

# **7** *SAAFA* **Flying Spirit** **75**

September 2020

## Message from National President



So, here we are, fast approaching the spring of 2020. With what has transpired over the last five months or so I am sure that we will welcome the signs of new growth, of renewed energy, and of the feeling of wanting to “get up and go”. Having spent a few days in the Lowveld over the past weekend has made me realise once again what a beautiful country we live in. The scenery, winding roads, lush vegetation, wildlife, forest walks, and the majestic mountains were invigorating indeed.

The scars of the Covid-19 pandemic are there to be seen, businesses and restaurants closed up, vacant shops, and houses. People have lost much. However, there were also signs of revival, of re-birth, of hope as people went about cheerfully setting up and providing services. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has predicted that this pandemic will be around for the next two years (at least) so the reality is that we need to learn to live with this thing. We also need things to move forward. Our collective hope is that everyone will continue taking precautions like wearing face masks and physically distancing as our

economy opens up and people start to get out more. I am aware that there are individuals who will vehemently disagree with the wearing of face masks, citing various reasons for their convictions. However, out of respect for others, I will continue to wear mine in order to protect them, not myself.

It has been said that “*This virus has made people lose their marbles, and many people are triggered by what others are doing.*” This is so true, and we need to stop it. We need to respect and accept people for how they choose to define their own new normal. We need to stay safe but respect what

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others are doing as well, each to their own. We can choose to stay home or choose to go out, but above all of this, we need to choose kindness.

Once we choose hope, anything is possible. There is immense power in both hope and fear, but we need to be incredibly careful which we decide to feed. The one makes us open to endless possibilities while the other can make us stark-raving mad. And we cannot live in a constant state of fear. It is toxic and will eventually consume all of us. So, we need to choose hope. But hope is not about proving anything. It is about choosing to believe this one thing that love is more significant than any perceived political agendas, conspiracy theories, alarmist rumours, and fear-inducing statistics that get thrown at us. And if we are feeling hopeless - even for a second - then we need to get up and do something. We should not wait for good things to happen to us, but rather we should go out and make some good things happen.

Enough of that, now to get back to some good old SAAFA business. Even though it might appear unlikely that we will have an opportunity this year of hosting the Annual SAAFA Banquet and Awards Ceremony, we have not lost hope and will keep our options open to possibly host such an event during late October or early November. Failing this the National Executive Committee (NEC) will consult widely and explore other options, even if it might mean postponement to Congress 2021.

SAAFA 75 regalia is available, and the products and price lists may be accessed on our SAAFA Webpage, [saafa.co.za](http://saafa.co.za). Orders may be placed and paid for online and delivery to your home address can be arranged. Please support this initiative as SAAFA stands to benefit in the form of donations towards our benevolence projects. On this note, the

East Rand Branch is also marketing merchandise, including ladies' scarves. Durban Branch has launched a fundraising effort through the selling of face masks that display the SAAFA Eagle and SAAFA 75 wording with the Branch name of choice. These items can be ordered directly from the Branches and an appeal is made for all of us to support the fundraising efforts of all Branches throughout the Country.

In terms of veterans' administration, documentation for registration on the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) database has been finalised for incorporation into the SAAFA Manual of Administration. It is vitally important for every member of SAAFA to be registered on the DMV database. The benefits of registration are considerable. Some of these benefits include compensation for injury, trauma, and disease; facilitation of employment placement; subsidised public transport; access to health care; housing, and funeral support up to R25 000. Certain veterans registered with the DMV may also apply for Social Relief of Distress (SRD) should they qualify through the determination of a means test. In addition to these considerations, registration of SAAFA members of the DMV database will also ensure that SAAFA represents a credible constituency and can engage with strength in numbers within the higher echelons of the Council of Military Veterans Organisations (CMVO), the SA National Military Veterans' Association (SANMVA) and of course, the Department of Military Veterans. Registration will also assist in determining the military veteran footprint (location/town/suburb) throughout the country to ensure the provision of services in the high-density areas. All SAAFA Branches are thus encouraged to launch a campaign to register their members with the DMV.

Amongst others, our SAAFA Constitution clearly states that the Association has been formed to perpetuate a tradition of comradeship. Thus, camaraderie remains one of the fundamental pillars of our Association. Active camaraderie in our Association is vital for the wellbeing of every member, for the wellbeing of every Branch and the wellbeing of SAAFA at large. Every military person knows that care for one's comrade is pivotal to the success of any venture.

That injunction should be clear to us all

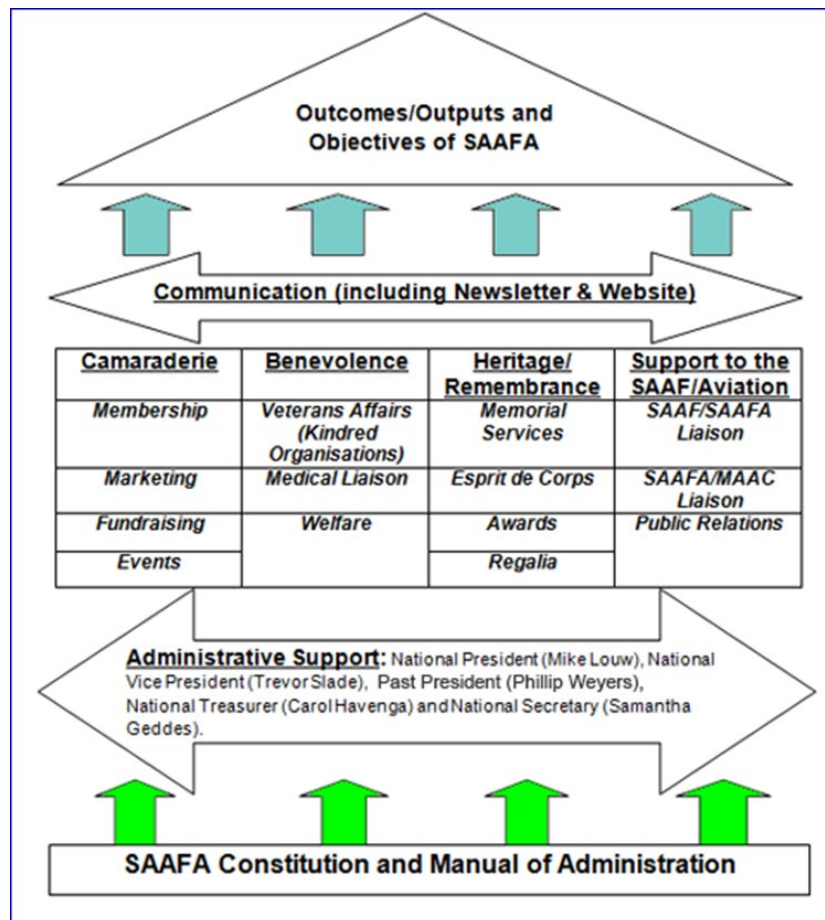
in SAAFA and we should strive to uphold the pillar of camaraderie in all that we do.

In closing, I would like to encourage all SAAFA members 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.

God bless.

**Mike Louw**

**National President: South African Air Force Association**

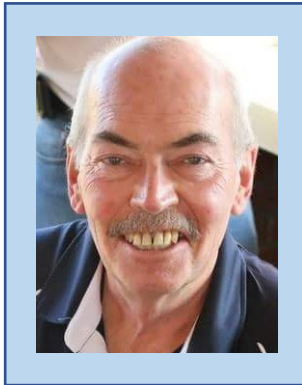




## NATIONAL OFFICE BEARERS

### **Philip Weyers**

#### **SAAF/SAAFA Liaison**



Raised on the family farm, "Doornkloof". Occasionally attended Pretoria Boys' High School.

