

FLYING SPIRIT

The Official National Newsletter of the SAAF Association



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Contact Us

The Editors
SAAFA NHQ
P.O. Box 21223
Valhalla
0137

Tel: 012 651 5921 or
012 351 2116
Fax: 086 218 4657
Email: nationalhq@icon.co.za
Website: www.saafo.co.za

NOTE

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Totsiens Lt Genl Gagiano! *Photos with thanks to Stefaan Bouwer*



Lt Genl Gagiano en Msimang na afloop van die parade inspeksie.

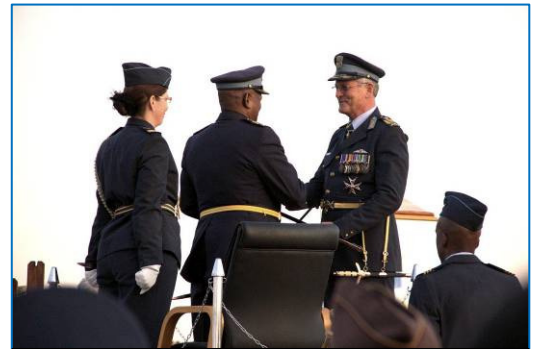
Op 28 September 2012, is daar op luisterryke wyse afskeid geneem van Lt Genl Carlo Gagiano tydens 'n afskeidsparede op Lugmag Basis Zwartkop. Genl Gagiano het aan Lt Genl Zakes Msimang oorhandig wat amptelik op 1 Oktober 2012 die leisels as Hoof van die Lugmag oorgeneem het.

Genl Gagiano het in sy toespraak die parade, vriende, familie en kennisse op 'n rit deur sy loopbaan geneem. Hy het die spesiale mense wat help vorm het aan sy lewe bedank en spesiale dank het aan sy vrou, Leonie, gegaan wat sy anker deur sy loopbaan was. Hy het ook spesifiek aan

die mense wat hom bygestaan het om sy taak te vergemaklik gedurende sy termyn as Hoof van die Lugmag, bedank.



Nadat hy vir die laaste keer die parade geïnspekeer het, is hy verras met verbyvlugte deur van die vliegtuie wat hy in sy loopbaan gevlieg het.



Oorhandiging van die swaard.

Na die oorhandiging van die swaard, wat simbolies is van die oorhandiging van die pos, het genooide gaste verversings in "Hanger 2" geniet tot laat die aand.

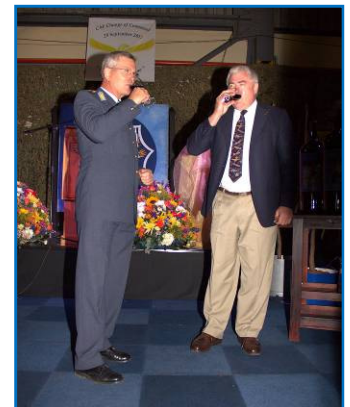
Genl Gagiano het nou amptelik afgetree en kan nou sy plek as nuut aangestelde beskermheer van die SALMV inneem.



voorspoed toe met 'n reuse taak wat voorlê.

Baie dankie Generaal vir wat u en Leonie vir die Vereniging gedoen en beteken het tydens u termyn as Hoof van die Lugmag. Mag ons julle nou baie meer gereeld te siene kry by ons funksies.

Baie geluk aan Genl Msimang en ons wens hom alle



Inauguration of the Viscount Memorial in the VTM Garden of Statues



A photo of the modest yet very impressive memorial erected for the victims of the shooting down at the Kariba Lake by SAM 7 missiles of the Viscount Hunyani on 3 September 1978 and the Viscount Umniati on 13 February 1979. The memorial was erected at a cost of ±R110 000,00 by the Project Committee (under Keith Nell, the author of *Viscount Down*), in cooperation with the Erfenisstigting and the Flame Lily Foundation (of ex Rhodesians). 107 Crew and passengers perished in the two incidents, only 8 persons survived.

The Project Committee collected the funds for the planning, erection and inauguration of the memorial. The architect was Johan Els (MEG Architects), and the quantity surveyor was Christo Ferreira (B&L Pta). Various contractors contributed to the erection of the memorial and the engraving of the granite

slabs. BAE Systems sponsored the manufacturing of the symbolic aircraft emblem.

Approximately 500 guests attended the inauguration ceremony. The memorial can be visited by members of the public in the VTM Garden of Statues.

Read Ola Grinaker's story in this issue where he mentions this tragedy. Ed

Armed Forces

A General is inspecting 3 armed forces personnel, 1 from each of the fighting forces.

He asks each one what they would do if they woke up and found a camel spider in their tent during a military operation?

The Naval Officer says, "I'd reach over, grab my boot and batter it to death!"

The Army Officer says, "I'd reach over, grab my bayonet and stab it to death!"

The Air Force Officer says, "I'd reach over, pick up my phone, call reception and ask..... "Who has put a tent up in my hotel room?"

Badges of Rank for Commissioned Officers by Graham du Toit

The badges of rank for Commissioned Officers, known in military terminology as the "pip" had an exceptionally strong Christian background. These badges of rank were worn by officers in the South African Air Force from its inception in 1920 until South Africa became a Republic on 31 May 1961.

The "pip" had a base in the form of a four-pointed star, symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem. Upon this star was mounted a Maltese Cross, symbolic of the Christian Crusaders who, based on the Island of Malta, undertook the Crusades to the Holy Land in their attempt to wrest the sacred soil and the Holy City of Jerusalem from the Turks.



Superimposed upon the Maltese Cross, is a wreath of olive leaves, the symbol of good over evil - victory of the Christian Faith over Idolatry.

In a circular band inside the wreath of olive leaves are the Latin words "TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO" which translated into English would read "THREE JOINED INTO ONE", in other words, The Holy Trinity. In the centre of the circular band are three Bishops Mitres, once again symbolising the Holy Trinity.

These officer rank "pips" were replaced by a five-pointed star having the South African Coat-of-Arms in the centre for junior officers and the Castle, representing the Castle of Good Hope, in Cape Town, also with the South African Coat-of-Arms in the centre, for senior officers and higher.

