

December 2023 – Pretoria

The Flying Spirit

The Official National Newsletter of the SAAF Association



“Let’s make SAAFA Great Again”

DON'T RETIRE

**START LIVING –
JOIN THE
SAAFA**



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Cover Photo: Festive Spirit – Artist Unknown.

From the desk of the National President.

The year 2023 has come and almost gone at a rate of knots. For our Association the year has been very eventful, to say the least. Many of these events have been highlighted by our esteemed Editor, Roelf Rossouw, in this issue and others before.



As SAAFA we continue to support a number of beneficiaries both in cash and in kind. To support this effort we need to rely on the **dedicated** support of our SAAFA members countrywide in making donations in the form of cash or kind. Our Branches continually attempt to make life a little easier for those less fortunate than ourselves by making up and providing them with Winter and Christmas hampers. Another way of supporting our SAAFA efforts is for members to religiously pay their annual levies, which are now again due early in the New Year.

As we enter the festive season we pause to remember those who passed on to higher service during the past year. I pray especially for the families left behind as they face their first Christmas and New Year without their loved ones. May the good Lord enfold you in His loving arms and comfort and strengthen you during this time.

It is often said that the joy of receiving is found in the act of giving. At this time of the year, we can reflect on what blessings we have received during the course of the past year and even over the course of our entire lives. I am very thankful for all the many blessings bestowed upon me, from my family, my home, my church, my health, my circle of friends and many, many others, including the wonderful sense of camaraderie that I experience within the SAAFA. Having said that we should ponder about how we can make a difference in the lives of others through the giving of ourselves, in person, in kind, in cash, in effort, a helping hand, a word of encouragement, a listening ear, just about in any way you can think of that will touch others in a positive way. It is my earnest wish, that during the year ahead, SAAFA will remain an Association that provides **Assistance** where required, is active in **Remembering** those who did not return, is able to **Support** our SAAF as and when required, and that we will carry out these, our SAAFA objectives, whilst engaging in meaningful **Camaraderie**; enjoying one another's company, which is the platform on which all else is based.

Let us then continue to truly live out the values of our Association in being a source of comfort and strength to those most vulnerable among us, and to continue to maintain and foster friendship, comradeship, and good fellowship among all members. Let us continue to bear one another's burdens during the challenging and unknown times that still lie ahead.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a little thought that I read in the booklet "Faith for Daily Living".

"He who has little and wants less is richer than he who has much and wants more."

My prayer for you all is that you will experience a blessed Christmas with family and friends and that you will enter the New Year with much gusto to make a difference in the lives of others, particularly the less fortunate.

God bless.

Mike Louw

Col (Ret) Mike Louw – National President SAAFA



Christmas Message from the Benevolence Portfolio.



I am writing this article for the Christmas Issue of The Flying Spirit as War is happening in the Ukraine and Israel/Palestine!.. But I also write as we South Africans revel in the victory and joy of a 4th Rugby World Cup win by the mighty Springboks. It came at a time when South Africa needed to celebrate something profound that would bring our people together in a strong sense of camaraderie and oneness. Winning that Gold Cup certainly did that.

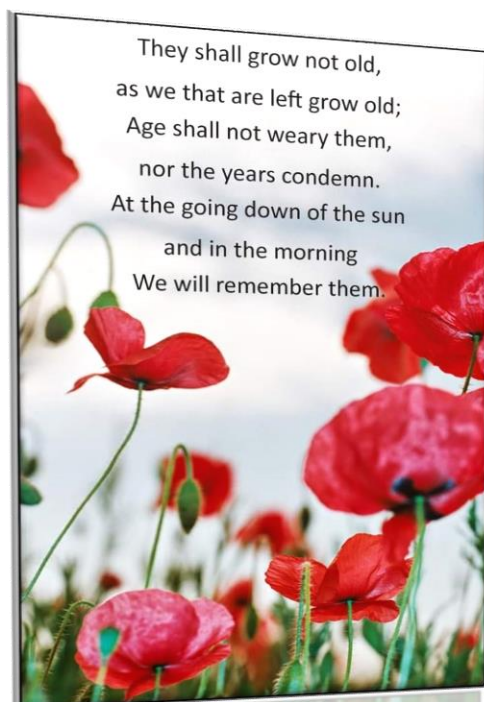
The motto of the Springbok Team was “Stronger Together” and our Association, our Branches, our Members and their families, in adopting this powerful concept of “Stronger Together” will see our South African Air Force Association going from strength to even greater strength!

