



SAAFA

Flying Spirit

January 2021





President's Message

Col Mike Louw (ret)

As the clock winds down for 2020 it is natural to pause and reflect on the events of the past year, a year that initially held so much promise to be a memorable one indeed. Little did we know that we would end up remembering 2020 for several reasons other than intended. For a number of our SAAFA members, it has been a traumatic year indeed, with some having suffered the effects of being infected with the dreaded Covid-19 virus, whilst others have sadly succumbed to the effects of the virus. They will be remembered.

As a country, we have returned to a more stringent lockdown level which sadly impacts negatively upon the very nature of our social beings. However, with the advantages of modern technology, we should make use of all possible means to maintain contact with each other, particularly with the elderly and those living in solitude or places of care. Camaraderie, as one of the fundamental pillars of our Association, should remain paramount in all we do. From this, the other founding fundamentals of SAAFA in terms of remembrance/heritage, benevolence, and support to the SAAF/general aviation, should naturally flow and manifest themselves.

Fortunately, we as SAAFA were able to celebrate our 75th birthday on the date of inception, 26 January, and this was also followed by the hosting of a National Banquet and Awards Evening during November. Circumstances permitting, we intend to continue with our planned celebrations during 2021, including the hosting of the Silver Queen Air Rally in celebration of the "centenary plus 1" of the epic historic flight between Great Britain and South Africa. Together with our partners and other stakeholders such as the SAAF and the Aero Club of SA, we will explore ways and means of continuing with milestone celebrations that were meant to have been held this past year.

Despite the challenges of the past year, I have been truly impressed with the innovative manner in which Branches have continued to uphold the ideals of our Association. I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all our Branch Chairpersons and the members of their Branch Executive Committees for their sterling efforts. Such service above self is exemplary indeed. To all the members of the SAAFA National Executive Committee, I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to them for their unselfish service and support over the past year. Together we will continue to ensure that SAAFA not only grows from strength to strength but that it will continue to uphold and live out the ideals of SAAFA as envisaged by its founding fathers so many years ago.

In closing, I would like to wish all SAAFA members and their families God's richest blessings for the forthcoming year. May your ideals be realised and may you be blessed with good health, much love, joy, and peace.

Happy New Year!!!!

God bless.

Mike Louw
SAAFA National President



MILITARY ATTACHÉ AND ADVISOR CORPS'



As we are all painfully aware, 2020 has been a year like none other, ever. We mourn the loss of family, friends, and colleagues and it is doubtful that there is any among us who has not experienced tragedy during the year. As has been noted in previous months, the Diplomatic missions in South Africa have without exception had to comply with their own countries' Covid protocols in addition to those imposed by our own NCCC, tenuous as ours might sometimes seem.

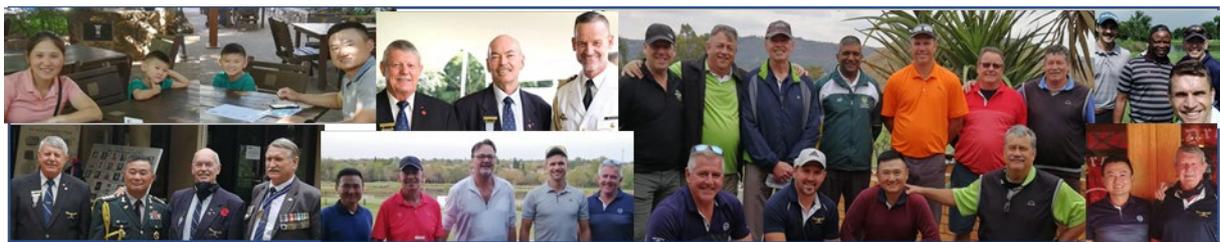
As a result of the extraordinary circumstances and consequences, the MAAC community have of necessity had to stay well off the radar, and only after the relaxation of their regulations as well as ours did a few of the DA's emerge from obligatory hibernation and take hesitant steps on the path to the new normal.

The Korean Embassy, long close friends of SAAFA, held their "Turn Towards Busan" event, the function of which is to recognise the substantial contribution made by 2 Sqn to the Korean War and remember those who did not come home. The event was of necessity curtailed both to conform to capacity constraints, but also most importantly to ensure that the SAKWVA Veterans and their widows were not exposed to the risk of infection. Sincere thanks are due to Col Byunchul Lee, Ansie Everleigh, and of course our colleague Dirk Louw, President of SAKWVA.