Two biscuits are out jogging when one gets flattened by a truck. The other one, shocked, says, "Crumbs!"

The Contact by Ola Grinaker (Shortened for publication purposes.)

LT OLA GRINAKER, 17 SQUADRON

I was a 25 year old Lieutenant in the South African Air Force (SAAF) based in Pretoria flying choppers at 17 Squadron. SAAF Headquarters (HQ) instructed me to take an Alouette III up to Messina to patrol the Border between South Africa and Rhodesia. On the 5th September 1978, my Flight Engineer, Sergeant Nick Lubbe, and I landed at Messina. HQ had also instructed me to fly to Beitbridge in Rhodesia to meet with the OC of 1 Independent Company (1 Indep Coy), Maj Don Price, and get a situation report (SITREP) from him. After the briefing, I was to fly back into South Africa and remain on the southern side of the Limpopo River. I was only allowed to go back to 1 Indep Coy if I needed trackers!

On the 26th August 1976, the then South African Prime Minister, announced the withdrawal of all the South African air crews and aircraft from Rhodesia. Don briefed me on all the gooks movements, protected villages, radio frequencies and we exchanged telephone numbers. We had a cup of tea and a good chat with all the blokes in their canteen before flying back to our hotel. We were about to put the chopper covers on when we got a call from 1 Indep Coy asking if I could do a casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). We got airborne and were at the ambush site within twenty minutes. With help from passing motorists, we pulled the driver and his wife out of the totally wrecked car down a steep embankment. We got them to the hospital alongside the runway at 1 Indep Coy. The injured motorists were, the following day, transferred to the Salisbury Hospital. Before we took off for Messina, we started discussing the terrible tragedy of the Rhodesian Airways Viscount that was shot down, two days before on the Sunday afternoon flight. The following day, still so angry about the Viscount horror, another two vehicles were ambushed on two separate occasions, severely injuring all of the civilian occupants. I was again called upon to CASEVAC the injured motorists from the scene of the ambush to the field hospital.



During the afternoon of the 7th September 1978, we were flying down the Limpopo River when I spotted tracks in the sandy river bed and recognized the tracks as the imprints of gooks. We flew across to 1 Indep Coy, where we uplifted four Rhodesian trackers and dropped them at the spoor. They informed me that at least 10 heavily armed gooks carrying heavy equipment (because of the depth of the spoor) had crossed into South Africa in the early hours of that morning. As we landed back at 1 Indep Coy, Sgt Maj Tyler ran up to me and asked if I could assist them again. Some of his troops were involved in a huge punch up (Rhodesian slang for contact) and they needed urgent support. I cut the motor and ran to the Ops room where I was told that four sticks were fighting approximately 60 gooks and that Don was airborne in a PRAW Cessna 206 trying to give overhead support to his men on the ground who were seriously outnumbered. I made a split second decision to go to these soldiers assistance; I had a chopper!!! There was no fire force anywhere near and time was of the essence. Nick refuelled and restarted the chopper whilst I checked on frequencies etc and within a matter of minutes I jumped back into the chopper. I did up my lap straps leaving the shoulder straps undone and hanging behind the back of my seat. We took off for the contact site to ferry in the four troops already on board.

After about 20 minutes I saw the Cessna with Don accompanied by Lt Neill Jackson, of 1 Indep Coy circling the contact area. Don talked me into a landing zone (LZ) where I dropped off the four troops. They linked up with the three troops who had been in the contact. I took off and asked Don to talk me into the position where the wounded troop and captured gook were waiting. Don talked me into the area but when I was unable to find any sign of them, he talked me back to the troops, where Cpl Pete De Barros

had volunteered to show me where they were waiting. I uplifted Pete and we set off once again. We flew for a minute or two looking out for the missing two. I suddenly saw a gook behind a tree. The chopper that I was flying was not a gunship as it had no fixed 20mm cannon. So when I saw a couple more gooks hiding behind some trees I told Pete in the back to open up on them with his FN 7.62mm rifle. I was about to turn to the left when all I saw were hundreds of red tracers coming straight at me. I banked sharply to the right and rolled out losing a lot of speed in the process, and while in this vulnerable position flew right over a second group of approximately 60 gooks who immediately opened up with everything at their disposal. Bullets dug and

whined into the chopper. It sounded like flying into a hail storm. I dived across the middle seat where I tried to lie as flat as possible and took cover behind the instrument panel. It was this action that saved my life. Nick doubled up over in his seat with five bullets in his body whilst unbeknown to me, Pete, sitting in the back, was hit by two rounds. I felt a stinging pain above my eyes and blood started to blind me; shrapnel had hit me in my arms, face and chest and it felt as though my teeth had been shot out. By this time the chopper was heading for the trees so I stirred the cyclic (stick), but the chopper kept going down in slow dive to the right. Suddenly the controls worked and we scraped over the trees missing them by inches. I managed to keep control of the chopper with the cyclic left and forward of the centre. The rudders also felt very stiff and had probably been hit by a bullet or two. Somehow I managed to fly out of the danger zone and very gently turned South.

I realized that the control rods inside the chopper airframe were hit, hence the strange position of the cyclic and that any sudden movement of the controls could cause one of the rods to fail which would result in the chopper to falling out of the sky! I wanted to fly to a safe position far enough from the contact site so that I could land and ascertain the serviceability of the chopper and to check if we could make it back to the hospital. I realized that if we landed and could not take off again, Nick would not survive. He was in urgent need of medical attention. My instrument panel had been shot away but I knew the area fairly well so without instruments or a fuel gauge I took a gamble and headed off in the direction of the hospital at the airfield. A ferocious wind was blowing into my face through the large gaps in the damaged Perspex and I could smell fuel in the swirling wind, which meant that the fuel tank had been hit and fuel was pouring out of the chopper. So with increasing trepidation, blood streaming down my face I continued to limp in the direction of Beitbridge.

