTS:

Despite sanctions, Russia still manages to get modern foreign tech and equipment through leasing deals. These deals are basically long-term rentals with an option to buy. The equipment has a dual purpose and is used by factories in the Russian military industry. These goods are mainly designed for civilian enterprises, but they can also be used to make weapons, components for them, and reconnaissance and surveillance devices. This is how the aggressor keeps its military industry afloat. The database of the Defence Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine already contains 50 samples of equipment supplied to Russia under such schemes. Manufacturers may not even know that their equipment is being used to kill Ukrainians, because the Russians turn off GPS trackers or bring the equipment to factories in parts and assemble it on site, breaking the access codes.



Russia is in critical need of Western technology, particularly machine tools and lathes, because “domestic” machine tool manufacturing is unable to provide the precision and quality required for the production of sophisticated weapons. Not to mention speed - the Russian military industry is only increasing its production rates.

To circumvent sanctions on the purchase of machine tools and microelectronics, Russia actively uses a network of fictitious leasing companies in jurisdictions that have not joined the sanctions. According to the current list of the US Department of the Treasury, Russia is being assisted by countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, India, Taiwan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The United States imposed additional sanctions on some of these jurisdictions in September 2025. The typical scheme works as follows: a machine tool is purchased ostensibly for lease to Russian companies and registered as something “peaceful” that does not require export control. Once the equipment crosses the border, it remains in Russia forever.

(*Militarnyi*)

ISRAEL MODIFIES F35I:

Israel has modified its F-35I fighter jets to have extended range capabilities through additional fuel tanks, “without compromising stealth,” Yechiel Leiter, Israel’s ambassador to the United States, claims in an interview with the Israel Hayom daily.

“We developed fuel tanks that extend the aircraft’s range without compromising stealth, and we added four missiles on the wings,” Leiter says.



An IAF Boeing 707 refueller flies alongside F-35 fighter Jets. (photo issued on June 18, 2025). (Israel Defense Forces)

It has been reported for several years that the Israeli Air Force has been developing range-extending fuel tanks for the F-35s, enabling strikes in distant locations such as Iran without the need for aerial refueling.

While extra fuel tanks can increase the range of the aircraft, they would likely negate its stealth qualities as they would significantly increase the jet’s radar signature, unless jettisoned before approaching enemy airspace.

Leiter’s mention of placing missiles on the wings of the F-35 is also not a new development, but rather known as “beast mode” configuration, whereby the stealth qualities of the fighter jet are forgone for extra firepower.

A year ago, the Israeli Air Force said that it had developed — alongside the F-35 manufacturer Lockheed Martin and the Pentagon’s F-35 program — a capability to carry missiles on the fighter jets’ wings, saying that its aircraft are the “only F-35 to conduct strikes with this design.” Images published by the IAF during the June 2025 war with Iran showed missiles attached to the wings of Israeli F-35I jets. *(Times of Israel)*

USAF – HOW MANY FIGHTERS?

