



Stick & Throttle

Pretoria Branch
First Quarter – March 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Sincere greetings to you all as we approach the end of the first quarter of this year 2024. This first edition for the year reminds me of how fortunate we all are to be able to celebrate life and each year that passes. We need to celebrate our time with family, colleagues, and friends. I have included the following Poem as this sums up friendship and how we have been affected by each explanation [Reason/Season/Lifetime] over time.

A Faithful Step

A Reason, Season, or Lifetime

People come into your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime.

When you figure out which one it is, you will know what to do for each person.

When someone is in your life for a REASON, it is usually to meet a need you have expressed. They have come to assist you through a difficulty, to provide you with guidance and support, to aid you physically, emotionally, or spiritually. They may seem like a godsend, and they are!

They are there for the reason you need them to be. Then, without any wrongdoing on your part, or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end.

Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away. Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand. What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled, their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered. And now it is time to move on.

Then people come into your life for a SEASON, because your turn has come to share, grow, or learn. They bring you an experience of peace or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it! It is real! But, only for a season.

LIFETIME relationships teach you lifetime lessons – things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation. Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person, and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life. It is said that love is blind but friendship is clairvoyant.

- Unknown Author.

Some of our friendships, especially within SAAFA are long forged, and even though we may not see one another for many months or even years, we still value these friendships.

During the last few months, we have held our regular luncheons at 10AD Lapa and at the Warrant Officer's Lapa at AFB Waterkloof. These have been relatively well attended and I have seen some new/old faces that have attended for the first time in a long time.

Our AGM was held on 9th February at 10AD Lapa and I am honoured and privileged to have been re-elected as the Chairman of this truly wonderful Branch. Philip Gouws was elected as our new Vice-Chairman, while Jaap Rossouw and Carol Havenga were reappointed as Secretary and Finance Manager respectively. The remaining members include Chrishella Crause, Hester Bezuidenhout [newly appointed onto BEC as Editor and Marketing], Pieter Jacobs, Bob Thorsen, and last but not least Renier Feldtmann. A special mention about Renier is that this is his 30th year of serving on the BEC. You are an inspiration and a true gentleman who has given a great amount of your time and effort to the Branch and SAAFA. DANKIE RENIER.

Looking forward, we will have a few surprises in store regarding where we will be having Lunches and other get-togethers.

In closing may this year be a wonderful year for each of you, for your loved ones, family, and those friends closest to you – who we all need more as we all get older and who are still with us.

Warm Regards!!

Bill De Pinho

GENERAL NOTIFICATIONS

Called to Higher Service

It is with regret that we inform you of the passing away of the following members. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families and may they RIP.

Katie Muller – the wife of our Patron Gen Muller

SAAFA Pretoria

Lest We Forget

THE HEALTH OF MEMBERS

The following Branch Members are unwell and/or are recuperating from illness or operations and we wish them a swift recovery.

- ❖ Lt Gen (Ret) Mike Muller
- ❖ Cathy de Beer
- ❖ Bill de Pinho

MEMORIAL SERVICES

A number of Memorial Services were attended over the past three months and some of them are pictured below.

***WE WILL
REMEMBER THEM***



SS Mendi Memorial Service at ATTERIDGEVILLE, Pretoria, on 3 March 2024, Renier Feldtmann laid a wreath on behalf of the SAAF Association

MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

Monthly Luncheons were not all bad and we managed to host the October one at the Groen Kloof Bowls Club, the November one was cancelled and at the last minute, we successfully arranged our Christmas Lunch at Jan Smuts House.

The following are a few photos from the luncheons held over the last quarter.

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON AND AGM

The AGM saw Bill de Pinho re-elected to the Chair, while Philip Gouws was elected as the Vice. Congratulations to them both and we look forward to another great year ahead.



The Chairman, Bill de Pinho, and newly elected Vice-Chairman, Philip Gouws



Our newest member on the BEC and Editor of the Stick and Throttle – Hester Bezuidenhout



MARCH LUNCHEON



*Vanessa Louw all ready for
St Patrick's Day*

30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO BEC

Renier Feldtmann has been an unwavering member of the Pretoria Branch Executive Committee [BEC] for more than 30 years. He oversees the very important Portfolio of Memorials and Heritage which he handled with the necessary passion and purposefulness. He can always be counted on and he represents SAAFA in the true spirit of remembering those who have passed before us.