As I flew ever so smoothly, I started to take stock of my injuries. I moved my tongue around my mouth and found all my teeth intact which is when I realized that I had not been shot through the mouth! What I believed to be loose teeth turned out to be large pieces of Perspex and shrapnel. The heavy bleeding was also shrapnel that had made deep gashes above my eyes. What a relief. Now I knew I would get Nick to the hospital if we did not run out of fuel. I was flying back slower than normal to reduce the strain on the damaged chopper and fuel usage. Every second I was anticipating the engine to fail and to have to put the chopper down in the trees. If that happened we would lose Nick for sure. I was hoping to fly over a road so I could follow it to Beitbridge. If the engine failed, I could put her down on the road and still get Nick to the hospital. But I never came across a road! At this stage Neill had seen me scampering home. Don tried to call me but got no reply. I tried to call Don on the radio to give him a SITREP, but was unable to make contact with him. I found out later that the cable to my head phone had been severed by a bullet right next to my neck. During the tense flight back, I asked Pete several times to check if Nick was still alive. Each time I enquired, Pete leaned over the backrest of the middle seat to feel Nick's pulse and then shouted to me; "He is alive, Sir." I still treasure those words to this day.

After what seemed an eternity, I could make out the airfield. I touched down very gently at 80 knots and had run 200 meters down the runway when the turbine engine cut due to lack of fuel. Then we rolled another 200 meters while I managed to keep the chopper straight with the stiff rudders and applied the brakes as I got alongside the field hospital entrance. We had made it back!! What relief!! With the blades still turning, I jumped out of the chopper and ran up the path to the hospital screaming for help. I ran back to the chopper and applied the rotor brake. When the blades stopped turning, Nick, who was still sprawled across the middle seat called out quite loudly, "YELLOW!" (Chopper pilots and their engineers always bet on the colour of the front blade when it stopped – blue, red or yellow). Yellow it was. It was his lucky day! No one had heard the chopper as it rolled silently down the runway without its engine running. My screaming for help surprised the doctor and staff who rushed out and ran up to the chopper with a stretcher for Nick. I lay down on the ground next to my holed chopper gazing up into the darkening sky and thanked my lucky stars for getting us back alive. I heard Pete shouting for help so I jumped up to find him lying on the back bench of the chopper. Only then did I realize that Pete was also seriously shot up, so I ran to the hospital and asked them to bring out another stretcher for him. He must have been in a lot of pain but with no regard to his situation, Pete had checked on Nick at least four times on the way back for me.

The following day the shot up chopper was loaded onto a truck at the airfield and covered with a very thick tarpaulin, with instructions that not one hole was to be left open. It could not be seen leaving Rhodesia with the SAAF emblem on the fuselage peppered with bullet holes. On my return to South Africa I went to see my chopper being repaired at ATLAS in Kempton Park. With help from the technicians we strung pieces of string between the entrance and exit holes of the bullets that had gone through the cockpit. It was clear that by not securing my shoulder straps before taking off (the only time in my entire flying career) the lack of shoulder straps saved my life! Had I been sitting upright instead of lying across the centre seat, five or six bullets would have hit me in the head and chest. We counted 52 entry holes and 37 other holes all over the chopper. Eight of the bullets that did not exit were in Nick (3 still in him) and Pete, with one under my seat, a few more were found inside the fuel tank and a couple in the instrument panel. A total of 89 holes in the chopper were plugged and lots of parts had to be replaced. Each Perspex glass windshield was replaced, etc. The list of parts is long. Alouette 629 was declared Cat 4(damage level). Cat 5 is a write off.



I had a pocket diary in my left overall pocket that stopped a sharp piece of shrapnel going into my heart. The piece went through the cover as well as the first 30 pages. My seat was also been hit from below, but I was saved by the armoured plate. Luckily I was flying the only chopper in the SAAF at that stage that was testing this safety device. The first chopper that was allocated to me was Alo 631 but when that would not start it was replaced by Alo 629 (that had the armoured plate) which I used during the operation.

On 19 October 1979 the Prime Minister, Mr P.W. Botha, presented me with the Honoris Crux Decoration at a spectacular parade in Voortrekkerhoogte for this deed of saving the lives of Nick and Pete.

Thank you for sharing your story with us Ola!

Did you know? - Antarctica is a desert.

The Longest Flight in History... In a Cessna-172 by Barry Meek

Last summer on a contract job, I flew an average of about five hours a day. There were stretches lasting several days when I'd be aloft for over ten hours, landing just once for fuel. If the weather was bad, there would be a break, or a short flight of two or three hours. Most pilots do what they do because they love the work. But after a few days of non-stop ten-hour flights, it gets a bit gruelling. The noise, heat, vibration, mental and physical fatigue can be really tough on the mind and body. If you think that's difficult, imagine spending over two months in a Cessna 172, flying twenty four hours a day, without even landing for fuel. That's exactly what two pilots did back in 1958 in the California and Nevada desert. Bob Timm and John Cook set a world endurance record, remaining airborne for just under 65 days. It was a publicity flight, sponsored by the Hacienda Hotel in Las Vegas. Timm worked at the Hacienda, and he had the passion for flying, along with a dream of setting a world record by staying airborne for longer than any other pilot in history. He convinced his boss to sponsor the flight, reasoning it would bring a lot of publicity to the hotel.



John Cook, Bob Timm, actor Preston Foster & Hacienda owner Doc Bayley



Refueling "Endurance" 172

A stock Cessna 172 was purchased, then modified for the flight. Although the Continental engine was basically untouched, two oil systems, filters, and a 95 gallon fuel tank were installed. The oil could be changed and the plane refuelled without shutting down the engine. Except for the pilot seat, the interior was gutted, then re-done to include a mattress and a sink. The right side door was collapsible, providing access to the exterior and enabling the co-pilot to operate a winch for bringing supplies aboard from below. Re-fuelling and re-supplying the airplane were the tricky parts. Twice daily, the plane was flown just above a speeding truck from which a hose was hoisted up to pump 95 gallons of avgas into the belly tank. Food, water and other supplies were lifted up from the truck as well.