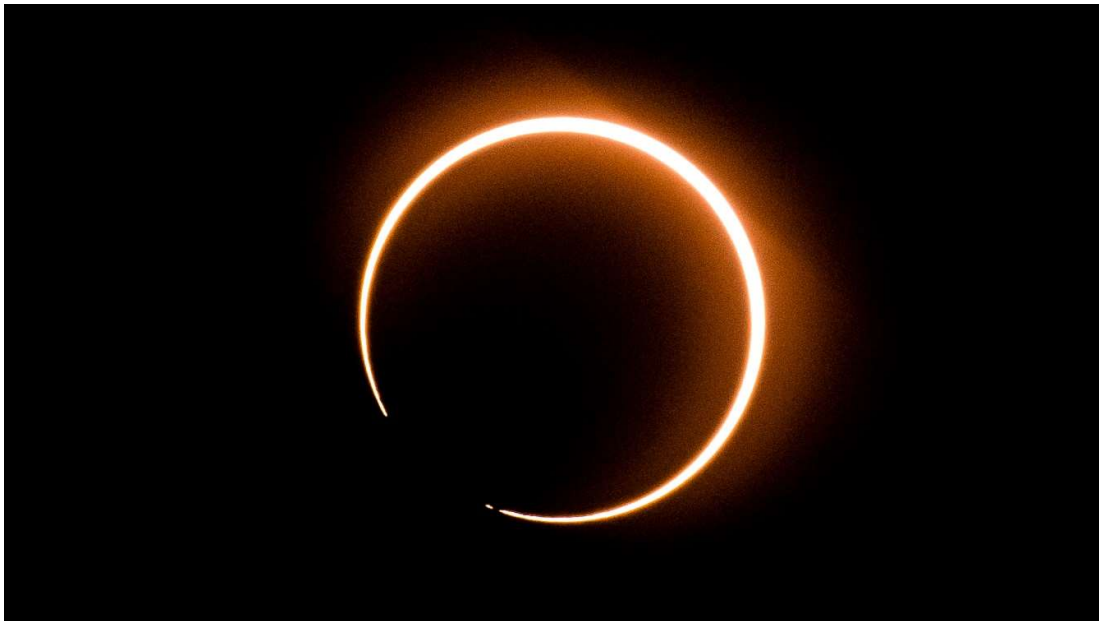


When people try to count how many fighter jets the United States Air Force operates, they often want to find a simple number, a single snapshot of American airpower. But that seemingly simple question opens the door to a deeper story about force structure, modernization, doctrine, and the evolving nature of combat aviation.

Fighter aircraft are among the most visible and expensive components of military capability, and their numbers serve as shorthand for readiness, deterrence, and global reach. Counting fighter jets reflects strategic priorities, congressional funding decisions, and the balance between legacy aircraft and cutting-edge stealth platforms. The United States fields the largest and most technologically diverse fighter fleet in the world, but the precise composition and the definition of a “fighter jet” for the USAF reveal how the Air Force organizes its combat power. At its core, the answer is this: in 2025, the active United States Air Force operates roughly 1,450 fighter and fighter-attack aircraft (*with statistics varying from as low as 1,295 in Statista to a maximum of 1,610 by WDMMA*) across five principal types — the F-15 family, F-16C and F-16D variants, F-22A, F-35A, and also the A-10 Thunderbolt II. These figures derive from consolidated inventory reporting, such as the USAF aircraft registry summarized in Air And Defense Forces Almanac, and defense industry fleet analyses, including Statista and the World Directory of Modern Military Aircraft (*WDMMA*).

SOLAR ECLIPSE IN ANTARTICA:

A magnificent annular solar eclipse just swept over Antarctica this week, putting on an impressive display of orbital mechanics as the moon passed in front of the sun at the perfect distance from Earth to create a fiery halo in a darkened sky - at least for the few souls lucky enough to be in a position to see it.



Feb. 17's annular solar eclipse occurred as the lunar disk slipped between the sun and Earth during its new moon phase. The alignment occurred as the moon travelled through a distant point in its elliptical orbit, making it appear smaller than usual in Earth's sky.

Today's eclipse got underway at 4:56 a.m. EST (0956 GMT), as the moon took an ever greater bite out of the solar disk, transforming its burning orb into a glowing crescent, before finally diving entirely within its fiery expanse. The moon — appearing fractionally smaller than usual — was unable to cover the entirety of the sun's disk, leaving a thin sliver of its outer edge visible to surround Earth's natural satellite to create a ring in the skies over Antarctica. (*Space.com*)

FARCE BEHIND EL PASO AIRSPACE SHUTDOWN:

Last week, the Texas city of El Paso experienced one of the greatest disruptions in service to its international airport since the attacks on September 11th, 2001. In stark contrast to the solemn days, the cause behind the most recent ground stop at El Paso International (ELP) is due to overreach and communication failures for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Two anonymous sources told the New York Times that the reasoning that the Department of War gave to the FAA and Department of Transportation (DOT) to shut down the airspace was a "total fabrication." It appears that the entire basis of the threat to shut down El Paso's airspace for 10 days was simply because Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) didn't want to take the time to use the proper channels to try out a new anti-drone laser.