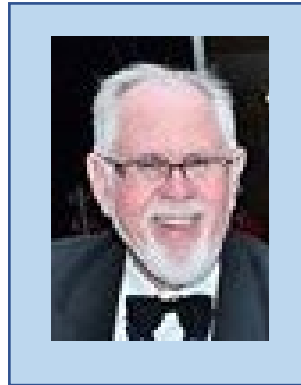
Called up for National Service at the SAAF Gym in January 1976, completed Operations/Intelligence course and posted to the SAAF's finest, 28 Squadron. Awarded the Pro-Patria medal.

Philip joined the SAAF Association in March 1976. In 1997 was co-opted to the BEC to produce the Stick & Throttle newsletter which he did from 1997 to 2005. In 2005 Philip was elected Chairman of Pretoria Branch. In 2006 appointment as Vice-President followed and elected National President in 2007. Due to an internal issue at Pretoria Branch, Philip returned as Chairman for a year in 2012. Arising from the passing of Ken Snowball and incapacitation of Neville Greyling, Philip was "re-cycled" and returned as President in 2013 to complete the cycle. In 2014 Philip was co-opted in a support role as Pretoria Branch Vice-Chairman, which arrangement continued to 2015.

Philip currently serves on NEC managing portfolios including SAAF/SAAFA liaison, MAAC liaison and PR. Philip also served as Chairman of Air Forces Housing Memorial (Pretoria) for 12 years and Vice-Chairman of CMVO for 5 years.

### **Renier Feldtmann**

#### **Memorial Services**



Renier was born on 3 April 1941 in Frankfort, OFS, and matriculated in 1959 at Erasmus High School, Bronkhorstspuit.

He joined the SA Air Force on 7 December 1959 as Personnel Clerk and retired on 30 April 1996 as Warrant Officer Class 1. He served at various Headquarters/Units during his career.

He joined the SA Air Force Reserves on 1 July 1996, at Secretary for Defense and Air Force Headquarters, until 30 March 2006. During his Reserve Force period he was appointed as Reserve Warrant Officer in the Directorate Air Force Reserves at Air Force Headquarters.

Renier joined the SAAF Association on 21 June 1987 and in March 1994 he was elected as Committee member of the SAAFA Pretoria Branch, responsible for Memorial Services, Parades and Ceremonial. During 2011 he was co-opted member on the SAAFA NEC in the same capacity. He represented the SAAFA Pretoria Branch on the Pretoria Memorial Services Council since March 1994. During November 1996 he was elected as Secretary for the PMSC and in 2005 he was elected as Vice Chairman of the PMSC. In 2014 was elected as Chairman of the PMSC until November 2016.

# MILITARY ATTACHÉ AND ADVISOR CORPS



Aunty Rona has of course continued to influence the MAAC and High Commission/Embassy functions, though some few activities have begun to resume on an Ops Abnormal basis.

Large gatherings are still not permitted, so restaurants and golf courses are the currently chosen venues. The DA's have not forgotten SAAFA in either activities.

After a three-year tour, the United States Military and Naval Attaché, Capt Steve Morgenfeld USN has left South Africa. Steve is a US Navy Chopper pilot as is his wife Cmdr. Kate Dooley Morgenfeld. Steve was a wonderful representative of his country and he and his family fully embraced South Africa, to the extent of him being a highly accomplished photographer of South African birds. We wish Steve, Kate, and their four sons well for their next deployment.

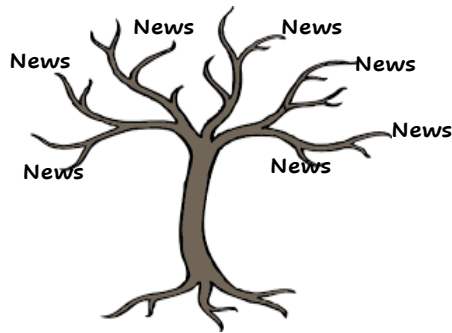
Of possible interest, Steve Morgenfeld's father, Captain Tom Morgenfeld, is a person of considerable note. Also, a United States Navy aviator with a BSc in Aeronautical Engineering, he was a fast-jet jock with 560 carrier landings and 90 Vietnam combat missions to his credit. After his Naval service, Capt Morgenfeld joined the legendary Lockheed Skunkworks, surely the most iconic military aircraft development and construction facility there is and once the preserve of the late great Kelly Johnson. Johnson was amongst his numerous other achievements also responsible for the C-130. While at the Skunkworks, Capt Morgenfeld was the evaluation pilot of the Mig-23 and Sukhoi SU-22 and Chief Test Pilot of the F-117 (1200hrs), the YF-22 and the X-35. In addition, Capt Morgenfeld was the Chief Test Pilot for the mid-life upgrade of the F/A-18 Super Hornet. Capt Morgenfeld retired from active flying with 7000hrs in 80 different aircraft.

One lives in hope that the threat posed by Aunty Rona will ease ahead of projection so that ops normal might again be resumed.



Captain Steven Morgenfeld, the senior defense attaché at the U.S. embassy, mark the delivery of N95 surgical masks provided to the Military Health Service by the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa.





▣ Freda Garzouzie's husband, John, is receiving dialysis and is at home with the family.

▣ Neels Botha was in the hospital during July 2020 for a checkup relating to his heart.

SAAFA



▣ One of our members Morris Silke has passed.

▣ Will shortly start looking at golf day 2021.

▣ We are planning for December to have our Annual Christmas lunch at the Goodwood Club, as we are not sure of using the Base facilities.

▣ There was a Special edition of the Aquila Capensus, to keep in touch with members.

▣ The normal edition of the Aquila Capensus should be going out for early September.

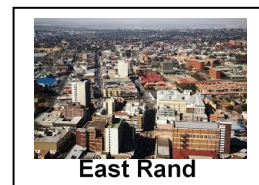
SAAFA



▣ The Virtual Delville Wood Memorial Service was watched on YouTube.

▣ The first planning (physical) meeting for Congress 2021 was held.

SAAFA



▣ Aubrey Miles was called to Higher Service early in July.

▣ The newsletter is overdue.

SAAFA



▣ Two members have passed on: Sheila Smith and Raymond Waugh.

SAAFA



▣ The branch has 79 members at present – 1 up from last month.

▣ Brian and Trish Farmer from Durban have relocated to the area.

▣ Abe de Kock passed away on 28 July 2020. He was 95 years old.

▣ We have a very uncomplicated branch.

SAAFA

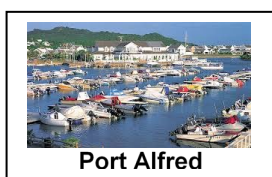


Pietermaritzburg

▣The Pietermaritzburg Branch did not host a lunch in July 2020 lunch due to the lockdown status of the country.

▣The branch membership remained at 10 members.

#### SAAFA



Port Alfred

▣The monthly meeting and lunch for members continue to be held in abeyance.

▣With the lockdown, the normal winter flu is being held at bay and members generally appear in good health.

▣One member, Peter Metcalfe, recently suffered a stroke but he is recovering and is doing well.

▣Audrey Geyer, our last WW2 WAAF member, celebrated her 96th birthday on Sunday 19th July.

▣A growing concern is that the lockdown will prevent the Victoria Cup Golf Competition will not take place in January 2021.

#### SAAFA



Port Elizabeth

▣PE Branch signed up 9 new members 8 of whom are from 108 Squadron.

▣There is a slim chance that the annual memorial service in September may take place.

▣Alternately the possibility of recording (audiovisual) a short virtual memorial service that can be distributed as an AV clip via What's app and e-mail is a possibility.

#### SAAFA



Pretoria

▣Karel (Rassie) Erasmus and Col Andre Retief passed on to higher service.

▣The Branch Meeting was held on 28 July 2020 for the first time since March 2020 as a Zoom Session.

▣6 new members joined in July.

▣The Lunches for Love contributions continued during July.