After three unsuccessful attempts at the record, mechanical problems and difficulties between Bob and his co-pilot needed to be dealt with. A new pilot, John Cook, agreed to fly the next flight with Bob. That attempt was ultimately the record breaker. The two fellows got along well, and the 172 seemed to sense the harmony. No more serious breakdowns occurred for the more than 1,550 hours of continuous flying. On December 4, 1958, the pair departed McCarran Airport in Las Vegas in pursuit of their dream. Immediately after takeoff, they flew low over a speeding car while someone with a giant paint roller applied a special white paint to the tires of the plane. It would provide proof that the pilots didn't land at night in some far off airport for a rest or repairs.



Re-supplying from the T-bird

Two months is a long time to be away from family, friends, and the comforts we take for granted on the ground. There was an autopilot installed, but Bob and John needed to take turns flying and sleeping. Four hour shifts seemed to work well. They had a radio to talk to the mechanics at their base, a radio to speak with their families at home, and a monitor was set up in the Hacienda lobby as part of the publicity campaign. The two fell into a routine that worked well, and by the half-way mark of the flight, it was Christmas. The hotel kitchen staff was charged with the meals, and on December 25, John hoisted a turkey dinner up from the fuel truck.



Pilot Bob Timm

Boredom and fatigue were the biggest problems. One night, both men were asleep for a period of time lasting over two hours. The plane, on autopilot, had continued south until it was almost in Mexican airspace before Timm woke up and realized they were way off course. On about day 40, their heater failed. Even in the desert, winter nights can be cold. The men wrapped themselves in blankets for a few days, until something could be rigged and lifted up to fix the problem. As the end of the flight neared, Bob and John began to check each other's work fearing a human error would cause them to fail in their quest for a world endurance record. Each procedure, every item, every decision was carefully planned and discussed. The previous record was 50 days. As that day passed, they decided to extend their flight as long as possible, finally touching down over two weeks later. By then, the engine had started to carbon up and lost so much power that climbing out with full fuel was dangerous. The list of 'snags' included the generator, heater, tachometer, fuel

gauge, winch and electric fuel pump. It was a tremendous achievement for both man and machine. Sixty four days and twenty two hours in the air. Bob Timm died unexpectedly in 1978. John Cook passed away in 1995. The Cessna 172 was sold to a Canadian pilot, but was eventually brought back to Nevada, where it now hangs from the ceiling at McCarran International Airport. The entire story of this flight, and the record which stands to this day, is available to read at the Howard W. Cannon Aviation Museum at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas.

Did you know? - A marine catfish can taste with any part of its body.

Wat Kinders geleer het: submitted by Tom Borrill

- Wanneer jou Ma kwaad is vir jou Pa, moenie dat sy jou hare kam nie.
- As jou suster jou slaan, moenie terug slaan nie, hulle vang altyd die tweede persoon.
- Jy kan nie honde vertrou om jou kos op te pas nie.
- Moenie nies terwyl iemand jou hare sny nie.
- Jy kan nie 'n stukkie blomkool in jou glas melk wegsteek nie.
- Die beste plek wanneer jy hartseer is, is op Ouma of Oupa se skoot.
- Maak nie saak hoe jy die koeldrank meet nie, maar jou broer het altyd meer koeldrank as jy.
- As daar lekker nagereg is moenie laaste by die bak uitkom nie.
- Lekkergoed is geneig om jou eetlus weg te neem en jou boude te laat brand.
- Honde en katte hou ook nie van ertjies nie.

Ministers throw support behind SAAF Museum by Janet Szabo and published with authority from the SABC



General Earp, Minister Sexwale and Minister Martins at the flying day.
(Janet Szabo)

The South African Air Force (SAAF) Museum's August flying day attracted not only the regular aviation enthusiasts, but also two South African ministers, a senior government figure from Swaziland and a former chief of the SAAF.

The Museum's Officer Commanding, Lieutenant Colonel Mike O'Connor, said this was the first time he had hosted so many high-level dignitaries at a flying day.

Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale, who is also the Honorary Colonel of the Museum, Transport Minister Ben Martins and Swaziland's Prime Minister Barnabas Lamina watched as classic aircraft such as the Harvards, the Vampire and a Puma helicopter were put through their paces.

But the visit was also about benefiting the Museum and improving its facilities, infrastructure and security. Colonel O'Connor said together with the Transport Minister, they were investigating improving the road access and opening up an entrance on the northern side of the base. This would then give the Museum a separate entrance and security would be controlled by its own staff.

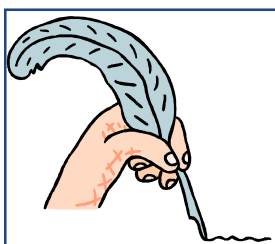
General Earp said the country had produced one of the finest air forces in the world. Swartkops Air Force Base currently is home to several operational squadrons and tight security is controlled by the base commander, which makes it a challenge to relax security to accommodate the public on flying days.

In a day full of surprises, local businessman and owner of the beautifully restored North American P-51 Mustang Menno Parsons took the former SAAF Chief Lieutenant General Denis Earp for a spin. After a fiery start and fly-pasts for the benefit of the spectators, a visibly elated General Earp reminisced about the aircraft he first flew in 1951 during the Korean War. He said this was the first plane he flew in combat in Korea and that pilots who had flown the Mustang all agreed that it was the best in the world.

The Museum also has a Mustang which has not flown since 2001 when it landed with its wheels up. General Earp, who serves on the Museum board, said the ambition is to get it flying again, but this will take time and cost tens of thousands of dollars. Funds are being collected to restore not only the Mustang, but also the iconic Supermarine Spitfire to flying condition.

Commenting on the wider significance of keeping the Museum's vintage aircraft in flying condition, General Earp said this was part of the heritage of the whole of South Africa. He said the country had produced one of the finest air forces in the world and that going forward the future of the country was related to aviation. The museum, through its work especially with regard to introducing the youth to aviation and the Air Force, is an invaluable asset.

Our Readers say.....



Central Flying School

Please help. For some time I have been collecting memories of the CFS for publication. I have had help from many ex SAAF pilots of all ranks; Stories of pupes course, instructing, days on the base and anything that brings back the story of the flying school.