At least one local official chalked up the entire series of events to what at least appears to be sheer incompetence. The events in El Paso also mark what is the first publicly known use of the Laser Oriented Counter UAS System (LOCUST) laser weapon system (LWS), according to CBS. The airspace notice was not made public knowledge to many of the local government offices in El Paso until after it took effect. This is despite the fact that the actual notice included the threat of military force to destroy any aircraft that violated the airspace.

It later came to light that while the border patrol claimed that they were working together with military personnel to intercept and destroy drones infiltrating American airspace by Mexican drug cartels, in reality, they simply popped some party balloons that had floated away. Still, the FAA has issued a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) for a 10-day period. The order was rescinded the next morning, but that didn't prevent the fallout for the community of EL Paso. (*Simple Flying*)

DR ANTHONY TURTON ON SA WATER CRISIS:



Dr Anthony Turton warned 18 years ago that South Africa is facing a water crisis, which can lead to public anger and social unrest. This is now playing out in real time.

In November 2008, Turton published a paper, "Three Strategic Water Quality Challenges that Decision-Makers Need to Know About and How the CSIR Should Respond." In this paper, he warned that South Africa was facing a critical water crisis characterized by a

growing ingenuity gap.

He argues that while demand for complex technological solutions was growing exponentially, the country's capacity to develop them was declining.

He explained that South Africa has already allocated approximately 98% of its national water resource and that it effectively has no more surplus water.

Because there is no surplus water available for dilution, all pollutants and effluent must be treated to much higher standards before discharge.

Unlike most global cities located on major rivers or coasts, South Africa's major economic hubs, such as Johannesburg and Pretoria, are situated on watershed divides. Because these cities are at the top of the watershed, their treated and untreated effluent flows downstream, degrading water quality.

Another problem was that South Africa was struggling with its national science, engineering, and technology (SET) capacity.

Turton warns that the country was flying blind because it was losing the experts needed to solve uniquely South African water problems.

He warned that if the government fails to deliver essential services, such as clean water, there is a high risk of social unrest.

He added that unresolved water constraints could lead to "anarchy and chaos" as social instability grows.

Turton urged the government to avert the water crisis before it happens. The alternative was to deal with the fallout, as was the case with load-shedding.

Instead of taking his threat seriously, his employer, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), suspended him.

The council executive of the CSIR charged the water scientist with insubordination and bringing the CSIR into disrepute. *(Newsday – full article at link below)*

[One man warned about South Africa's water crisis 18 years ago – and was suspended – Newsday](#)

ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR TOES CURLING...

Accusations of cheating. Swear words being hurled across the ice. Counter-claims of a sting operation with illicit filming. *(Ed: That's not cricket, Sir!)* Then changes to how games are officiated. Protests from teams. Another alteration to the protocols. It's been quite the few days in the Cortina Curling Stadium during a Winter Olympics that has delivered intrigue and excitement both on and off the field of play. The drama in the curling started last Friday. Canada's Marc Kennedy became involved in a heated verbal exchange with Swedish opponent Oskar Eriksson towards the end of his side's 8-6 win. The Swedes believed Kennedy was repeatedly double-touching some of his stones - releasing the handle at the appropriate time but then giving the stone another little prod with his finger to correct its course. Not allowed. But the cards were signed by both teams at the end, meaning the result would stand in a sport that is proudly self-governed by the players. World Curling later confirmed that "decisions made during a game are final" and that they do not use video replays "to re-umpire" decisions. The only sanction given was to Kennedy for swearing. Intriguingly, Eriksson had told his opponent during the row that "I'll show you the video after" and, sure enough, footage found its way into circulation post-match. Kennedy was bang to rights. But where had the video come from? The word from Canada was that it was pre-meditated. A set-up. That the Swedes had deployed someone to try to catch them out in a game that is founded in trust and respect. *(BBC)*

US TO GIVE REFUGE TO KORAN BURNER:

A man at the center of a free speech row in Britain may receive protection from the United States if his legal fight fails in the UK, according to a report by the Daily Mail.