The Fundamental Pillar of SAAFA BENEVOLENCE is a foundation on which every Branch can be “Stronger Together” when building deeper caring for every SAAFA Member and their family. Our Branches are encouraged to share great ideas with other Branches that will make us all “Stronger Together”. I remember Dave “Silver Fox” Owen telling me one day that “...the South African Air Force is a Family!!” It’s that “Family reality”...being Stronger Together...on which our Branches and every Member will build our SAAF Association into something all of us can be most proud of.

Right now there is great news for every SAAFA BENEFICIARY. The NEC will be sending a Gift of R2750 to every Branch Beneficiary for Christmas and we do so with great joy and deep respect. May we all enjoy a Peaceful SAAFA Family Christmas...Peace in the World...and a New Year filled with prosperity and a Stronger Togetherness!

Trevor Slade.

Trevor Slade – Vice National President SAAFA



- BENEVOLENCE -
IT'S OUR RESPONSE THAT
DEFINES US



Impala 469 on her Best Behaviour.

A kaleidoscopic scene in front of my eyes as the earth and sky spun crazily, a slight movement of the control column stopped the tumbling! Then, just for the hell of it, another movement and we started tumbling in the opposite direction.

I laughed as the horizon settled back into place. A slight back pressure on the stick and we climbed sunwards revelling in the sheer enjoyment of aerobatics. We, Major Bob King, Officer Commanding of No 5 Squadron, SAAF Impala 469 and I had slipped the surly bonds of earth and, in the words of Battle of Britain pilot John Gillespie McGee had “danced the skies on laughter sil’ved wings...” How I envied the man sitting in front of me and all those other South African Air Force pilots who have almost limitless opportunities to fly the Impala.



Chief of the SAAF, Lt General Jim Verster, SM, had earlier granted me special permission to fly in one of 5 Squadron's new Impalas to see for myself just how safe this aircraft really is and also to judge just what an ideal aircraft this is for pilot training from ab initio to advanced tactical manoeuvres. All the experiences I have had during 7000 hours of flying in time faded into insignificance as I felt this trim, South African-built fighter trainer respond easily to our every whim.

I heard Bob chuckle over the intercom “She is a very forgiving bird. Even a ham-fisted sprog pilot is safe in the Impala,” he said. “Watch this...” Purposely he initiated a shuddering “G-stall” during a roll. Impala 469 forgave us for the mishandling and recovered her composure. Impala 469 was on her best behaviour that day. Eighteen thousand feet over the Natal South Coast and we throttled back, lowered the flaps and undercarriage, and prepared to stall Impala 469.

In the 15 years since I first started flying, I have never come across an aircraft with stall characteristics as gentle and as decile as those of the Impala. With the stick right back, we deliberately endeavoured to keep Impala 469 stalled. As the speed dropped, the stick gave a warning shudder. She stalled! Her nose dropped fractionally. She built up speed despite our efforts; un-stalled herself, flew for a while and then, because of our determination, reluctantly agreed to stall again.

There was no sickening drop out of the sky. No violent wing drop as many aircraft are inclined to do. Designed and built like a precision instrument, the Impala gracefully acknowledged our efforts and then started flying again. Here was the ideal training aircraft. Beautiful to handle, easy to fly and economical to operate.



In fact, I am prepared to stick my neck out and forecast that the Impala will eventually become a second Harvard. It is no wonder that Citizen Force pilots throughout the country love this aircraft. Others who have not yet converted to these jets and who have to be content to “Bash the circuit” in the old Harvard’s, can be forgiven for being envious. But their turn will come. They, too, will soon experience the thrill of flying the Impalas.