▣The weekly infamous Pretoria "Thirstday Evenings", have been successfully taking place "Virtually" every week thanks to Zoom sessions as arranged through Zenita Bowring. Time to enjoy beers and wine in the comfort of our own homes with good banter and stories been told on remote video feeds even to a few members overseas.

#### SAAFA



West Coast

▣The Chairman remains in contact with members using e-mails, what's app telephone calls, and a monthly "lockdown newsletter".

▣The Branch also started an additional fund, "Bystands Fonds" in case funds are needed in the future for individual welfare cases

▣Kevin Kilfoil, our good Secretary/Treasurer indicated recently that they as a family will be relocating to Somerset West by the end of August.

#### SAAFA



Whale Coast

▣Whale Coast (WC) managed a meeting, at a suitable venue on 16 July 2020.

At the end of July 2020, there were 98 names listed on the Whale Coast Branch database of which 69 members are active.

Arrangements for the 100th birthday of Michael Welchman on the 8<sup>th</sup> September are still in progress, with Christo Stroebeel doing the necessary coordination with family and the retirement estate.

SAAFA



Johannesburg

SAAFA



Kimberley

SAAFA



Lowveld

SAAFA



Soutpansberg

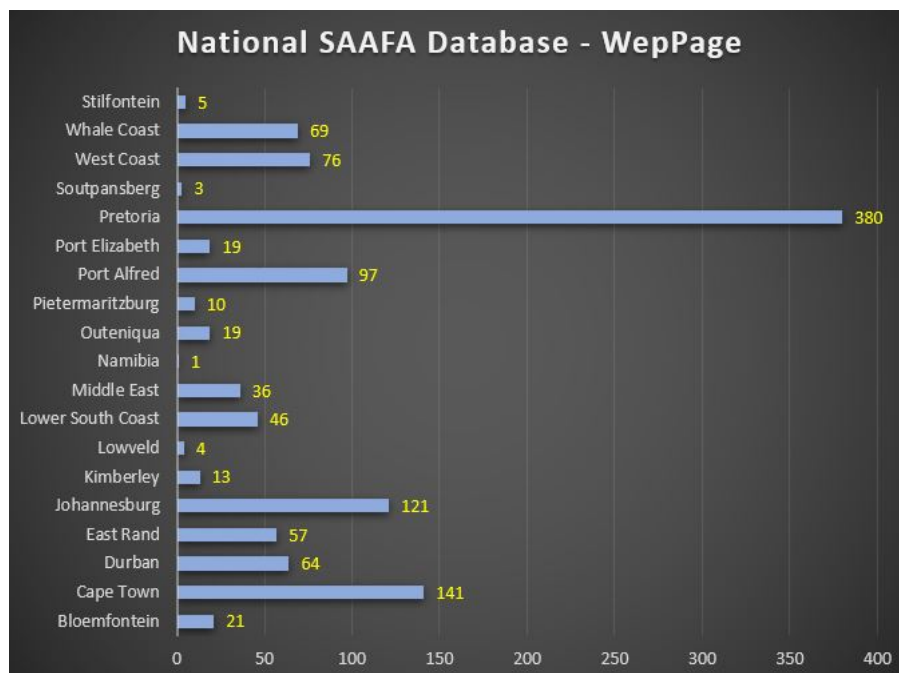
SAAFA



Stilfontein

SAAFA

## Status of National Database per branch





## SAAFA PRETORIA BRANCH



Pretoria, also known as Tshwane, is one of South Africa's three capital cities, serving as the seat of the executive branch of government, and as the host to all foreign embassies to South Africa. Pretoria straddles the Apies River and extends eastward into the foothills of the Magaliesberg mountains. It has a reputation as an academic city and center of research.

Pretoria is named after the Voortrekker leader Andries Pretorius, and South Africans sometimes call it the "Jacaranda City," because of the thousands of jacaranda trees planted along its streets and in its parks and gardens.

The Pretoria Branch of the SAAF Association is one of the five founding Branches which were approved at the first National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on 24 April 1945. The Pretoria Branch has always been fortunate to be located close to SAAF Headquarters as well as the largest concentration of SAAF Units, Bases, and Squadrons, which has contributed significantly to the number of Branch members. This has also provided excellent continuity for the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) Members. By being in the midst of the hub of these SAAF Units, Bases, and Squadrons, Pretoria has for the past number of years enjoyed the largest membership in SAAFA.

BEC members have over the years for the most part been people who have served both the SAAF and SAAFA with pride and these members include such notables as David van der Byl, Geoff Downer, Jules Moolman, Ken Smith, Duncan Ralston, John Boardman, Derrick Page, Des Lynch, Ken Snowball, Philip Weyers, Hugh Paine, and Neville Greyling as well as the serving SAAFA President, Mike Louw, to name but a few who have had a lasting impact on both the Pretoria Branch and SAAFA as a whole.

Pretoria is also home to several VIP's, namely our esteemed Patrons. The current Chief of the Air Force, Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang as well as previous Chiefs that still reside in the Jacaranda City, these being Lt Gen's A.M. Muller, W.H. Hechter and C. Gagiano.

Over the years, Pretoria Branch has hosted the annual SAAFA Congress on numerous occasions, most frequently utilising SAAF facilities, but on occasion also local hotels and resorts, including the Boulevard Hotel which was owned by Jimmy McLaughlin. Pretoria Branch was meant to the SAAFA 75 Congress this year, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic this was cancelled and a "Virtual AGM" was successfully held.

Also since we are in Pretoria we host the Annual Memorial Service at Bays Hill and are also invited to numerous Memorial Services or gatherings of other esteemed organisations including the Royal Air Force Association, the SA Korean War Veterans Organisation, the SA Legion, the Warsaw Flights Commemoration Committee, the Berlin Airlifters Committee, the Alpine 44 Club, the annual SAS Mendi Service at Attridgeville and different Country

National Days as a result of invites from the Military Attaché Corp.

## SAAFA PRETORIA BRANCH

Chairman



Bill de Pinho

Vice-Chairman



Johann Mostert

## 2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Membership



Nick Havenga

Treasurer



Carol Havenga

Secretary



Jaap Rossouw

Heritage



Renier Feldtman

SAAF/SAAFA



Zenita Bowring

Newsletter



Sallie Pretorious

Fundraising



Marianne Mostert

Camaraderie



Caro Duven

Benevolence



Philip Gouws

Heritage



Kevin de Beer

Events



Morney Versveld

The branch also has a few sub-committees which are run by enthusiastic members eager to ensure the well-being of the Branch, contribute unselfishly to fund-raising events and provide support at events as required.

Monthly Lunches are normally held on the second Friday of the month and we are fortunate to be able to utilise several different SAAF messes and other venues, such as the Airman's Mess at Swartkop West (Old SAAF Gym), SAAF College, the Officer's Mess at AFB Waterkloof and even the Lapa at 10 Air Depot. These lunches have however unfortunately not taken place since March this year due to the Lockdown restrictions, which is most unfortunate. This meant that funds raised during the lunches were impossible, or so we thought. Our members have however been exceptional, and many have donated funds towards our so-called "Lunches-of-Love", which is in-lieu

of monies that would have been spent had a member attended the luncheon.

"Thirstday" is held weekly on a Thursday evening at the Hartbees Officers Club / Pub at Swartkop which is at times attended by "legends" and other distinguished fellows to enjoy some good laughs, cheer, liquid refreshments and even "Boerie" rolls for those ordering in time. Well needless to say this has also been affected over the last five months of lockdown. Once again the Pretoria members came up with a fabulous idea to have "Zoom Thirstday Sessions" and we have enjoyed the true spirit of friendship and camaraderie via this "Virtual" connection – fun discussions and intimidating coin challenges (with fines for not being able to produce one's coin). Due to the closure of "Harties" our Barman, Nico was found wanting and once again members showed their compassion and raised some well-needed funds for him and wife via the so-called TT Fund ("Thirstday Tips").