He attends most of the different Memorial Services and Parades where possible, especially in and around the Pretoria area. He has on numerous occasions represented SAAFA at National Memorials when the National President for reasons can't attend himself.

Within the Heritage part of his portfolio, he does a lot of research and visits places and institutions in which SAAFA is involved, especially SAAF Monuments and/or Memorials around the Province. He also serves on the National Executive Committee [NEC] in the same capacity and he performs this task with vigour and enthusiasm.

AVIATION SNIPPETS



“BUSH WAR PERIOD”

From 1966 to 1989, the SAAF was committed to the Border War, which was fought in northern South West Africa and surrounding states. At first, it provided limited air support to police operations against the People's Liberation Army of Namibia or PLAN (the military wing of SWAPO, which was fighting to end South African rule of South West Africa). Operations intensified after the defence force took charge of the operations in 1974.

The SAAF provided air support to the army during the 1975–76 “Angola” campaign”, and in the many cross-border operations that were carried out against PLAN bases in Angola and Zambia from 1977 onwards.

At least two MiG-21s of the Angolan Air Force were shot down by Mirage F1s in 1981 and 1982.

During the bush war, the SAAF lost a total of 22 aircraft (1974–1989) to enemy action. A further 11 aircraft were lost in the operational area due to pilot error or malfunction.

Note: There are now numerous books and video clips doing the rounds which in most cases provide some excellent reading and accounts of what transpired during this period. There are even some books that have been written in collaboration with the so-called “opposition” at the time. The most recent being “The Mig Diaries”, written by Lt Col Eduardo Gonzalez Sarria and Lionel Reid.

THE STORY OF THE COW



Here is a story that flight crews, animal lovers, and BBQ fans might enjoy. In August of 2017, a lone Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II was sighted with a most unusual marking on its side...a cow.

The Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II, single-seat, twin turbofan, straight wing jet known as the "Warthog" or "Hog" is always a welcome sight to friendly forces on the ground, and less so, to her enemies. Designed with one mission, close air support (CAS) of ground troops, and the well proven proclivity for removing the threat of enemy armoured vehicles and tanks, by providing quick-action support against enemy ground forces. The Warthog is both feared and loved for very good reason.

A victory marking, or kill mark is a symbol applied in stencil or decal to the side of an aircraft to denote an aerial victory achieved by the aircraft's pilot or crew. A tradition that originated during World War I, and would usually be seen in the form of a national flag, roundel, or a silhouette of the air or ground vehicle defeated, which in this case, was a cow.

To carry out her assigned mission, the Hog's primary weapon is the 30mm GAU-8/A Avenger autocannon which possesses the ability to dispense 3,900 rounds per minute (65 rounds per second) of depleted uranium armour-piercing shells. A cannon is so large, that the rest of the airframe had to be basically designed around the cannon.

This particular Warthog [S/N 81-994] was seen at the 100th anniversary of the 107th Fighter Squadron (107FS) also known as the "RED Devils" of the Air National Guard 127th Wing assigned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB), Michigan.

According to unsubstantiated and vague internet sources, the story behind the cow marking starts with a CAS mission over Afghanistan by an unnamed pilot, who was utilizing his GAU-8/A Avenger Cannon in an undisclosed location in the pursuit of establishing and maintaining international relations.

After the A-10 had completed its mission and cleared the area, the ground troops moved in, it is said that a solitary Cajun cooked depleted uranium seasoned cow was discovered, that had most unfortunately suffered from a rapid kinetic disassembly unknowingly delivered by the A-10 Warthog as it provided its support. Thusly, explaining the appearance of a victory marking in the form of a cow adorning the side of a Warthog.

For more BBQ tips, please contact the 107th FS. As far as the story behind the marking, all we have are some unsubstantiated rumours, and an uncredited image, so if anyone has more info on the story behind the story... we would love to hear from you.

SAAF Origin and Flight Schools

The first winged flight in South Africa is thought to have been made around 1875 by John Goodman Household in a primitive glider in the Karkloof district of Natal. The first powered flight is attributed to the French aviator Albert Kimmerling on 28 December 1909 at East London flying a Voisin 1907 biplane.