Speed, I have been asked this question several times. It does what is required of it and it took us less than 11 minutes from the time we started rolling off runway 05 at Louis Botha Airport, Durban, until we were overhead the Margate NDB at 10 000 feet. What is more, we had only been at a relatively slow cruise climb as I wanted to prolong my flight in the Impala.

For 45 minutes, with Bob King flying, I revelled in the sheer beauty of flight in Impala 469. It is a flight I will never forget. In fact, after we had landed and the ground crew was helping me to disentangle myself from the multitude of straps which had fastened me securely to my ejector seat, I was prepared to sign up with the SAAF there and then for a long-service commission – if only to have the opportunity of flying the Impala.

“Your age and your eyes, Old Boy . . . OK for civvie flying but not quite up to scratch for the SAAF,” someone muttered, not unkindly. As I drove back to the more mundane existence of flying a desk, I saw a crowd of senior high school pupils. What a wonderful opportunity awaits them if only they will grasp it. The squadron life; the spirit de corps; magnificent aircraft to fly: a chance to serve their country: and, above all, the opportunity to fly. Oh! To be 18 again!

Article by Tom Chalmers – Editor, World Air News (PARATUS – November 1973)



Robert King and Michael Parsonson
at a 5 Squadron Reunion Parade.
Air Force Base Makhado.
(Date and Time not known)



Photo – Courtesy of Brig. General (Ret) Robert King

The Pretoria Branch Chairman's Christmas Message

Greetings to you all from the Capital City!

The year 2023 has flown past and as we settle down for the holiday period we ask ourselves what we have achieved this year. I know and realise that most of us as SAAFA members enjoy relaxing times, and keep busy with our day-to-day activities. Others, however, are busy and are still serving or working in related aviation fields, providing training to improve the skills, aptitude, attitude, and knowledge of people, hosting visitors to our country, and most importantly giving back to society where possible.

For the Pretoria Branch, it was a great year and we may have not achieved all of our objectives, but we were ever present flying the SAAFA Flag at Memorial Services, SAAF events, and different Museum activities. We were and are an integral part of the Spitfire Restoration Project and will continue to be. This year saw the helicopter guys and girls celebrate 75 years of helicopter operations and the Pretoria Branch was at the "Chopper Reunion" to provide some much-needed nourishment – the Prego and Boerie Rolls were a hit.



It was also an honour to play a big part in both the "Elder's Flight" and "The Children's Flight", which took place at the Brakpan and Orient Airfields respectively. These two events show what individuals, groups, and businesses can do to give back to society by providing the elderly / children who attended with an opportunity to celebrate the thrill of flight. For the hundreds that were given the opportunity to fly, this was indeed a day to remember. For many, it was the first time they had flown, and seeing and hearing the joy made it all worth it.

As we wind down we also reflect back and remember those members who have passed away due to age, illness, or unfortunate circumstances, and we pray that their loved ones, family and friends have the strength to keep the memories alive. *"We will remember them!"*

Warm wishes and blessings to you all from the Pretoria Branch Executive Committee and the esteemed members of this Branch. May your New Year be filled with happiness, good health, great friendships, and most importantly good times. Take care and be safe.

Bill de Pinho.

Col (Ret) Bill de Pinho – Chairman SAAFA Pretoria Branch.



1920-1921



1921-1927



1927-1947



1947-1958



1958-1981



1981-2003



2003-present

Evolution of
the South
African Air
Force roundel



Picture The Past

* Happy times come and go, Memories stay forever *



– Through Adversity to the Stars –

Dragon Peaks Airstrip (ZS11)



The C.L Van Wyngaard Airfield, Is situated in the Heart of the Champagne Valley, Central Drakensberg, Kwazulu Natal Province of South Africa.

The airfield is also used by the SAAF to train their pilots to fly in mountainous areas.



Article by - <https://bergflying.co.za>

Final Approach and Shutdown

Happy holidays to you and your families. May the season be one of joy, celebration, and warmth and the year to come filled with health and new blessings. May this Christmas end the year on a cheerful note, and make way for a fresh and bright New Year.

Remember, opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or the NEC. Please remain safe and healthy. With my very best personal regards.

Roelf Rossouw

Editor – The Flying Spirit

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Let's make SAAF Great Again

