

SAAF ASSOCIATION



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EAST RAND BRANCH

=MAX THRUST=

EAST RAND BRANCH NEWS LETTER SEPTEMBER 2019

Planning is still under way for the celebration next year of the SAAF 100th and SAAFA 75th anniversaries.

There will be a cocktail party on 26th February at the Melrose Country Club, as a start. Special functions will be set up by the various branches starting in January with a sort of finale at the 2010 Congress Banquette. This Congress will be hosted by the Pretoria Branch.

The East Rand Branch has an additional four new Members! Hopefully they will be at the September lunch, so we can look them over and welcome them.

Since earlier this year, Krause Venter (ex SAAF), Piet Kok (ex SAA), Robert Noble (also ex SAAF), and wife have been joined by Kevin Gunzenhauser (retired from the SA Navy), and his wife Roselee. These are the new members of our branch. Kevin is very active in the MOTHS, but seems to be fairly comfortable with the absence of any sea water in the vicinity.

Roelf will allocate a Mentor to these folks. They will be gently eased into the frequent raucous goings on every third Friday of the month. What a lovely diverse bunch we have become!

As you now know, our branch has been tasked to work with the Johannesburg branch in preparing for the approaching celebrations of SAAFA's 75th anniversary celebrations.

Suggestions and ideas are requested from members – like specially designed ties and scarves, lapel badges, and newspaper and radio interviews and so on. We need people with connections with helpful agencies and contacts to participate. We need to get going.

At a later date we will advise what form our celebrations, if any, will take. I think our focus should be turned more to our own branch members' needs and comforts – our evening function will be postponed and planned for early next year when enthusiasm becomes a bit more evident! At present no-one on the committee, or for that matter amongst the members, appears to have much of that commodity!

This is a true story copied from a USA article about aviation heroes.

Old Man and a Bucket of Shrimp

This is a wonderful story and it is true. You will be glad that you read it, and I hope you will pass it on. It happened every Friday evening, almost without fail, when the sun resembled a giant orange and was starting to dip into the blue ocean. Old Ed came strolling along the beach to his favorite pier. Clutched in his bony hand was a bucket of shrimp. Ed walks out to the end of the pier, where it seems he almost has the world to himself. The glow of the sun is a golden bronze now. Everybody's gone, except for a few joggers on the beach. Standing out on the end of the pier, Ed is alone with his thoughts...and his bucket of shrimp.

Before long, however, he is no longer alone. Up in the sky a thousand white dots come screeching and squawking, winging their way toward that lanky frame standing there on the end of the pier.

Before long, dozens of seagulls have enveloped him, their wings fluttering and flapping wildly. Ed stands there tossing shrimp to the hungry birds. As he does, if you listen closely, you can hear him say with a smile, 'Thank you. Thank you.'

In a few short minutes the bucket is empty. But Ed doesn't leave. He stands there lost in thought, as though transported to another time and place.

When he finally turns around and begins to walk back toward the beach, a few of the birds hop along the pier with him until he gets to the stairs, and then they, too, fly away. And old Ed quietly makes his way down to the end of the beach and on home.

If you were sitting there on the pier with your fishing line in the water, Ed might seem like 'a funny old duck,' as my dad used to say. Or, to onlookers, he's just another old codger, lost in his own weird world, feeding the seagulls with a bucket full of shrimp. To the onlooker, rituals can look either very strange or very empty. They can seem altogether unimportantmaybe even a lot of nonsense.

Old folks often do strange things, at least in the eyes of Boomers and Busters.

Most of them would probably write Old Ed off, down there in Florida ... That's too bad. They'd do well to know him better.

His full name: Eddie Rickenbacker. He was a famous hero in World War I, and then he was in WWII. On one of his flying missions across the Pacific, he and his seven-member crew went down. Miraculously, all of the men survived, crawled out of their plane, and climbed into a life raft.

Captain Rickenbacker and his crew floated for days on the rough waters of the Pacific. They fought the sun. They fought sharks. Most of all, they fought hunger and thirst. By the eighth day their rations ran out. No food. No water. They were hundreds of miles from land and no one knew where they were or even if they were alive. Every day across America millions wondered and prayed that Eddie Rickenbacker might somehow be found alive.

The men adrift needed a miracle. That afternoon they had a simple devotional service and prayed for a miracle. They tried to nap. Eddie leaned back and pulled his military cap over his nose. Time dragged on. All he could hear was the slap of the waves against the raft...suddenly Eddie felt something land on the top of his cap. It was a seagull!

Old Ed would later describe how he sat perfectly still, planning his next move. With a flash of his hand and a squawk from the gull, he managed to grab it and wring its neck. He tore the feathers off, and he and his starving crew made a meal of it - a very slight meal for eight men. Then they used the intestines for bait. With it, they caught fish, which gave them food and more bait....and the cycle continued. With that simple survival technique, they were able to endure the rigors of the sea until they were found and rescued after 24 days at sea.

Eddie Rickenbacker lived many years beyond that ordeal, but he never forgot the sacrifice of that first life-saving seagull... And he never stopped saying, 'Thank you.' That's why almost every Friday night he would walk to the end of the pier with a bucket full of shrimp and a heart full of gratitude.

Reference: (Max Lucado, "In The Eye of the Storm", pp...221, 225-226)

PS: Eddie Rickenbacker was the founder of Eastern Airlines. Before WWI he was race car driver. In WWI he was a pilot and became America's first ace. In WWII he was an instructor and military adviser, and he flew missions with the combat pilots. Eddie Rickenbacker is a true American hero. And now you know another story about the trials and sacrifices that brave men have endured for your freedom.

As you can see, I chose to pass it on. It is a great story that many don't know...You've got to be careful with old guys, you just never know what they have done during their lifetime.



This is the Dehaviland DH 100 single engine jet aircraft that was operated by the SAAF in the 50s and remained in service up until about 1962, or later. It was used to give pilots a grounding on jet technology before progressing to Sabres and other more advanced jet types.

As a conversion trainer it saw service also in the training of Citizen Force pilots. In 1963 the expense of operating this type precluded the CF from the program, much to the disappointment of this scribe, who

was taken off a course just before leaving for Langebaan. He had to wait until SAA provided a job flying Boeing 707, 727, 747 and A300 multi engine types. What a step-up!

The F86 was a fair match for the Russian designed and built MiG 15, which saw operations in the Korean conflict.



The dude on the wing has found a comfortable spot to avoid the attention of Die Sersant.

The MiG 15 had a better climbing rate and a higher ceiling than the F-86 and could also turn more sharply. Operations: The **Sabre** was designed as a direct response to the **MiG-15** that was causing havoc in the Korean skies. Flown by WW2 veterans, they were moderately successful in hunting down and intercepting the **MiG-15s**.