What does COVID-19 mean to us in the greater scheme of things?

COVID-19 has meant a total adjustment to our way of life and suddenly appreciate what we previously took for granted. The following is a short “acrostics poem” to remember it!!

**C**      **CAMARADERIE** reigns supreme even with cancelled congress and lunches,  
**O**      **OPPORTUNITY** looms through shared hopes, lunches-for-love, and sacrifice,  
**V**      **VIRTUAL** times abound and are confirmed as we meet and greet on Zoom,  
**I**      **IMPROVISE** all that we need to do with WhatsApp, Emails, and cell phone calls,  
**D**      **DAYS** are confined and praying for the health of all our members near and far.  
**19(45)**   **75 YEARS** and counting, celebrating, and remembering our fallen heroes too.

We pray that all members of SAAFA and the greater SAAF will be healthy and continue to stay safe amid these troubling times. Friendly Greetings from the Pretoria Branch.

## FAMOUS ACE



(From Wikipedia)

While on patrol over the Dover area in September 1940, Pilot Officer Eric Lock of 41 Squadron RAF took on three Heinkel He 111s of the Luftwaffe and shot one down into the sea. He then attacked another German aircraft immediately afterward, using cool determination and great skill to destroy it. He was awarded a Bar to the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for this daring act of flying in October 1940. The details of this award also stated that he had ‘displayed great courage in the face of heavy odds’ and had destroyed ‘fifteen enemy aircraft within nineteen days.’

Eric Lock was one of the most famous aces of the Battle of Britain, officially recorded as having shot down 21 enemy aircraft. He was nicknamed ‘Sawn Off Lockie’ by his fellow pilots for his short stature and became popular in the British press for his flying successes. Lock went on to earn a Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and joined 611 Squadron in June 1941.

He was shot down during a mission near Boulogne, France, on 3 August 1941 and was never seen again.



# Warsaw Uprising

The Warsaw Uprising was a major World War II operation, in the summer of 1944, by the



Polish underground resistance, led by the Home Army, to liberate Warsaw from German occupation. The uprising was timed to coincide with the retreat of the German forces from Poland ahead of the Soviet advance. While approaching the eastern suburbs of the city, the Red Army temporarily halted combat operations, enabling the Germans to regroup and defeat the Polish resistance and to raze the city in reprisal. The Uprising was fought for 63 days with little outside support. It was the single largest military effort taken by any European resistance movement during World War II.

The Uprising began on 1 August 1944 as part of a nationwide Operation *Tempest*, launched at the time of the Soviet



Lublin–Brest Offensive. The main Polish objectives were to drive the Germans out of Warsaw while helping the Allies defeat Germany. An additional, political goal of the Polish Underground State was to liberate Poland's capital and

assert Polish sovereignty before the Soviet-backed Polish Committee of National Liberation could assume control. Other immediate causes included a threat of mass German round-ups of able-bodied Poles for "evacuation"; calls by Radio Moscow's Polish Service for uprising; and an emotional Polish desire for justice and revenge against the enemy after five years of German occupation.

Initially, the Poles established control over most of central Warsaw, but the Soviets ignored Polish attempts to make radio contact with them and did not advance beyond the city limits. Intense street-fighting

between the Germans and Poles continued. By 14 September, the eastern bank of the



German Stuka Ju 87 bombing

Vistula River opposite the Polish resistance positions was taken over by the Polish troops fighting under the Soviet command; 1,200 men made it across

the river, but they were not reinforced by the Red Army. This, and the lack of air support from the Soviet air base five-minutes flying time away, led to allegations that Joseph Stalin tactically halted his forces to let the operation fail and allow the Polish resistance to be crushed.



Home Army soldier

Winston Churchill pleaded with Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt to help Britain's Polish allies, to no avail. Then, without Soviet air clearance, Churchill sent over 200 low-level supply drops by the Royal Air Force, the **South African Air Force**, and the Polish Air Force under British High Command, in an operation known as the Warsaw Airlift.

## Airdrops

From 4 August the Western Allies began supporting the Uprising with airdrops of munitions and other supplies. Initially the flights were carried out mostly by the *1568th Polish Special Duties Flight* of the Polish Air Force No. 301 Polish Bomber Squadron, stationed in Bari and Brindisi in Italy, flying B-24 Liberator, Handley Page Halifax and Douglas C-47 Dakota planes. Later on, at the insistence of the Polish government-in-exile, they were joined by the Liberators of 2 Wing – **No.31 and No. 34 Squadrons of the South African Air Force** based at Foggia in Southern Italy, and Halifaxes, flown by No. 148 and No. 178 RAF Squadrons. The drops by British, Polish, and **South African** forces continued until 21 September. The total weight of allied drops varies according to source (104 tons, 230 tons and 239 tons), over 200 flights were made.

## Capitulation

By the first week of September both German and Polish commanders realized that the Soviet army was unlikely to act to break the stalemate. The Germans reasoned that a prolonged Uprising would damage their ability to hold Warsaw as the frontline; the Poles were concerned that continued resistance would result in further massive casualties. On 7 September, General Rohr proposed negotiations, which the Polish commander agreed to pursue the following day. Over 8, 9 and 10 September about 20,000 civilians were evacuated by agreement of both sides, and Rohr recognized the right of Home Army soldiers to be treated as military combatants. The Poles suspended talks on the 11th, as they received news that the Soviets were advancing slowly through Praga. A few days later, the arrival of the 1st Polish army breathed new life into the resistance and the talks collapsed.

However, by the morning of 27 September, the Germans had retaken Mokotów. Talks restarted on 28 September. In the evening of 30 September, Żoliborz fell to the Germans. The Poles were being pushed back into fewer and fewer streets, and their situation was ever more desperate. Again, an appeal for a Soviet intervention. None came. According to Soviets who were by this time at the Vistula front, advised Stalin against an offensive because of heavy Soviet losses.











Surrender of the Warsaw Uprising resistance, 5 October

The capitulation order of the remaining Polish forces was finally signed on 2 October. All fighting ceased that evening. According to the agreement, the Wehrmacht promised to treat Home Army soldiers in accordance with the Geneva Convention, and to treat the civilian population humanely.

## Summary of Uprising

Date:	1 August – 2 October 1944 (63 days)
Location:	Warsaw, Poland
Result:	German victory
Territorial Changes:	Destruction of city

## Belligerents



 Polish Underground State   Polish First Army (14 Sep)  <b>Supported by:</b>  Royal Air Force incl Polish Sqn's (4 Aug – 21 Sep)   South African Air Force   US Army Air Force (18 Sep)   Soviet Air Force (13 Sep)	 Germany   <b>Supported by:</b>  Luftwaffe
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## Units involved

 <b>Home Army</b> City Center - North City Center - South Powiśle Warsaw-North Żoliborz Kampinos Forest Warsaw-South Kedyw Units  <b>Polish First Army</b> 1st Infantry Division	 <b>Warsaw Garrison</b> Kampfgruppe Rohr Kampfgruppe Reinefarth Sturmgruppe Reck Sturmgruppe Schmidt Sturmgruppe Dirlwanger Schutzpolizei  <b>Supported by:</b>  Luftwaffe
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## Strength

<b>Range</b>  20,000 to 49,000 Initially 2,500 equipped with guns Initially	 Range 13,000 to 25,000 initially Throughout the course of uprising: ~ 50,000
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150,000–200,000 civilians killed  
700,000 expelled from the city.

## Casualties and losses

<b>Polish resistance:</b> 15,200 killed and missing 5,000 Wounded In Action 15,000 POW (Incl. capitulation agreement)	<b>German forces:</b> 8,000-17,000 killed Missing 9,000 Wounded in action
<b>Polish First Army:</b> 5,660 casualties <b>Warsaw Airlift:</b>	



August 1944 Warsaw Old Town in flames during Warsaw Uprising

## The South African connection Warsaw Uprising

Soon after the German occupation of Poland in September 1939, the Polish Liberation movements were formed to co-ordinate all resistance activities against the Germans.