I know there is still plenty out there and would ask you to publish this last request for stories to be sent to me or at least contact me to make arrangements to get the stories down. I don't want to publish and be deluged with letters telling me "if only you had contacted me etc".

Andrew Embleton: andemb@hermanus.co.za

The Great Escape

The Great Escape seems to have been in the news a lot lately here in UK, on TV and in newspapers. I recently saw the K. Wilson TV film about South African Bushell and a TV film about the Tom, Dick & Harry tunnels. I'm also in touch with the daughter of Canadian ex RCAF Don Edy who wrote "Goon in the Block" about his time in Stalag Luft 111-the POW camp where the tunnels were built. About a month ago there was an obituary of Alex Cassie, a man in the camp who made the forged documents for the escapees.

My stepfather was at school in Sydney [Australia] with one of the escapees who was shot, John Williams RAAF. My distant cousin, RV "Rusty" Kierath RAAF, was another recaptured and shot. The Polish man with him was a family friend of a Polish contact of mine.

My RAAF x 31 SAAF father [TR Millar -still missing in action] was at school in Sydney with Paul Brickhill who wrote The Great Escape, The Dambusters and Reach for the Sky books, among others.

Anne Storm: storm04@globalnet.co.uk

Did you know?- Kleenex tissues were originally used as filters in gas masks

8 Squadron "Usque Ad Mortem" (Until Death) by Graham du Toit



Formed in February 1942 using Hawker Furies of 43 Squadron and disbanded in August of the same year, this Squadron never became operational and was one of the shortest-lived SAAF units of World War II.

The Squadron was reinstated on 1 January 1951 as the Citizen Force element of 24 Squadron, based at Bloemspruit flying Harvards. All members, including the Commanding Officer, were Citizen Force members, with the exception of Testing and Assessing Officers. In 1957 the Squadron was split into Permanent (PF) and



Citizen Force elements, with the PF instructors presenting the Harvard Weapons Course. Until 1970 all Harvard Weapons Courses in the SAAF were carried out by 8 Squadron. In 1973 the unit became the fourth SAAF Squadron to convert to the Impala Mk I and in November 1974 the Squadron became the first in the SAAF to be equipped with the Impala Mk II. The

Squadron ended its long association with Bloemfontein when they relocated to AFB Hoedspruit from 1 April 1999. The Squadron was officially disbanded on 31 March 2001.

Trots Suid Afrikaans

In 'n onlangse studie deur Wits is bevind die gemiddelde Suid-Afrikaner stap omtrent 1200km per jaar.

Intussen is in 'n studie deur die KWV bevind Suid-Afrikaners drink gemiddeld sowat 50 liter alkohol per jaar.

Dit beteken Suid-Afrikaners kry gemiddeld sowat 24km op 'n liter..!

Dit maak mens mos TROTS *Suid-Afrikaans* !!!

The Loss of PUMA 164 by Neill Jackson (Article shortened)

In September 1979, Rhodesian Combined Operations HQ issued the orders for a massive air and ground strike against Frelimo and ZANLA positions in the Gaza Province of Mozambique. This action was given the codename of Operation Uric, known as Operation Bootlace in South Africa, in an attempt to conceal the involvement of Rhodesia's only ally in the cross-border strike.

Friendly forces committed to Op Uric comprised troops from all three squadrons of the Rhodesian SAS, operators from South Africa's 1 Recce Commando, commandos from the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) Support Commando and 1 Commando, and demolition experts from 1 Engineer Squadron. In total, 388 frontline soldiers.

The air effort consisted of Hawker Hunter ground attack jets, Canberra bombers, Dakotas from the Rhodesian Air Force and the SAAF, Cessna 337 Lynx ground-attack aircraft, a mix of helicopters from both forces; Bell 'Cheetah', Puma, Alouette 111 as well as Super Frelons. In addition, SAAF Mirage and Buccaneer strike jets were on standby at nearby Hoedspruit Air Force Base in case of interference from Tanzanian Air Force MIGs. Reserve forces comprised a battalion of South African paratroopers with Puma helicopter transport at an SADF base close to the Mozambique border.



Puma 164

Enemy forces in the Gaza Province were estimated to be 3 500 strong, with the heaviest concentrations at Mapai, Malvernian and Mabelane. The enemy bases were heavily defended, being equipped with anti-aircraft and heavy weapons including SAM 7 and SAM 3 anti-aircraft missile systems. Mapai, the area where Puma 164 will eventually go down, contained the 2nd Brigade HQ with an Infantry battalion, one tank regiment and a 76mm recoilless rifle battalion. This target was scheduled for a combined ground and air attack on 6th September 1979.

In the early hours of Saturday morning, 1st September 1979, 13 SA 330 Puma and 2 Super Frelon helicopters took off from AFB

Swartkops near Pretoria, and routed via AFB Pietersburg, where the crews were briefed on the upcoming operation in Gaza Province.

The Puma crews were in action shortly after arriving at the forward base, tasked with ferrying troops and supplies. Hostile small arms and RPG-7 fire were a serious problem from the onset of the operation, and after the week involved on Operation Uric, only two of the thirteen Pumas returned to South Africa without damage from enemy fire.

On 6 September, Puma 164, crewed by Pilot Paul Velleman, Co-Pilot Nigel Osborne and Flight Engineer Dick Retief joined the Rhodesian Bell formation at the rear. Fourteen troops, 9 from RLI and 5 from the Rhodesian Engineering Squadron, were packed into the rear.

Approximately 5 kilometres from the target area, the low-flying helicopter armada overflew a small base, which had been abandoned by most of the defenders earlier that morning. One lone Frelimo soldier, armed with an RPG-7 rocket launcher, had remained at his post to confront the enemy. As the helicopters thundered at high speed over a low rise towards him, he took aim and fired his rocket towards the massed aircraft, just as they drew level with his position. His rocket struck Puma 164 on the right side, immediately behind the pilot's seat. She rolled to the right and plunged into the ground, exploding in a huge ball of flame.