On a more casual note, both the DA from the Republic of China (Taiwan), Col Jeff Lin, and the First Secretary of the Embassy of the Czech Republic, Viktor Dolista, hosted golf games with various members of SAAFA and the SAAF. Both missions see these as valuable opportunities to interact with both organisations. Col Jeff Lin is about to depart our shores after an extremely successful tour. Despite not enjoying diplomatic accreditation due to political whims, he nonetheless made a tremendous effort to establish a Taiwanese presence and create meaningful relationships and succeeded in both endeavours with remarkable success. Col Lin is certainly one of the stand-out DA's of the past number of years and a huge credit to both Taiwan and the RoCAF. SAAFA will miss him!

Several Diplomatic missions hosted on-line National Day ceremonies which were virtually attended by members of SAAFA.

For the new year, the current one mercifully about to come shortly to an end, SAAFA will continue its endeavours to maintain existing MAAC relationships and to establish camaraderie with the DA's who have arrived during the past months, most notably those from Japan and Taiwan. We look forward to a new year when we might be able again to enjoy the company of our colleagues from foreign shores, albeit under rather different circumstances than we all enjoyed in the days of the "old" normal.



MAAC 2020



- ▶ A committee meeting will be conducted prior to the AGM scheduled for the second week of February in order to do some strategy planning and discuss the way forward in the light of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic.
- ▶ As the well-known buzzword says “we will have to apply our minds to address the challenges of the current pandemic” in order to reactivate our activities and continue with a positive but responsible branch program in 2021 in spite of the limitations of the current situation.
- ▶ The 2021 AGM is planned for Wednesday 10 February at the Riviera Hotel, Velddrif. With better clarity regarding the status of the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee should be able to ensure that all Covid regulations, limitations and protocols pertaining to the hosting of public gatherings/meetings will be strictly adhered to, including applicable preventative measures during the AGM to really ensure the safety of our members.
- ▶ Planning is already in the process for the hosting of the Yearly Bowls Day in Langebaan during the first week of March 2021.
- ▶ Members are urged again to remain in contact with each other, share every bit of news on activities and welfare of all and please inform the committee/ Chairman with regards to any news related to the Branch and individual members.

SAAFA



- ▶ Members of the branch attended a small memorial service on 11 Nov, at the Memorial Wall at Ysterplaat, wreaths laid by the chairman for SAAFA, Carl Moatshe one on behalf of the Base, and the Moths.
- ▶ The Annual Poppy day service organised by the City of Cape Town, had to be moved indoors at Civic Centre due to bad weather, Kevin Sampson laid the SAAFA wreath. This was followed by lunch at Officers mess which we hosted some of the guests.
- ▶ The final event will be our Christmas lunch on Tuesday 8th December at Goodwood Sports Club.
- ▶ The last newsletter will be going out shortly.
- ▶ Regards from an extremely windy Western Cape which normally means rain in the North.

SAAFA



- ▶ We had a meeting at the North Gate Lodge to discuss branch matters and plans for next year followed by lunch and some refreshments in excellent company.
- ▶ The next meeting will be in January on a date to be determined.

SAAFA



- ▶ At the end of November 2020 there are officially 82 names listed on the Whale Coast Branch database. Of the 82 members, 73 members are classified as active members.
- ▶ One new member (Full member) Etienne Naudé joined our branch during the month.
- ▶ Marie Halforty informed us on 21 November 2020 that Frank passed away in the early hours of the morning.
- ▶ The first edition of Whale Coast Flier was distributed on 26 November 2020, with good response from various members. The intention is to issue a Christmas-edition towards mid-December 2020.
- ▶ The branch's year-end luncheon was on 18 December at Old Boys Club, Hermanus.

SAAFA



- ▶ The Branch Meeting was held on 11 November 2020 at the SAAFA Offices Conference Room at Swartkop and was the last one for the year.
- ▶ There have been some donations by individual members which has helped our cause even more for which we are grateful.
- ▶ The Branch monthly lunch did not take place in November due to the Banquet and other planned activities. There were still a few contributions for the Lunches for Love initiative during November which is sincerely appreciated.
- ▶ Johann and Marianne Mostert attended a SAAFA Durban Branch Braai at Simbithi Eco Estate and hosted by Maj Gen Paine (Ret) and Brig Gen Baine (Ret).
- ▶ The Pretoria Golf Day has been rescheduled for 26 March 2021.
- ▶ As we are still in Level 1 of Lockdown it gives us ease of movement and helps in getting together as family, friends, and colleagues, but please continue to take care. As we approach the Christmas holiday period, we would like to wish everyone God speed and a very happy and safe festive period. Greetings and salutations to the President and members of the NEC.