On 1 August 1944, the Polish partisans led an uprising in Warsaw and occupied major sectors of the city. The situation in the city itself soon became desperate for the partisans. They needed armor and ammunition, as well as medical supplies.



On 3 August 1944, the Polish partisans in Warsaw called for urgent help from the Allies. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to send assistance. This operation became known as the Warsaw Airlift, also referred to as the 'Warsaw Concerto'.

The flights to Warsaw took place from 13 August to 22 September and represented a round trip of 2 815km. The aircraft flew over enemy territory and in broad daylight.

Supplies had to be accurately dropped on identified street areas or into specified air-supply zones.

On reaching the Vistula, the aircrews would become aware of a dim glow on the horizon as they approached, it would slowly become bigger until it developed into a bright inferno.

### This was Warsaw burning



Owing to the thermal effects of the fires in the burning city, the aircraft would shake wildly as they flew over at approximately 320 - 1000' AGL.

The hot air and smoke inside the aircraft would become almost intolerable.

The fires that lit the sky would make the aircraft easy targets for enemy machine guns positioned on the rooftops.



### No OF AIRCRAFT LOST DURING WARSAW AIRLIFT

Squadron	No of ac	No ac lost	%ac Lost
178	21	4	19.1
31	26	8	30.8
148	22	3	13.6
1586	14	7	50
34	3	1	33.3
<b>Totals</b>	86	23	26.7

**TOTAL OF 485 CONTAINERS DROPPED  
100% Success**

Today, the aircrews are honored for their brave actions when the Polish community gathers in Johannesburg in September every year to commemorate these events. Squadrons are widely praised for the courageous conduct perseverance and sense of duty which they exhibited whilst participating in the

**Josef Garlinski** (Polish historian) said: *'the great sacrifice of the young men who died with the full knowledge that their death could not alter the course of the events, is an example of the utmost **HEROISM**'*,



## Battle of Britain

(excerpt from a speech given by Philip Weyers at RAF College Cranwell)

The Battle of Britain, the greatest air battle ever fought, with very likely the direst consequences in the event of the Royal Air Force not having prevailed, is what we remember here today, 75 years on.

If the second report of Smuts was one of the most significant in the history of airpower, then surely the letter addressed by later Lord Dowding to the Air Ministry on 16 May 1940 could quite conceivably be said to have changed the history of the world.

*Sir,*

*I have the honour to refer to the very serious calls which have recently been made upon the Home Defence Fighter' Units in an attempt to stem the German invasion on the Continent.*

*I hope and believe that our Armies may yet be victorious in France and Belgium, but we have to face the possibility that they may be defeated.*

*For this purpose, it is necessary to retain a minimum fighter strength in this country and I must request that the Air Council will inform me what they consider this minimum strength to be.*

*I would remind the Air Council that the last estimate which they made as to the force necessary to defend this country was 52 Squadrons, and my strength has now been reduced to the equivalent of 36 Squadrons.*

*Once a decision has been reached as to the limit on which the Air Council and the Cabinet are prepared to stake the existence of the country, it should be made clear to the Allied Commanders on the Continent that not a single aeroplane from Fighter Command beyond the limit will be sent across the Channel, no matter how desperate the situation may become.*

*It will, of course, be remembered that the estimate of 52 Squadrons was based on the assumption that the attack would come from the eastwards.... We have now to face the possibility that attacks may come from Spain or even from further North.... The result is that our line is very much extended at the time as our resources are reduced.*

*I must point out that within the last few days the equivalent of 10 Squadrons has been sent to France, that the Hurricane Squadrons remaining in this country are seriously depleted, and that the more Squadrons which are sent to France the higher will be the wastage and the more insistent the demands for reinforcements.*

*I must, therefore, request that as a matter of paramount urgency the Air Ministry will consider and decide what level of strength is to be left to Fighter Command for the defences of this country, and will assure me that when this level has been reached, not one fighter will be sent across the Channel however urgent and insistent the appeals for help maybe.*

*I believe that, if an adequate fighter force is kept in this country, if the Fleet remains in being, and if Home Forces are suitably organised to resist invasion, we should be able to carry on the war single-handed for some time, if not indefinitely. But, if the Home Defence Force is drained away in desperate attempts to remedy the situation in France, defeat in France will involve the final, complete and irremediable defeat of this country.*

*I have the honour to be,  
Sir, Your obedient Servant*

In essence, Dowding said to the Air Ministry that it was pointless sending aircraft to France for re-enforcement, France was lost, and England was going to be hard-pressed to defend herself against the German onslaught that was sure to follow.

On 18 May 1940, while France was dying, Churchill made his now "immortal" speech to Parliament:

"What General Weygand has called the Battle of France is over ... the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be freed, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands.

But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us, therefore, brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, this was their finest hour."

The Battle of Britain officially began on 10 July and ended on 31 October 1940 and it was a short and intense battle that was to change the course of history.

At the commencement of the battle, Germany had a total of 2698 aircraft, of which 1835 were serviceable, and England 954, of which 716 were serviceable. The odds were surely against England.

Rather than delve into and recite statistics, I thought I would share some thoughts expressed by the few:

Wing Commander Neil recalled his being one of The Few thus:

*"We did nothing but take off, shoot at the enemy, land, go to sleep, take off again, do the same; three, four, five times a day. That was our life. The Battle of Britain to me was just a horrendously tough rugby match in which the penalty of losing was death, whereas in a rugby match you probably break a leg or a collarbone or something like that. There, the penalty was much more severe"*

*"Dogfighting exacts a fearsome toll from the frail human body and its senses, aside from the immediate stress of combat. Flying at 30 000 ft in an unpressurised environment with no cockpit heating and little by way of special flying clothing, the din pounds the eardrums and the g-forces lead to blood draining from the brain causing the nightmare of blackouts.*

*The pilot has to summon every ounce of his physical and mental strength to maintain control against the huge elemental forces acting against his body, mind and aircraft. The environment inside the cockpit was as hostile as the one outside"*

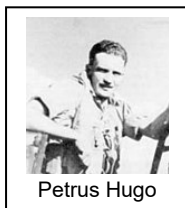
The Battle of Britain was flown and fought, for the most part, by English pilots, but there were many others including Canadians, Poles, Australians, New Zealanders and of course, South Africans.

To put a subjective twist to the Battle of Britain, South African's played a significant role, not in terms of numbers, but certainly in terms of influence and effect.

The most famous of our Battle of Britain pilots was Adolf Gysbert Malan, DSO & Bar, DFC & Bar known as "Sailor" as he was a seaman before deciding to become a pilot. Group Captain Sailor Malan is along with Air Vice Marshal Johnny Johnson probably the most definitive Battle of Britain fighter pilot, and he wrote: "Ten of my rules for Air Fighting" which were adopted by the Royal Air Force as the doctrine which was to be followed during the Battle of Britain. Sailor Malan scored 27 kills, 7 shares, 3 probables and 16 damaged. The man remains a legend.