In June 1911 the South African John Weston flew a Weston-Farman for 8.5 minutes, a South African record time for a sustained flight.

Demonstrations by Weston followed well into 1912 and at a large number of locations. In December 1911 two visiting aviators, Cecil Compton Patterson flying a Patterson No. 2 Biplane and Evelyn Driver flying a Bleriot biplane, started flying demonstration flights in the Cape and aroused significant public and government interest to the possibilities of powered flight in South Africa. Prompted by the Patterson / Driver displays, General Jan Smuts (then Minister of Defence) sent Brig Gen C.F. Beyers (Commandant-General of the Citizen Force) to Britain to observe the 1912 military manoeuvres in Switzerland, Germany, France and England and to report on the viability of using aircraft in military operations. Beyers' response was extremely supportive and encouraging of the establishment of an air corps, particularly for the purpose of aerial scouting. By this time the Patterson Driver flying syndicate had dissolved and in 1912 Patterson and the Union Defence Force reached an agreement to establish a flying school at Alexandersfontein in Kimberley, known as the Paterson's Aviation Syndicate School of Flying to train pilots for the proposed South African Aviation Corps (SAAC).

Basic flying training commenced in 1913 with ten students, using a Compton-Paterson biplane and six of the students who completed the basic training were sent to the Central Flying School at RAF Upavon in Great Britain for further training. Lt. Kenneth van der Spuy passed his final examination on 2 June 1914 and was granted the certificate of the Royal Aero Club, becoming South Africa's first qualified military pilot. The others passed a few days later, with five of them eventually qualifying. On qualifying, the Union Defence Force granted permission for these aviators to be seconded to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), which later became the Royal Air Force (RAF).

FASK – SWARTKOP BASE



Air Force Station (AFS) Swartkop was established in April 1921 after a private farm named Zwartkop was acquired by the Government in 1920. The Dutch spelling of Zwartkop was retained for the Air Force Station that was subsequently established there. On 1 April 1949, the Dutch spelling was dropped in favour of the Afrikaans spelling and resulted in Air Force Station Swartkop. The Air Force Station was upgraded to an Air Force Base on 1 February 1968. The name of the base reverted to the original "Zwartkop" in 2012.

The SAAF claims Swartkop is the second oldest air station in the world and the oldest operational air station in the world. Over the years many distinguished Squadrons have been based at Swartkop. This included 26 Squadron SAAF which was formed there on 24 August 1942

The Chief of the South African Air Force opened the relocated South African Air Force Museum at AFB Swartkop in 1993. The Air Force Base reverted to Air Force Station status in 1999. This decision was made by the SAAF to vacate the base and leave behind the South African Air Force Museum located there and to keep the Airfield as an extension of Air Force Base Waterkloof. The SAAF Museum Historic Flight also moved to the airfield.

As of December 2013, the South African Air Force still hasn't vacated all operational units on the base. The South African Air Force Museum currently occupies the northern/western side of the base while 17 Squadron is housed at the southern/western side of the base.

In May 2023 the facility was redesignated as the "Air Force Mobile Deployment Wing" or AFMDW.

The South African Air Force Memorial is located at Swartkop. It contains a roll of honour of SAAF personnel who have been killed on duty as well as a memorial to personnel of all nations that died during the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan in South Africa. It also includes a specific memorial to those that served in the Korean War.



HISTORY – LOOKING BACK



**Capt Daniël Laubscher. HC
SA Airforce**

Eyewitness Mark Hume recalls the attack at Xangongo – Ops Protea in August 1981.

Recognition to Capt DJ Laubscher (HC94)
24 August 1981.

Eyewitness Mark Hume recalls the attack at Xangongo – Ops Protea in August 1981.

During Ops Protea I was one of the Bosbok pilots that was responsible for getting the army "battle groups" ["veggroep" in Afrikaans] to their targets, recceing ahead for any problems, controlling the artillery and 120mm mortars, liaising with various call signs on 3 different radios, etc. etc. etc.