Puma 164 Crew Grave site

One of the Bell pilots immediately dropped his troops to search for survivors while the rest of the helicopters were ordered to continue on to Mapai. The RLI troops, led by Lieutenant Gavin Wehlburg, advanced cautiously towards the crash site, but met with no opposition, and saw no locals. The whole area was eerily deserted, and strangely silent. The Puma was found in a sparse tree line at the edge of a grassy clearing. There were no survivors. The helicopter was totally destroyed, with only the engines remaining relatively intact. Plans for recovery were thwarted by the intensity of the ongoing battle at Mapai, and the reluctance of the Operation Commanders to risk any further losses.

With the withdrawal of Frelimo and ZANLA troops from the Mapai area, the local headmen decided to bury the bodies of the fallen men where they lay, and placed them in two large graves, next to each other. These graves remained unmarked and unkempt for thirty years, their whereabouts unknown to all but the local population.

On Saturday 11 April 2009, a small search party led by former RLI Lieutenant Rick van Malsen discovered the crash site of Puma 164, and the graves of the seventeen brave men who died there.

These men were finally laid to rest by their comrades-in-arms, with a short service, and the placing of a memorial cross on the larger of the two graves. The Roll of Honour of the fallen men was read out, whilst the haunting sounds of The Last Post rang out over the silent African bush.

SAAFA needs your help!



If you feel that you would like to donate a little more, please make a direct deposit to our account:

SAAFA NEC

ABSA

Account number: 1660167699

Reference: Donation and your name and surname

We also request that you forward this pledge to all your friends and family and not to keep it within the SAAFA "family" only.

Your contribution can make a world of difference!

Carrier Landing submitted by Arrie de Klerk



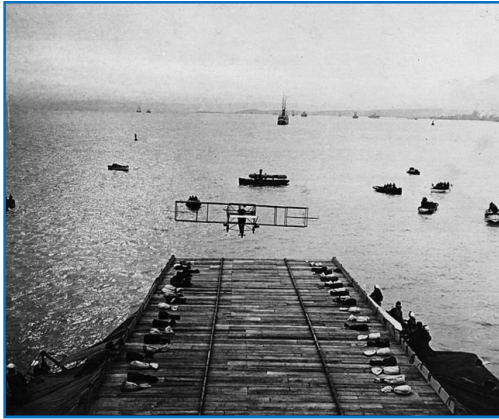
It was 100 Years Ago, January, in San Francisco, when Eugene Ely invented naval aviation. One hundred years is a very long time. Yet in the hierarchy of modern marvels, the ability to recover and launch aircraft from the deck of a moving ship stands out as one of our signature accomplishments. Which just goes to show you: Some tricks never grow old.

Naval aviation was invented one hundred years ago, on January 18, 1911, when a 24 year-old barnstormer pilot named Eugene B. Ely completed the world's first successful landing on a ship. It happened in San Francisco Bay, aboard the cruiser USS Pennsylvania, which had a temporary 133-foot wooden landing strip built above her afterdeck and gun turret as part of the experiment. Ely accomplished his

feat just eight years after the Wright Brothers made their first flight at Kitty Hawk.

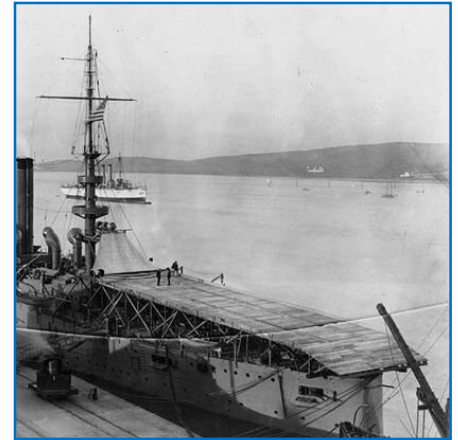
His aircraft was rudimentary: a Curtiss Model D "Pusher" biplane, equipped with a 60 hp V-8 engine that gave the aircraft a 50 mph airspeed. To get a sense of how simple it was, behold a contemporary replica of Ely's 1911 Curtiss Pusher that was built to celebrate this 100th anniversary: But back then, innovation was afoot. Ely's Curtis Pusher had been fitted with a clever new invention called a tail hook. The idea was to quickly halt the aircraft after landing by using the tail hook to catch one or two of 22 rope lines -- Each propped up a foot above the deck and weighted by 50-pound sandbags tied to each end -- Strung three feet apart along the Pennsylvania's temporary flight deck.





Mark J. Denger of the California Center for Military History has written a tidy biography of Eugene Ely which narrates the historic day: *On the morning of January 18, 1911, Eugene Ely, in a Curtiss pusher biplane specially equipped with arresting hooks on its axle, took off from Selfridge Field (Tanforan Racetrack, in San Bruno, Calif.) and headed for the San Francisco Bay. After about 10 minutes flying North toward Goat Island (now Yerba Buena), Eugene spotted his target through the gray haze from the PENNSYLVANIA.*

Ely's plane was first sighted one-half mile from the PENNSYLVANIA's bridge at an altitude of 1,500 feet, cruising at a speed of approximately 60 mph. Now ten miles out from Tanforan, he circled the several vessels of the Pacific Fleet at anchor



in San Francisco Bay. The aeroplane dipped to 400 feet as it passed directly over the MARYLAND and, still dropping, flew over the WEST VIRGINIA's bow at a height of only 100 feet. With a crosswind of almost 15 knots, he flew past the cruiser and then banked some 500 yards from the PENNSYLVANIA's starboard quarter to set up his landing approach. Ely now headed straight for the ship, cutting his engine when he was only 75 feet from the fantail, and allowed the wind to glide the aircraft onto the landing deck. At a speed of 40 mph Ely landed on the centre line of the PENNSYLVANIA's deck at 11:01 a.m. The forward momentum of his plane was quickly retarded by the ropes stretched between the large movable of sand that had been placed along the entire length of the runway. As the plane landed, the hooks on the undercarriage caught the ropes exactly as planned, which brought the plane to a complete stop.