Hamit Coskun, who burned a copy of the Quran outside the Turkish consulate in Knightsbridge, London, earlier this year, is waiting for a fresh court ruling after prosecutors challenged the overturning of his conviction.

Donald Trump is on the verge of escalating transatlantic tensions over free speech. State department officials are preparing to accept Hamit Coskun as a refugee from Britain if he loses a landmark blasphemy case this week.

Mr Coskun successfully overturned a conviction for a religiously aggravated public order offence after he burned the Koran outside the Turkish embassy in London.

However, the Crown Prosecution Service is now contesting that decision at a hearing in the High Court tomorrow. The case is one of several being watched closely by senior officials in the Trump administration, which has discussed granting refugee status to the 51-year-old, should he apply. Speaking to The Telegraph, Mr Coskun said that if he did lose his case, he may be forced “to flee” and seek protection in the US. “For me, as the victim of Islamic terrorism, I cannot remain silent,” he said. “I may be forced to flee the UK and move to the USA, where President Trump has stood for free speech and against Islamic extremism. If I have to do so, then, to me, the UK will have effectively fallen to Islamism and the speech codes that it wishes to impose on the non-Muslim world.” (*Ed: Give that man a double Bells*)

The intervention is the latest sign of Trump’s willingness to intervene in domestic British affairs amid a growing transatlantic rift over the protection of freedom of speech. Last year, The Telegraph revealed how the US president sent a secret free speech fact-finding squad to London. The case risks causing another diplomatic headache (or U-turn?) for Sir Keir Starmer as he fights for his political survival. (*Daily Mail and Telegraph*)

DEVASTATING DISMASTING:

It’s devastation as the race-winning South African Cape2Rio boat sank at sea on its return voyage back to Cape Town. Thankfully, all three sailors on board were saved with no injuries. A daring rescue 1 500-km off the coast of Rio de Janeiro by the MV Bryant was coordinated by maritime authorities.



Amazingly, last month, a team of young sailors from the Cape Flats claimed first place on handicap in the 2025 Cape2Rio race. The team, representing the Royal Cape Yacht Club (RCYC) Sailing Academy, was backed by AlexForbes. It was a historic 3 300-nautical mile transatlantic crossing that concluded on Tuesday 20 January 2026. However, the team’s joy was short-lived as the South African Cape2Rio boat sank at sea with three of the original crew on board. According to *Nova News*, the boat “Angel Wings” was abandoned in the early hours of the morning on Monday 3 February 2026.

The South African Cape2Rio boat sank after suffering a complete dismasting in deteriorating weather conditions of more than 25-knot winds and 5-metre-high waves. After consultation with motor vessel Bryant's master, the decision was made to abandon ship. The crew had lost all spars needed for a jury rig, which would have made sailing any further impossible. The race-winning South African Cape2Rio boat crew was led by Skipper Sibusiso Sizatu, First Mate Renaldo Mohale and Andrea Myburg. And it included three women, Philasande Gwala, Sesona Ntsaluba and Yonela Temela who'd never crossed the Atlantic before. All sailors hail from disadvantaged areas of Masiphumelele, Khayelitsha and Capricorn. Moreover, the South African Cape2Rio race-winning team faced great adversity during the crossing. Their boom broke in the mid-Atlantic on Saturday 10 January, forcing them to race without critical equipment. Despite the setback, they were the first to finish on handicap. MV Bryant that rescued the sailors is currently bound for Singapore. When it docks in early March, the South African Cape2Rio boat crew will fly back to Cape Town, no doubt to a hero's welcome at the Royal Cape Yacht Club. *(South African)*

THE WAY THINGS WERE...