42 Squadron (Bosbokke) had quite a few Bosbokke taking part in Protea - think 4 or 5. We did some training before hand with the different army units at Oshivello - just to the east of the Etosha pans. The Bosbok pilots - if memory is correct were myself, Ray Doyle, Freddie Viljoen, Richard Muller, Andre White and possibly a few more.

The day before the ops started, we moved across to Ruacana airfield. I took over from the Bosbok that led the battlegroup from Ruacana to close by Xangongo. As there was nobody to take over from me and the army wanted a Bosbok for the whole day I organised with the Artillery guys to take a few drums of avgas with them. The plan was to land in the shona (pan) where the artillery was deployed to refuel.

As D-day progressed the army battlegroups would move closer and closer to the airfield which was the major objective for the group that I was working with. A lot of bombs were dropped. The battlegroup on the ground eventually reached the road that

runs south from Xangongo to the border. The problem they encounter here was that this road was build up so as to be above the water during the rainy season. As the first ratel stuck its nose onto this road an anti-aircraft canon about 400m away opened up. Eventually the Mirages were called in to take care of the ack-ack. They were controlled by a forward air controller (FAC) probably sitting on one of the ratels - also without much success as it was very difficult to explain to the "vlammies" exactly where the ack-ack was deployed.

At this stage I had about 7 hours of flying and decided that it was time to "defuel" and refuel. After about 45 minutes refuelling was done and we got airborne. Spiralled up a safe distance from where the action was and on reaching 10 000' moved closer. The news was not good. The ack-ack was keeping the battlegroup at bay and nobody was getting any closer in eliminating it. By now I realised that the FAC himself wasn't sure exactly where the target was, so I chipped in and said that I'll take over control and mark the target with a smoke rocket. To mark this target I sort of lopped a smoke rocket in the general direction. It exploded a distance from the target, and I gave corrections to the Mirages.

However, they missed, and I fired another smoke rocket that was bit closer but still the Mirages could not hit the exact spot. I realised that the only way to "neutralise" this target was to mark it more accurately and the only way to do that was to get closer to the target. So, rocket pod selected on, pitch full fine to get max speed in the dive, a nice steep wingover and down we went. In the dive, I noticed that the canon was busy firing at me.

Sometime during the dive I decided that I was probably as close as I would like to be and pulled the trigger. 1 x smoke rocket streaked to the target. I pulled the nose up into a steep climb away and also rolled to the left. Looking back at the target I noticed that the smoke of the rocket was coming out of the pit where the "ack-ack" was deployed. I called the Mirages and told them that the target was right there where my smoke was only to be told that they were out of ammo and fuel and returning to Ondangwa. A while later Spyker called me and said that the battlegroup is busy crossing the road and that the "ack-ack" was not firing on them. On reaching the specific site they found the gunner sitting in his chair with a 68mm hole through him where my smoke rocket hit. If there ever was a "mogge troffe" then this was it.

Copied from Port Elizabeth SAAF Museum unofficial webpage. Recognition to Capt DJ Laubscher (HC94) 24 August 1981. they found the gunner sitting in his chair with a 68mm hole through him where my smoke rocket hit. If there ever was a "mogge troffe" than this was it.

GENERAL NOTICE

SAAFA CONGRESS 2024

The 79th SAAFA Congress will be held over the period 23-26 May 2024 in the Wilderness and is hosted by the Outeniqua Branch. The Pretoria Branch will be represented by the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, as well as the Heritage and Benevolence members. We are looking forward to it and enjoying the hospitality and camaraderie in true SAAFA spirit.



Editor:

Please send your contributions and/or comments to:

hesterellis1974@gmail.com
pta.saafa.chairman@gmail.com
or pretoria@saafa.co.za
We're also on the web!

See us at: www.saafa.co.za

Note:

The editor extends her thanks and appreciation for all contributions. Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or Branch Executive Committee. The Editor reserves the right to amend or reject any editorial matter submitted for publication.

ELDERS FLIGHT 2024



Please note that the "Elder's Flight" that was scheduled to take place on 13th April 2024 has unfortunately been postponed due to CAA safety regulations. The Organisers are planning to host it later in the year. Let's hope and trust that they will get the necessary support and applicable go-ahead from CAA, as this remains a wonderful endeavour by the whole organising committee.