Once on board the PENNSYLVANIA, sheer pandemonium broke loose as Ely was greeted with a bombardment of cheers, boat horns and whistles, both aboard the PENNSYLVANIA and from the surrounding vessels. Ely was immediately greeted by his wife, Mabel, who greeted him with an enthusiastic "I knew you could do it," and then by Captain Pond, Commanding Officer of the PENNSYLVANIA. Then it was time for interviews and a few photographs for the reporters. Everything had gone exactly as planned. Pond called it "the most important landing of a bird since the dove flew back to Noah's ark." Pond would later report, "Nothing damaged, and not a bolt or brace startled, and Ely the coolest man on board." (NOTE: Safety first! Check out Ely's inner-tube life preserver!)

After completing several interviews, Ely was escorted to the Captain's cabin where he and his wife were the honoured guests at an officer's lunch. While they dined, the landing platform was cleared and the plane turned around in preparation for takeoff. Then the Elys, Pond and the others posed for photographs. 57 minutes later, he made a perfect take-off from the platform, returning to Selfridge Field at the Tanforan racetrack where another tremendous ovation awaited him.



Both the landing and take off were witnessed by several distinguished members of both U.S. Army and Navy, as well as state military officials. Ely had successfully demonstrated the possibility of the aircraft carrier. Indeed. The US Navy's first aircraft carrier, the USS Langley, was commissioned in 1922, eleven years later. But Ely didn't live to witness the milestone; he died just a few months after his historic flight, on October 11, 1911, when he was thrown from his aircraft during a crash at an air show. But 100 years ago, he merged the power of naval warships and aviation in ways that remain cutting-edge, even today.

"Betting on horses is a funny old game," says a man to his friend. "You win one day and lose the next." The friend replies, "So why not bet every other day?"

Nothing to do over the weekend in Pretoria?



Kevin Viljoen, a Pretoria Branch member, launched the Murrayfield Market on 1 September, however with “limited success!!” Following an “appreciation of the “limited success”, he determined that visual marketing was lacking. This has now been improved, but will be upgraded again in the very near future. Earlier he also mentioned that over the next month or so he is going to need all the help good friends can offer! He re-launched the Market on Saturday 6 October, again with “limited success”. In order to improve his success factor, he would appreciate it if you could forward this mail to as many of your friends as possible and then for them to forward it again. Hopefully that way the message will be transmitted and hopefully leading to the success of the market. Information on the market is available on; www.murrayfieldmarket.co.za or Cell: 082 588 6506. Without

accessing the web, the intention of the market is to get a “blend” of the Boeremark, with fresh produce & specific foods, the Hazel Food Market, with slightly more exotic foods and the arts & crafts of the Irene Market. In other words, he intends to offer Arts, Crafts, Food, Fresh Produce & Home Industries. Depending on the success, he would like to introduce antiques and military memorabilia every alternative fortnight.

The venue is ideally situated about 700 metres from the hustle and bustle of Lynnwood Road and the “The Grove Mall”, but offers the tranquillity of rural living. The property comprises an extremely large piece of land, which is intended to be utilised for safe free parking. Adjacent to this is a smaller plot with avenues of macadamia nut trees under which the vendors will ply their trades and the customers will be able to relax and enjoy the cuisine at various tables and chairs under the shade of supplied umbrellas. With the early rains received, the grass ground cover is good and the macadamia and other trees offer a lovely venue to firstly shop & then chill out and enjoy your food & own “frosties” or a glass of wine, as it is private property!

The market will be open again on Saturday 13 October and then operating every Saturday thereafter from 09h00 to 14h00. The market will be situated off Farm Road (Plot 22), near The Grove Mall, on Lynnwood Road. GPS Co-ordinates; S25° 45' 49" E28° 19' 39".

Interested vendors and produce suppliers to please contact Kevin at the following e-mail address: fksviljoen@gmail.com or via the web site; www.murrayfieldmarket.co.za, where GPS co-ordinates, contact details, costs, terms and conditions can be found, or cell: 082 588 6506. For interested Vendors, please pass on the word that he will **NOT** charge for stands until the Market is established!

*A couple of fleas are taking a trip to the far side of the house.
One says to the other, “Should we hop or take the cat?”*

Heroes Remembered as published by Ian Uys

MAJOR RICHARD CAMPBELL MCNEILLIE LEWER - 8 SQUADRON

Dick Lewer flew Mustangs in Korea and was awarded the American DFC and the US Air Medal. He returned to SA to qualify as a surveyor and lived in Bloemfontein. He became a Citizen Force pilot attached to a Permanent Force unit, flying Impalas.

On the eve of Operation Protea, Lewer flew his Impala MK II from Ondangwa at night in support of a company pinned down by a large force of SWAPO. Captain Leslie Rudman and his company of Bushmen from 31 Battalion were occupying a defensive position. A group of SWAPO terrorists walked into the position and in the ensuing fight one terrorist was killed. The company redeployed and, since they were being watched by the enemy, walked into an ambush laid by a heavily-armed SWAPO/FAPLA force. It resulted in three serious casualties in Capt Rudman's company.

Because of the nature of the terrain a counter-attack could not be carried out. The immediate task was to recover the wounded and to break out of the enemy encirclement, which put the company in a dangerous position. Rudman asked urgently for air support.

At that time Major Lewer was flying another mission in an Impala Mk II. He was ordered to go to the position of the company in trouble and to try to frighten off the enemy by diving and making a noise. At that time the SAAF had no close-range air support

By direction of the President of the United States of America,
Second Lieutenant RICHARD CAMPBELL MACNEILLIE LEWER, South
African Air Force, has been awarded the Distinguished Flying
Cross.