SAAF Strike Aircraft line-up of the 1970's (Via Hanke Fourie)

CHEERS FOR NOW:

“SA Weapon manufacturers beg Ramaphosa for help as they lose millions... Manufacturers with existing contracts face penalties if they cannot obtain export permits in time to meet their obligations”

Kakistocracy: a government that is ruled by the least suitable, able, or experienced people in a state or country. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Well, another turbid week in SA political life - and ongoing electricity and water cuts... gangs ruling the streets... an ineffective and venal SANDF deployed in major cities... Stupidity and incompetence upon incompetence...Where does it end? As we gird our loins for the next grisly episode, let's turn to better things...

Our next lunch will be at Wanderers on Friday 6 March 3026, 12h30 for 13h00. Lunch will be followed immediately by our AGM, of which due notice has been separately circulated. Please come along and enjoy a good meal, fellowship and banter, and show your support for your Club by your attendance, listen to the reports on the year 2025, and help to elect the incoming Committee

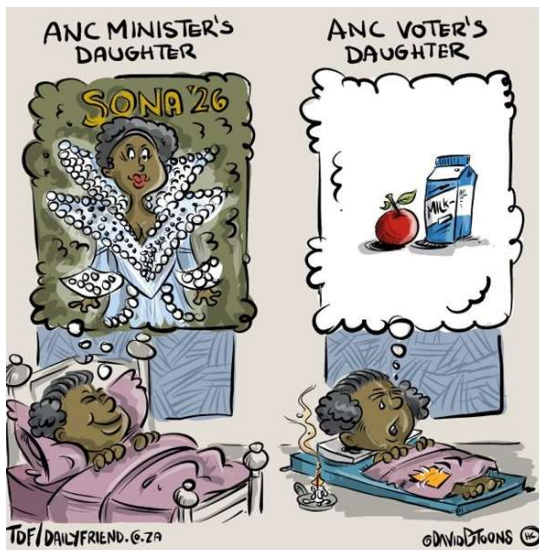
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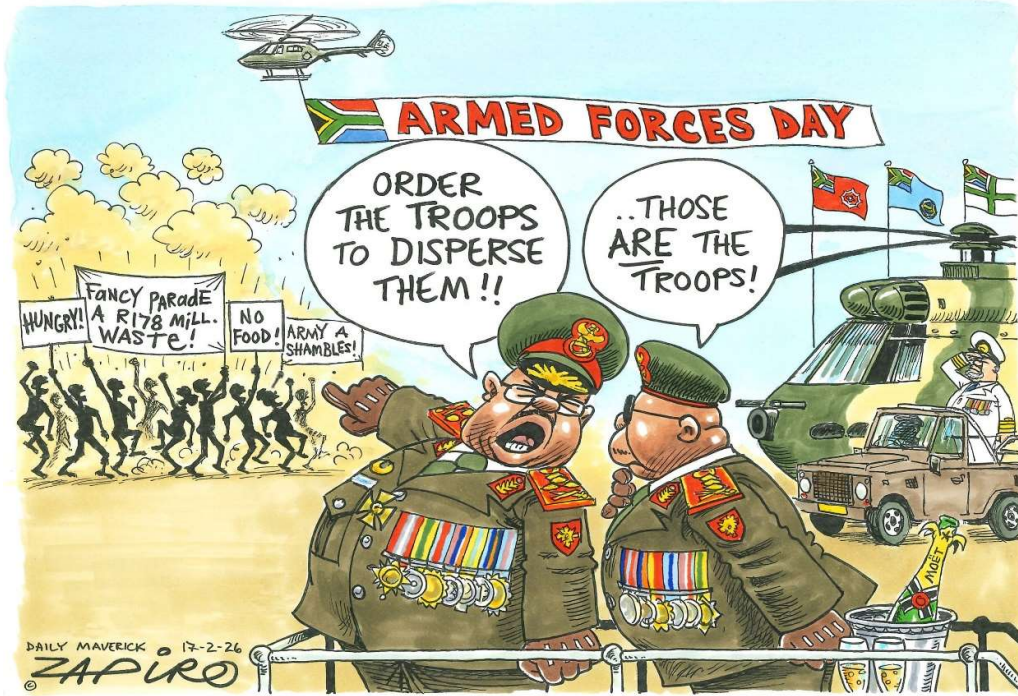
'Keir Starmer, you have two minutes on your specialist subject: u-turns'