## “Ten of my rules for Air Fighting”

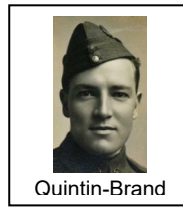
1. *Wait until you see the whites of his eyes. Fire short bursts of 1 to 2 seconds and only when your sights are definitely “ON”*
2. *Whilst shooting think of nothing else, brace the whole of the body, have both hands on the stick, concentrate on your ring site.*
3. *Always keep a sharp lookout. “Keep your finger out”.*
4. *Height gives You the initiative*
5. *Always turn and face the attack*
6. *Make your decisions promptly. It’s better to act quickly even though your tactics are not the best.*
7. *Never fly straight and level for more than 30 seconds in the combat area*
8. *When diving to attack always leave a portion of your formation above to act as top guard.*
9. *INITIATIVE, AGGRESSION, AIR DISCIPLINE and TEAMWORK are the words that MEAN something in Air Fighting*
10. *Go in quickly – Punch hard – get out!*



Petrus Hugo

Group Captain Petrus “Dutch” Hugo, DSO, DFC & 2 Bars was another South African who excelled, 17 kills, 3 shares, 3 probables and 7 damaged. Petrus Hugo was nicknamed

“Dutch” because his Afrikaans accent was so acute the British battled to understand him.



Quintin-Brand

Air Vice-Marshal Sir Quintin-Brand, KBE, DSO, MC, DFC was a most accomplished aviator, who in 1920 flew with General Sir Pierre van Ryneveld on their epic trip from London to the east of Pretoria, and for which he was knighted. During the Battle of Britain, he commanded 10 Group, which was charged with the defence of South-west England and Wales.

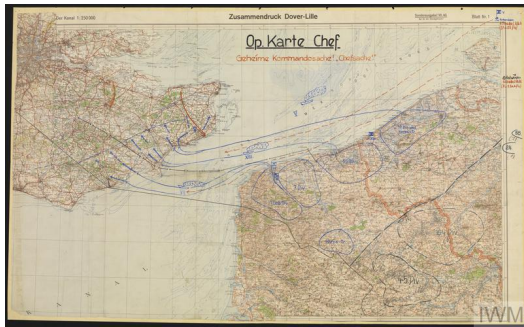




# Eight THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

(From the Imperial War Museum)

## 1. HITLER PLANNED TO INVADE BRITAIN IN 1940



Adolf Hitler had expected the British to seek a peace settlement after Germany's defeat of France in June 1940, but Britain was determined to fight on.

Hitler explored military options that would bring the war to a quick end and ordered his armed forces to prepare for an invasion of Britain – codenamed Operation 'Sealion'. But for the invasion to have any chance of success, the Germans needed to first secure control of the skies over southern England and remove the threat posed by the Royal Air Force (RAF). A sustained air assault on Britain would achieve the decisive victory needed to make 'Sealion' a possibility – or so the Germans thought.

## 2. THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN SAW THE RAF TAKE ON THE GERMAN AIR FORCE



The Battle of Britain was ultimately a test of strength between the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) and the RAF.

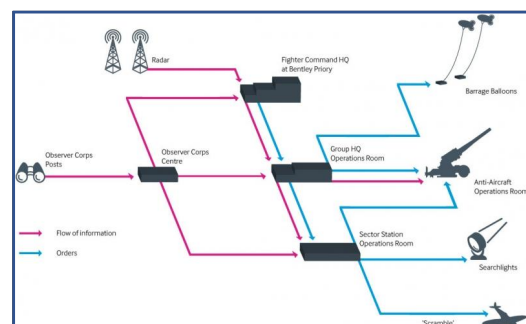


The RAF had become an independent branch of the British armed forces in 1918. Although it developed slowly in the years following the First World War, it went through a period of rapid expansion in the latter half of the 1930s – largely in response to the growing threat from Nazi Germany. In July 1936, RAF Fighter Command was established under the leadership of Air Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding.



Germany had been banned from having an air force after the First World War, but the Luftwaffe was re-established by the Nazi government and by 1940 it was the largest and most formidable air force in the world. It had suffered heavy losses in the Battle of France but by August the three air fleets (*Luftflotten*) that would assault Britain were at full readiness. The RAF met this challenge with some of the best fighter aircraft in the world – the Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire.

## 3. THE BRITISH HAD A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AIR DEFENCE NETWORK



The British developed an air defence network that would give them a critical advantage in the Battle of Britain. The Dowding System – named for Fighter

Command's Commander-in-Chief Sir Hugh Dowding – brought together technology such as radar, ground defences and fighter aircraft into a unified system of defence.

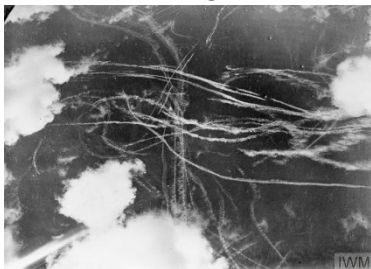
The RAF organised the defence of Britain into four geographical areas, called 'Groups', which were further divided into sectors. The main fighter airfield in each sector – the 'Sector Station' – was equipped with an operations room from which the fighters were directed into combat.

Radar gave early warning of Luftwaffe raids, which were also tracked by the Observer Corps. Information on incoming raids was passed to the Filter Room at Fighter Command Headquarters at Bentley Priory. Once the direction of the raid was established, the information was sent to the relevant Group's headquarters. From there it was sent to the Sector Stations, which would 'scramble' fighters into action. The Sector Stations received updated information as it became available and further directed airborne fighters by radio. The operations rooms also directed other elements of the defence network, including anti-aircraft guns, searchlights, and barrage balloons.

The Dowding System could process huge amounts of information in a short period. It allowed Fighter Command to manage its valuable – and relatively limited – resources, making sure they were not wasted.

#### 4.

### **THERE WERE SEVERAL PHASES TO THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN**



The Battle of Britain took place between July and October 1940. The Germans began by

attacking coastal targets and British shipping operating in the English Channel.

They launched their main offensive on 13 August. Attacks moved inland, concentrating on airfields and communications centres. Fighter Command offered stiff resistance, despite coming under enormous pressure. During the last week of August and the first week of September, in what would be the critical phase of the battle, the Germans intensified their efforts to destroy Fighter Command. Airfields, particularly those in the south-east, were significantly damaged but most remained operational. On 31 August, Fighter Command suffered its worst day of the entire battle. But the Luftwaffe was overestimating the damage it was inflicting and wrongly concluded that the RAF was on its last legs. Fighter Command was bruised but not broken.

On 7 September, the Germans shifted the weight of their attacks away from RAF targets and onto London. This would be an error of critical importance. The raids had devastating effects on London's residents, but they also gave Britain's defences time to recover. On 15 September Fighter Command repelled another massive Luftwaffe assault, inflicting severe losses that were becoming increasingly unsustainable for the Germans. Although fighting would continue for several more weeks, it had become clear that the Luftwaffe had failed to secure the air superiority needed for invasion. Hitler indefinitely postponed Operation 'Sealion'.

#### 5.

### **NOT ALL OF THE PILOTS WERE BRITISH**



Nearly 3,000 men of the RAF took part in the Battle of Britain – those who Winston Churchill called ‘The Few’. While most of the pilots were British, Fighter Command was an international force. Men came from all over the Commonwealth and occupied Europe – from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Belgium, France, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. There were even some pilots from the neutral United States and Ireland.

Two of the four Group Commanders, 11 Group’s Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park and 10 Group’s Air Vice-Marshal Sir Quintin Brand, came from New Zealand and South Africa, respectively. The War Cabinet created two Polish fighter squadrons, Nos. 302 and 303, in the summer of 1940. These were followed by other national units, including two Czech fighter squadrons.

Many of the RAF’s aces were men from the Commonwealth and the highest scoring pilot of the Battle was Josef Frantisek, a Czech pilot flying with No. 303 (Polish) Fighter Squadron. No. 303 entered the battle on 31 August, at the peak of the Battle of Britain, but quickly became Fighter Command’s highest claiming squadron with 126 kills.