SAAFA



- ▶ ERNEST WALL OBE (a member who lived in Peebles Scotland). He joined in 1950 and was 95 when he died on 15th November. He flew 69 ops in WWII in 24 Squadron Marauder Mark 3.
- ▶ Chairman's Challenge: There has been a good initial response to the Chairman's appeal for SAAFA 75 donations and this is still ongoing.
- ▶ The branch held a celebratory Branch Lunch at the Indaba Hotel on 28th October.
- ▶ On Thursday 3rd December the branch held a Christmas lunch at Old Edwardians, with an outside caterer, who might be appointed to the club next year.
- ▶ SKYLINE, SAAFA JHB's Newsletter for December was distributed 15th December. This is the last of four that were sent out in 2020.
- ▶ The Johannesburg Office will reopen on 4 January 2021.

SAAFA



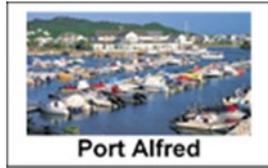
- ▶ Freda Garzouzie's husband, John, is receiving dialysis and is at home with the family.
- ▶ SAAFA Banquette 2020 was held in Pretoria and Ansie and Gavin Lavis attended. Thanks go to the organizers for a well-organized function in a posh venue.
- ▶ The SAAFA Bloemfontein Branch will be closed till 01 February 2021.

SAAFA



- ▶ Our best SAAFA Outeniqua wishes accompanies this message. There is not too much of a change to the October report so this is (to an extent), déjà vu.
- ▶ I am delighted to report that was a good attendance by SAAFA members at the memorial service for member Mr Koos van Staden who passed onto higher service on 8 November 2020. This service was held at the MOTH Shellhole, George.
- ▶ The Armistice Day Memorial Service held 11 November 17H30 at the MOTH Shellhole was also well attended by SAAFA members.
- ▶ The Branch wishes to extend its appreciation to the organisers of the SAAFA 75th Banquets' Awards Dinner held on 7 November 2020.
- ▶ SAAFA Outeniqua extends its heartfelt appreciation - THANK YOU - to all SAAFA office bearers and also to the supporting staff in the NEC office. We, out on the periphery, know only too well that teamwork, the notion of brotherhood, makes "this thing work". We send our best wishes to NEC, the Branches, and their office bearers and their many members at this time of cheer and goodwill. I'm not going to talk about 2020 – it doesn't deserve recognition. But I am so hopeful that 2021 offers up light and hope for all our comrades wherever they may be.

SAAFA



- ▶ It is with great sadness that we announce the passing to higher office of retired member Mrs Audrey Geyer on 18 November 2020 at the age 96 years and 4 months.
- ▶ Roy and Helen Somers went on holiday and overturned their car. Fortunately, both suffered only minor injuries in the form of bruises and scrapes. Being the intrepid travellers they are, they hired a car and carried on with their holiday!
- ▶ The Victory Cup Golf is hosted by the Royal Port Alfred Golf Club and the club informed us that the planning for it to be held on Saturday 2 January 2021 is still going ahead. This is the major fund-raising event for the Branch.

SAAFA



- ▶ Ettie Smit, wife of member Nico Smit, was called to Higher Service on 20 November 2020.
- ▶ The Annual SAAFA Banquet in Pretoria on 7 November 2020 was attended by Maj Gen (ret) Hugh Paine and Claire Paine, Steve and Linda Bekker, Rob and Leah-Ann Sinclair, Gavin Farquhar, and Clinton Wyness.
- ▶ Rob Sinclair laid the SAAFA Cross at the Durban High School Remembrance Day Service on 10 November 2020.
- ▶ Steve and Linda Bekker, and Rob Sinclair, attended the Pietermaritzburg Christmas Lunch at the Victoria Country Club on 24 November 2020.
- ▶ No lunch was held November 2020 due to the lockdown status of the country. A Christmas Lunch was held at the Royal Natal Yacht Club in the Durban Harbour on Friday 4 December 2020.

SAAFA



- ▶ The membership of the SAAFA Pietermaritzburg Branch remained at 10 members.
- ▶ The Pietermaritzburg Branch held their Christmas Lunch at the Victoria Country Club on Tuesday 24 November 2020. It was attended by 16 guests, of which 10 were members of the Pietermaritzburg Branch (100% attendance), 3 were from the SAAFA Durban Branch and 3 were other guests.
- ▶ The Christmas Lunch was a delightful affair and the lunch was concluded by Winks Steming, the Vice Chairman (who is 95 years old) singing a medley of "He wears Silver Wings", "On a Wing and a Prayer" and "Silver Wings in the Moonlight". Winks used to sing to the troops in World War II and was also a radio presenter and sang on radio during WW II.