'Obama says aliens are real. I hope people never find out that we went to Epstein's parties'



**SONA. Sona job sona
krag sona water sona
geld sona roads sona
blerry alles**



THE DEEP SEA CABLES:

The recent article on the GIUK referring to the cables on the seabed in that waterway, prompted some thoughts about the Cable and Wireless enterprise of a generation ago



CS Mercury... in port on the Sydney waterfront to lay the final 25 miles of the 1,200-mile Tasman submarine telephone cable from Auckland to Bondi Beach, 24 September 1975.

Cable laying ships played a key strategic role in laying vital lines of communication... During World War I, undersea cables were crucial for communication, and Britain cut German cables to disrupt their communications and gain intelligence, the Germans did the same to British cables where they could. In World War II, while radio became more dominant, both sides still targeted undersea cables to maintain strategic advantages and intercept enemy communications.

Built for Cable & Wireless specifically to lay the COMPAC and SEACOM cables with HMTS Monarch (4). This was the first cable laying vessel actually owned by Cable & Wireless or its predecessors. Flagship of the fleet and main cable layer until replaced by Cable Venture. From then on based in the UK for the maintenance of Atlantic cables. Fitted with three tanks with a capacity of 100,000 cubic feet or 1,100 nm of lightweight cable.

Three 10-foot diameter "V" bow sheaves were fitted initially, later replaced with two flat sheaves, and a stern chute was fitted to allow laying of repeaters. Seriously damaged after a fire in the engine room in 1996 while moored at Bristol. Scrapped in 1997.

When CS Mercury was commissioned in 1962, the Cable & Wireless house magazine, Zodiac, published the article below in October 1962

"As Zodiac went to press C.S. Mercury (8,000 tons gross), then the world's fastest and most modern cable-laying ship, was about to leave her berth in Cammell Laird and Co. (Shipbuilders and Engineers) Ltd.'s fitting-out basin at Birkenhead on her sea trials prior to handing over by the builders. After cable-laying trials, probably in the Bay of Biscay, she will load co-axial cable and repeaters at Greenwich, and then sail for Suva to lay the Suva/Hawaii section of the Commonwealth Pacific (COMPAC) cable.

Below is the article, specially written for Zodiac by Philip J. Beacall, the North of England writer and journalist, who visited the ship last month to watch the finishing touches being given to her by a thousand shipyard workers."

"Mercury Prepares to Make Cable Laying History, by Philip J. Beacall

Even the usually imperturbable English innkeeper could be forgiven for raising an eyebrow when the navigating officer placed an order for "ninety-five pints to be going on with." But after the fashion of his kind he coped manfully, assisted by his staff, although an accompanying order for sandwiches to go with the beer posed a problem when the bread supplies ran out halfway through the cutting operations.

It all happened on the coach journey bringing the Spanish crew of the new cable ship Mercury from Southampton to join the ship at Birkenhead where she has been built by Cammell Laird and Co. (Shipbuilders and Engineers) Ltd., and it provided yet one more example of the many and varied tasks which Cable and Wireless officers take in their stride. Navigating Officer John Neal accomplished the task of getting the crew safely to Merseyside in the Company's best tradition, and a more substantial meal and pleasant lodgings awaited them at Liverpool's famous Gordon Smith Institute for Seamen where they settled down happily until Mercury was ready.