CITATION

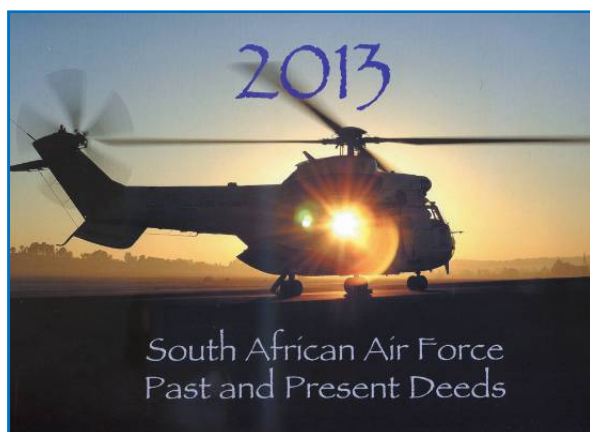
Second Lieutenant RICHARD C. W. LEWER distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as a Pilot, 2nd South African Air Force, Fifth United States Air Force, on 12 September 1962. As leader of an eight-ship flight of F-51 type aircraft, Lieutenant LEWER was pre-briefed to attack supply shelters in the Sinmak area. Despite adverse weather conditions, Lieutenant LEWER displayed faultless leadership and navigational skill in locating and positively identifying the target through the only break in the area. Lieutenant LEWER then attacked, scoring direct hits with both his bombs resulting in two shelters being damaged. Through his keen professional ability and exemplary devotion to duty, Lieutenant LEWER reflected great credit upon himself, the Far East Air Forces, and the South African Air Force.

in darkness, and, to make matters worse, it was a moonless night. The noise-making was ineffective and the company was still in a dangerous situation. Lower requested authority to continue attacking the enemy at his own risk, as there were no laid-down procedures for such night attacks. After permission had been granted Lower attacked the enemy with rocket and machine-gun fire. The enemy positions were indicated by flares sent up by the Forward Air Controller. The intense darkness, after the flare had burnt out, made things dangerous for Lower, as he might well have become disorientated and flown into the ground, since he was attacking at low level. With little regard to his own safety he continued attacking until his ammunition was spent.

The sustained attack by Lower saved a whole company from further casualties and enabled them to bring their wounded to safety. He had not been able to see the ground in the dark and had been entirely dependent on his altimeter as he dived at dangerously low altitudes to cover the target area with rocket and cannon fire. His attack on SWAPO was totally successful and allowed his forces to withdraw.

Lower was awarded the *Honoris Crux Silver*, the first jet fighter pilot to win the award on the border.

SAAFA Calendar 2013



SAAFA Pretoria Branch launched a Calendar 2013 project to raise funds for SAAFA. They sell at R100 a piece.

These calendars, of which a few photos are placed herewith, can be ordered from this office via email or fax. Contact the National Secretary on email: nationalhq@icon.co.za or send a fax to 086 218 4657 with your postal address and a contact telephone number.

A fixed postage fee of R30 per calendar must be added to the R100.

Payment to be deposited into our account and proof of payment must accompany the order. Our banking details are as follows: SAAFA NEC, ABSA, Account Number: 1660167699, Reference: Your name and surname.



Did you know? Oak trees are struck by lightning more than any other tree.

East Rand Branch Spit Braai

Hereby all are notified of the ERB's intention to prepare a little, large or enormous (as response dictates):

LAMB OR SHEEP

placed on a spit and subjected to extended exposure to a gas fire in a specially manufactured device of 18/8 stainless steel for the purpose of rendering said LAMB/SHEEP medium to well done for consumption by various lusty Members of the ERB and other organisations of similar lien. All are entreated to appear at Springs Airfield, Hangar 27 North Side on Saturday 27th October of this year (2012), dressed in appropriately styled leisure garb. Official time of gathering will be 14:00 local time. Arrivals as early as 11:00 will be permitted for those Members desirous of warm companionship, general natter/chatter or any acceptable form of ribaldry as permitted by SAAFA social norms. Aircraft flips may be on offer to aviation enthusiasts of

steadfast demeanor. Bring only own eating tools, camping chairs, drinking products and receptacles. Meat, salads and bread rolls will be provided.

The cost per person is R130.

Advise Chris Boshoff: Cell: 0744192464 or via email: chris.legair@cellc.blackberry.com or Dave: Cell: 0837002572 or via email: dtaylor@global.co.za of the number of persons attending.

A man says to his wife, "Just what have you been doing with all the grocery money I give you?" She replies, "Try turning sideways and look in the mirror!"

WICOE : Women In Charge Of Everything submitted by Arrie de Klerk

Is proud to announce the opening of its EVENING CLASSES FOR MEN! OPEN TO MEN ONLY

Note: due to the complexity and level of difficulty, each course will accept a maximum of eight participants.

The course covers two days, and topics covered in this course include:

- DAY ONE
 - HOW TO FILL ICE CUBE TRAYS : Step by step guide with slide presentation
 - TOILET ROLLS- DO THEY GROW ON THE HOLDERS? : Roundtable discussion
 - DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LAUNDRY BASKET & FLOOR: Practising with hamper (Pictures and graphics)
 - DISHES & SILVERWARE; DO THEY LEVITATE/FLY TO KITCHEN SINK OR DISHWASHER BY THEMSELVES? : Debate among a panel of experts.
 - REMOTE CONTROL: Losing the remote control - Help line and support groups
 - LEARNING HOW TO FIND THINGS: Starting with looking in the right place instead of turning the house upside down while screaming: Open forum
- DAY TWO
 - EMPTY MILK CARTONS; DO THEY BELONG IN THE FRIDGE OR THE BIN? : Group discussion and role play
 - HEALTH WATCH; BRINGING HER FLOWERS IS NOT HARMFUL TO YOUR HEALTH: PowerPoint presentation
 - REAL MEN ASK FOR DIRECTIONS WHEN LOST : Real life testimonial from the one man who did
 - IS IT GENETICALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO SIT QUIETLY AS SHE PARALLEL PARKS? : Driving simulation
 - LIVING WITH ADULTS; BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR PARTNER : Online class and role playing
 - HOW TO BE THE IDEAL SHOPPING COMPANION : Relaxation exercises, meditation and breathing techniques
 - REMEMBERING IMPORTANT DATES & CALLING WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO BE LATE : Bring your calendar or PDA to class
 - GETTING OVER IT; LEARNING HOW TO LIVE WITH BEING WRONG ALL THE TIME : Individual counsellors available

Fill up please!

Taken during a visit to Port Elizabeth Branch a few years ago.



Wonder if this will soon be our mode of transport!

Till next time folks! Ed