SAAFA

? Port Elizabeth; Stilfontein; East Rand; Lowveld; Lower South Coast ?

SAAFA CONGRESS 2021

As you well know by now Congress 2021 will be hosted by our Durban Branch along one of the most vibrant and popular attractions in the eastern KZN province at the St Ives venue situated in the Midlands Meander.

Delegates have the opportunity to arrive a few days early or extend their stay and explore some of the delights that the Midlands Meander has to offer.

Along this route one can find gems such as...



The Nelson Mandela Capture Sight



Marrakesh cheese farm



A craft brewery



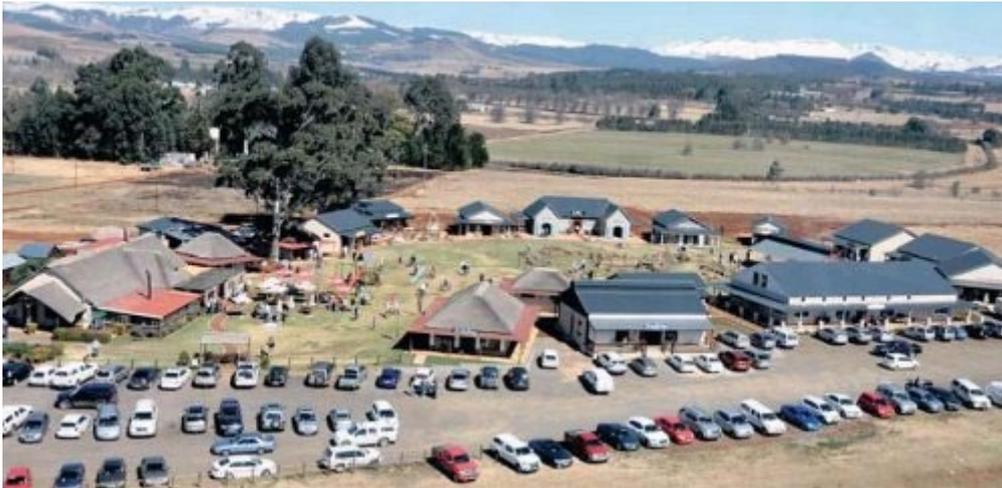
A wine estate



A chocolate factory



A shoe factory



All sorts of shops selling interesting things that you might not find elsewhere.

For the members residing on the outside of the Curry Curtain, you might find this Congress interesting for reasons other than the wonder of Congress itself.

We trust that this might give you some insight into the uniqueness of Congress 2021

Finest Durban Branch SAAFA regards and hopes to see you there.

St Ives Lodge and Venue





Amy Johnson, C.B.E.

(1 July 1903–5 January 1941)

“Flying Tonight.” Portrait of Amy Johnson, 1930. © Ruth Hollick, Melbourne.

Amy Johnson was born on 1 July 1903 at Kingston upon Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, England, the first of two daughters of John William Johnson and Amy Hodge Johnson. She attended The Boulevard Municipal Secondary School in Kingston before going on to the University of Sheffield in South Yorkshire. There, she majored in Economics and graduated in 1923 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Miss Johnson worked as a secretary for a London law firm from 1925 to 1929. She joined the London Aeroplane Club at the de



de Havilland DH.60
Cirrus II Moth

Havilland Aerodrome, Stag Lane, where one of her flight instructors was Captain Valentine Henry Baker, M.C., A.F.C., a World War I fighter pilot who would later co-found the Martin-Baker Aircraft Company. She trained in a de Havilland DH.60 Cirrus II Moth, and on 9 June 1929, after 15 hours, 45 minutes of dual instruction, made her first solo flight.

Johnson was issued a Pilot's Certificate and License by the Air Ministry of Great Britain, 6 July 1929. This was an “A” Flying Certificate, for private pilots. She was also awarded a Certificate for Navigators, and in December 1929, became the first woman to be certified as an Engineer (aircraft mechanic).



“A” Flying Certificate

With the financial assistance of her father and of Baron Charles Cheers Wakefield, the founder of the Wakefield Oil Company (better known as Castrol), she purchased a one-year-old de Havilland DH.60G Gipsy Moth biplane, c/n 804, registered G-AAAH. It had previously been owned by Air Taxis Ltd., of Stag Lane (a company formed by G.B.H. “Rex” Mundy and Captain W. Laurence Hope) and first registered 30 August 1928. Johnson named her airplane *Jason*, which was the name of her father's business.