The final weeks of a new ship's metamorphosis in the shipyard of its birth are always hectic and full of problems. Fitting out the Mercury proved no exception, and the layman, watching an army of nearly a thousand shipyard men putting the final touches before the acceptance trials, could be forgiven for doubting that order could ever come from such seeming chaos. But it does, and the tangled miles of electric cable, the hammerings, sawings and sparkle of acetylene burners are

eventually finished with and cleared away. This year shipyard men have had an additional handicap from notorious summer weather which has made such jobs as caulking decks a tricky business.

But, as the chief officer, Captain Robert Bowen Riddle, said during a particularly hectic Saturday morning at the shipyard: "These things have a handy knack of falling into place", and when Captain G. E. C. Reynolds, C.S. Mercury's Commander, takes over after the acceptance trials, he is assured of a well-found and happy ship, and the world's fastest and most modern cable layer as well.

Before that he and his senior officers will have tackled a score of daily problems in dealing with 1,600 cases of stores, 30 miles of grappling rope and buoy rope to be spliced, and thousands of items of working gear and spare gear. There will also be the freighter load of cable for the laying trials off the coast of Portugal or, if the weather is bad, in the Mediterranean, and the important human aspect of forming the new team of officers and men into a happy entity.

The 29-year-old purser, Robert Arthur Gray, has an important role to play, too. For him the most difficult time during the ship's preparation is the period immediately following her handing over when he must prepare the accommodation for the 135 officers and crew. First task of the purser's staff is the unpacking of the cases of stores which have been arriving at the shipyard during the immediate months before handing over. They include such items as a thousand pieces of linen, blankets, towels, etc., to make up the 135 berths, 5,000 pieces of glassware and crockery, 2,000 pieces of cutlery and silverware for cabin, saloon and messroom use, and, of course, every conceivable cooking utensil to stock the three modern galleys.

Gray was at Head Office a short time ago completing the order for stocking C.S. Mercury's pantries and deep freezes with two months' supplies of victuals and dry goods which included turkeys, mincemeat, dried fruits and similar commodities which will be a feature of the Christmas Day menus. If the ship's company get tired of rainbow trout, asparagus tips and other gourmet's delights, they will have pigs' trotters, tripe, baked beans and sardines to fall back on, for all these items are included in the bill of fare. Gray has also to ensure the Spanish crew of 74 have food to their taste, and 28 lb. of garlic will make certain their dishes do not lack flavouring!

Gray joined the Company in August, 1957, and was promoted purser the following May. He has served on C.S. Recorder, Retriever, Lady Denison Pender and Electra.

The initial order, which covers over 300 different items, includes more than 3 tons of meat, 224 lb. pigs' trotters, 100 lb. tripe, 1,000 lb. of ham and bacon, 1,400 lb. of poultry, including 200 lb. of duckling and 400 lb. of turkeys, 31 cases of tinned meats as well as several kinds of sausages, 3,000 lb. of fish, ranging from cod to rainbow trout and salmon, 30 cases of tinned fish, including shrimps, crab, lobster and salmon, 7,200 eggs, 4,000 lb. flour, 4 cwt. of rice, 3 tons of potatoes, 6 cwt. of onions, 36 cases of tinned fruits, 6 different kinds of cheese, 448 lb. of butter, 1 ton sugar, 350 lb. coffee, 300 lb. tea, 50 cases of tinned milk, 250 lb. biscuits, 440 lb. jam, marmalade, syrups, honey, etc., and nearly 1,000 bottles of sauces, pickles, salad cream, vinegar, and 5 lb. of bicarbonate of soda !

The extensive dry and refrigerated storerooms on the main deck include a large deep freeze cabinet which ensures a plentiful change of diet during Mercury's long periods at sea.

Small wonder then that after all this, and the taking on in London, of 1,200 miles of cable and fifty repeaters, the ship's company, is rarin' to go on a maiden voyage to the Pacific which will make cable laying history."