## 6.

### **‘THE FEW’ WERE SUPPORTED BY MANY**



Many people in addition to Churchill’s ‘Few’ worked to defend Britain. Ground crew – including riggers, fitters, armourers, and repair and maintenance engineers – looked after the aircraft. Factory workers helped keep aircraft production up. The Observer Corps tracked incoming raids – its tens of thousands of volunteers ensured that the 1,000 observation posts were continuously

manned. Anti-aircraft gunners, searchlight operators and barrage balloon crews all played vital roles in Britain’s defence. Members of the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) served as radar operators and worked as plotters, tracking raids in the group and sector operations rooms. The Local Defence Volunteers (later the Home Guard) had been set up in May 1940 as a ‘last line of defence’ against German invasion. By July, nearly 1.5 million men had enrolled.

## 7.

### **ALL OF THE RAF HELPED DEFEND BRITAIN**



The RAF was organised into different ‘Commands’ based on function or role, including Fighter, Bomber and Coastal Commands. While victory in the Battle of Britain was decisively gained by Fighter Command, the defence was carried out by the whole of the Royal Air Force. Britain’s most senior military personnel understood the importance of the bomber in air defence. They wrote on 25 May: ‘We cannot resist invasion by fighter aircraft alone. An air striking force is necessary not only to meet the sea-borne expedition but also to bring direct pressure to bear upon Germany by attacking objectives in that country’.

In other words, RAF Bomber Command would attack German industry, carry out raids on ports where Germany was assembling its invasion fleet, and reduce the threat posed by the Luftwaffe by targeting airfields and aircraft production. RAF Coastal Command also had an important role. It carried out anti-invasion patrols, provided vital intelligence on German positions along the European coast and occasionally bombed German shipping and industrial targets.



8.

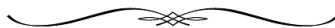
**THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN WAS A DEFENSIVE VICTORY FOR BRITAIN**



During the Battle of Britain, the Luftwaffe was dealt an almost lethal blow from which it never fully recovered.

Although Fighter Command suffered heavy losses and was often outnumbered during actual engagements, the British outproduced the Germans and maintained a level of aircraft production that helped them withstand their losses. The Luftwaffe, with its lack of heavy bombers and failure to fully identify critically important targets, never inflicted strategically significant damage. It suffered from constant supply problems, largely because of underachievement in aircraft production. Germany's failure to defeat the RAF and secure control of the skies over southern England made invasion all but impossible. British victory in the Battle of Britain was decisive, but ultimately defensive— in avoiding defeat, Britain secured one of its most significant victories of the Second World War. It was able to stay in the war and lived to fight another day.

So why was the Battle of Britain important? Victory in the Battle of Britain did not win the war, but it made winning a possibility in the longer term. Four years later, the Allies would launch their invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe – Operation 'Overlord' – from British shores, which would prove decisive in ultimately bringing the war against Germany to an end.



Battle of Britain Anniversary, 1943 RAF Parade at Buckingham Palace  
by Charles Cundall.





## 2020 Theme: Shaping Peace Together

The International Day of Peace ("Peace Day") is observed around the world each year on 21 September. Established in 1981 by unanimous United Nations resolution, Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and to contribute to building a Culture of Peace.

The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.

This year, it has been clearer than ever that we are not each other's enemies. Rather, our common enemy is a tireless virus that threatens our health, security and very way of life. COVID-19 has thrown our world into turmoil and forcibly reminded us that what happens in one part of the planet can impact people everywhere.

In March, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on all warring parties to lay down their weapons and focus on the battle against this unprecedented global pandemic. While the message is intended for armed parties, solidarity and cooperation across borders, sectors and generations are also needed to win this new fight against the worst public health crisis of our time.

### Shaping Peace Together



#### Past Observances

- 2019 - Climate Action for Peace
- 2018 - The Right to Peace: Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70
- 2017 - Together for Peace: Respect, Safety and Dignity for All
- 2016 - The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace
- 2015 - Partnerships for Peace - Dignity for All
- 2014 - The Right of Peoples to Peace
- 2013 - Education for Peace
- 2012 - Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future
- 2011 - Peace and Democracy: Make your voice heard!
- 2010 - Youth for Peace and Development
- 2009 - Disarmament and non-proliferation
- 2008 - Human Rights and Peacekeeping
- 2007 - Peace is the United Nations' highest calling





## The Extensive Team required to keep a Lancaster fully operational



**Top Left:** Petrol Bowser and crew.

**Top Right:** Mobile Workshop and crew.

### **Second Row** down:

Corporal Mechanic, 4 Aircraftsmen (Mechanics), Engineer Officer, Fitter (Armourer),  
3 Armourers, Radio Mechanic, 2 Instrument Repairs, 3 Bomb Handlers, Fitter

### **Third Row** from bottom:

Bomb train with WAAF Driver and Bombing-up Crew

### **Second Row** from bottom:

Flight Maintenance Crew, from left as follows  
NCO Fitter, Mechanic, NCO Fitter, 5 Mechanics, Electrical Mechanic, Instrument Repair,  
2 Radio Mechanics

### **Bottom Row** from left:

Flying Control Officer, WAAF Parachute Packer, Meteorological Officer,  
**Aircrew:** Pilot, Navigator, Air Bomber, Flight Engineer, Wireless Operator/Air Gunner,  
2 Air Gunners.

Of the 2500 Personnel who were housed on a Wartime Bomber Command Airfield, only 10% were Aircrew. Dozens of others were required to prepare each Lancaster for Flight and the Ground Crew were most appreciated by the Aircrew.

Generally working outside, the conditions, especially in the winter, were often windswept, wet, and cold. The contributions to the successes of the effort cannot be overemphasised.

The Ground-crew which were associated with each aircraft took immense pride in “their” Aircraft and would joke that they were only “loaning” the Bomber for a few hours and that the Aircrew were not to break it.



# The Roll of the Ground Crews Keeping the Lancasters in the air

(PATHFINDER CRAIG)

Master Bomber

The task of keeping an aircraft serviceable for operations was the task of very dedicated ground crew, the silent heroes of the Air Force.

The ground crew was made up of skilled Craftsmen who Serviced & Repaired the Lancasters. Given the nature of the tasks the Lancaster's were having to perform, this



From Wikipedia

must have been an incredibly difficult job.

Working around the clock at the lonely dispersal points, in all weathers, perched high above the ground toiling to

get their Lancaster ready for the Night's Operation and doing everything possible to ensure that no fault could occur which would endanger the safety of their Flight Crew.

The hardest of all, how they must have felt after waiting for hours for "their" Lanc to return and then the sad realisation that it would not be coming back to the now lonelier dispersal. Another 7 men who would never be seen again but also never forgotten.

The basis for a Ground Crew was the Flight. Within a Flight of Aircraft (which could range from 6-9 Aircraft), Ground Crew would be designated to service certain Aircraft. Ideally, one Aircrew would have one Aircraft, but often this was not possible, and the Crews would have more than one Aircraft to look after. These men took great pride in their Aircraft. It was often felt, and very often said, that the Ground Crews "owned" the Aircraft and "lent" them to Aircrew provided that they bring them back in one piece.

No examination of squadron operations can be very complete without a look at the

usually overlooked ground-crew, or "Erks ". They were the key to the ability of the squadron to conduct operations. Not only did they do their work well, but they often did it under terrible conditions. Former aircrews always have incredibly high praise for these men. Every squadron had exceptionally large ground staff to keep it running. The Chief Administrative Officer of the squadron was the Adjutant, usually at least a flying-officer or above in Rank. Often a Veteran of WWI or an Officer too old for flying duties the Adjutant answered directly to the Commanding Officer of the Squadron

Under the Adjutant's command were the Supplies Officer, Intelligence Officer, Catering Officer, Medical Officer, Signals Officer, Armaments Officer & Engineering Officer. Under each of these would be a complete Unit responsible for a specific facet of the Squadron's life. The men in these Units would be NCO's – Sergeants & Flight Sergeants – and "Rankers" – Corporals, Leading Aircraftmen, and Aircraftmen 1 & 2 (AC1 & AC2). The Catering-Officer would have several Cooks under his Command, the Medical Officer would have Orderlies and other Assistants, and so on. In addition to these, each Squadron had, from its flying component, an Operations Leader in each of the Aircrew "Trades ", who held responsibilities in addition to regular Flying Duties. These positions were Gunnery Leader, Bombing Leader, Navigation Leader, & Signals Leader.

The Team was vital to the success of every Mission by keeping the Squadron's Aircraft fully Serviceable and they were ever mindful of the Crew's risks. They only 'loaned' the Lancaster Aircraft to the Air Crew on the promise that they bring her back safe & sound and without any damage.

## Three Cheers for the Man on the Ground

*Flight Mechanic E Sykes (1942).*

Wherever you walk, you will hear people talk,  
of the men who go up in the air,  
of the daredevil way, they go into the fray;  
Facing death without turning a hair.

They'll raise a big cheer and buy lots of beer,  
for the pilot who's come home on leave,  
but they don't give a jigger, for a flight mech or rigger,  
with nothing but "props" on his sleeve.

They just say "Nice day" – and then turn away,  
with never a mention of praise,  
or the poor bloody erk, who does all the work,  
and just orders his own beer – and pays!

They've never been told, of the hours in the cold,  
that he spends sealing Germany's fate,  
how he works on a kite, till all hours of the night,  
and then turns up next morning at eight.

He gets no rake-off, for working 'til take-off,  
or helping the aircrew prepare,  
but whenever there's trouble – it's "Quick at the double",  
the man on the ground must be there.

Each flying crew could confirm it as true,  
that they know what this man's really worth,  
they know that he's part of the RAF's heart,  
even though he stays close to the earth.

He doesn't want glory, but please tell his story,  
Spread a little of his fame around,  
He's just one of a few – so, give him his due,  
and "Three Cheers for the man on the ground"

# Call back the past

From

**SAAFA Newsletter Update No 114**

**September 2000**

## **RAF tribute**

In a special article on the Korean conflict, the RAFA magazine *Air Mail* commented that “the South African Air Force also made a most valuable contribution to the UN air effort” It then devotes several pages to the South African contribution.

It concludes: A unique tribute came from the CO of 18<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber Wing who directed that all Wing retreat ceremonies should be preceded by the introductory bars of the South African Anthem Die Stem van Suid Afrika with all personnel honouring the anthem as their own.

## **A trenchant drama staged with only one prop**

East Rand Branch's newsletter recalls a desert incident where mechanics sitting under their Bostons dived for cover when strafed by Me109's. On returning to their planes a short while later, one turned pale and trembly.

As other gave him support, he pointed to the propeller of his unscratched aircraft idling, innocently. There seemed to be no problem – until he explained his near-collapse: “I ran right through that prop!” he gasped.

**Durban.** An informal meeting between National President **Derrick Page**, Branch Chairman **Harry Oldfield** and Treasurer **John Boardman** came to the conclusion that the theme for the 2002 Congress would be “a happy one”. So, there will be no departure from the norm?

## **Allen earned three DFC's for cover work**

Flt-Lt Mike Allen may have set a couple of records while providing cover for heavy bombers during their raids on Germany in WWII.

As a navigator and radar operator, he flew with the same pilot, **Harry White**, for almost four years and earned three DFC's. The pair accounted for at least 12 enemy aircraft.

White went on to become an air commodore; Allen died in June at the age of 78.

Michael Seamer Allen was born on March 16, 1923 at Croydon, Surrey and educated at Hurstpierpoint College, Sussex. He then studied mechanical engineering at night school before being apprenticed to Fairey Aviation.

Allen's father was also in the aviation business and persuaded Fairey to release his son for service.

Known in Bomber Command as “The Old Firm”, the partnership of White and Allen on night fighters was deemed to be unusually long. They were both barely 20 years old.

Having honed their skills on Bristol Beaufighters, the pair flew Mosquitoes towards the end of the war.

Their closest shave was while taking off on an op in January 1945. Their Mosquito nose-dived into the ground as an engine failed and threw the men into a heap in the cabin, with Allen's foot jammed, White pinned underneath him and the aircraft on fire.

White reached for the axe to mutate Allen's foot – but they were pulled free by a farmer and two laborers' just before the conflagration.

Mike was a member of Pretoria Branch and Honorary Vice-President of the Association

The presentation of the USA Higgins Langley award to SAAF helicopter squadrons has been postponed until November, **Marthie Visser** reported to NEC.



## Memorial Services 2020/21

### SEPTEMBER 2020

6	11H00	WARSAW Flight Commemoration Service	TBN	Johannesburg
13	10h30	RLI RAFA Battle of Britain Service	Bedfordview	Johannesburg
13	09h00	International Day of Peace Service	NGK Raslow	Pretoria

### OCTOBER 2020

11/18	10H00	Alphine 44 Memorial Service	Bays Hill	Pretoria
25	11h00	Battle of El Alamein Pretoria District MOTH	Coal Box MK2	Pretoria

### NOVEMBER 2020

1	09H30	Italian Prisoners of War Memorial Service	Italian Cemetery	Zonderwater
8	11h00	Remembrance Sunday Memorial Service	Union Buildings	Pretoria
8	11h00	Remembrance Sunday Memorial Service		Johannesburg
11	17h30	Cornwall Hill Service	Cornwall Hill	Pretoria

### DECEMBER 2020

6	09h00	SAMHS Veterans Ass Memorial Service	1 Mil	Pretoria
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## Unconscious Pilot's Safe Landing

By

Sapa's War Correspondent Cairo Monday 1943

Lieutenant G.G. Patterson, a South African fighter pilot had an amazing experience when the fighter plane he was flying landed in the Tripolitania desert (Libya) while he was unconscious. This is the second case of this kind in the present push involving a South African pilot.

Lieut. Patterson was one of a formation that



ME 109

flew to intercept seven ME109's west of Sirte. On spotting the enemy aircraft the South Africans turned in to

attack and a dog fight ensued at about 30 000ft.

During the flight Lieut. Patterson's aircraft developed an oil leak and fumes poured into the cockpit. He lost consciousness but came to for a couple of seconds at 10 000ft. He again lost consciousness and when he came to for the second time he was still in the cock-

pit of the aircraft, which had been on the ground for about 10 minutes when he recovered.

### FIVE FEET ABOVE THE GROUND

He climbed out of his machine and was met by a party of British soldiers, who told him that the aircraft had flown a straight course over their camp for about half a mile 5ft. from the ground.

The soldiers took Lieut. Patterson to the main road and handed him over to a RAF officer, who drove him back to the squadron. His only injuries were two black eyes.

On the same flight, Lieut. D. Rogan, South Africa's one-foot pilot secured another probable, and on the following day, the same squadron ran into another formation of ME109's, one of which was destroyed by Lieut. M.E. Robinson.





Spring has sprung and we are one lockdown level closer to freedom, that is what we hope will happen.

September is a significant month for us, with some of our most notable commemorative events taking place, namely "The Battle of Britain" and "The Warsaw Fights".

One thing is for sure, Branch News has more information to share than an average month. Would it not be amazing to see that all the branches are populated with information? Some members have indicated that Branch News is the only way that they get information from friends in their previous careers, it is imperative that we do not underestimate the unique role our newsletter plays.

We are now at the end of base leg, soon turning the final approach as Christmas is only three months away. Now that things are opening again, it is time to open the hangar doors and enjoy the company of our fellow members retelling old stories.

I am interested in publishing some stories closer to home in future editions of the Flying Spirit, and ask you kindly reach out with tales and quips of times past, even musings I am eager to hear from all of you! Please keep sending inputs and stories to [olmesdahl@gmail.com](mailto:olmesdahl@gmail.com) or the national branch who will then forward it to me.

Keep washing those hands, wearing your masks, and do not forget the social distance, see you on the computer screen.



*Thank You*

Marianne; Philip; Des,

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