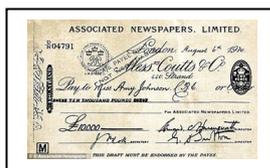
On 5 May 1929, Amy Johnson and *Jason* took off from Croydon Aerodrome on a 19-day, 11,000-mile (17,700 km) journey to Australia.



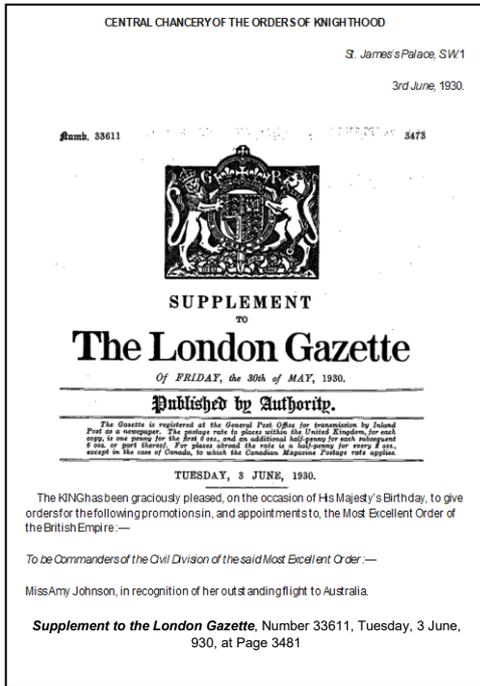
Lands at Darwin

She arrived at Darwin, Northern Territory, on 24 May.

For her accomplishment, she won a £10,000 prize offered by the *Daily Mail*, a London newspaper. The Australian Air Ministry issued her its Pilot Certificate and License Number 1. The International League of Aviators awarded her The Harmon International Aviatrix Trophy for 1930.



In the King's Birthday Honours, announced 3 June 1930, George V, King of the United Kingdom and British Dominions, appointed Amy Johnson a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.



de Havilland DH.80 Puss Moth

She broke the previous record which had been set by Jim Mollison. For this flight, she was awarded the Segrave Trophy of the Royal Automobile Club, for "the most outstanding demonstration of transport on land, sea or air."

The couple made a transatlantic flight, another flight from Britain to India, and competed in the 1934 MacRobertson Air Race from England to Australia. She was twice elected president of the Women's Engineering Society.

In May 1937, Johnson, who was already a rated navigator, travelled to Annapolis, Maryland, in the United States, where she studied advanced navigation under P. V. H. Weems, the acknowledged world authority in celestial navigation. (Among other devices, Weems invented the Weems Mark II Plotter, which every student pilot the world over would immediately recognize.)

Mr. and Mrs. Mollison divorced in 1938.

During World War II, Amy Johnson joined the Air Transport Auxiliary, ferrying Royal Air Force aircraft around the country. (Fellow record-setter Jackie Cochran also flew for the ATA before returning to America to find the WASPs.) Johnson held the civilian rank of Flight Officer, equivalent to an RAF Flight Lieutenant.

On 4 January 1941, Flight Officer Johnson was assigned to take an Airspeed AS.10 Oxford Mk. II, registration V3540, from Prestwick, Scotland, to RAF Kidlington in Oxfordshire. She landed at RAF Squires Gate, Lancashire, and remained there overnight, visiting her sister.



Amy Johnson, CBE, by Sir John Longstaff, 1930.

Amy Johnson made several record-setting long-distance flights, both solo and with other pilots, one of whom was James Allan Mollison. Mollison proposed marriage only a few hours after first meeting her. They married in July 1932. She soon after setting a new record for a solo flight from London, England, to Cape Town, South Africa, flying a de Havilland DH.80 Puss Moth there in 4 days, 6 hours, 54 minutes, 14–18 November 1932



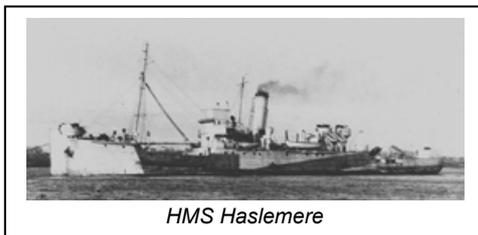
Airspeed AS.10 Oxford

The following morning, 5 January, although the weather was extremely poor with falling snow limiting visibility, Johnson departed Squires Gate at approximately 10:30 a.m., to continue her assignment. Reportedly advised not to go, she insisted, saying that she would “smell her way” to Kidlington.

What took place thereafter is not known. There was speculation that she was unable to land at Kidlington due to poor weather and continued flying east, perhaps finally running out of fuel.

At approximately 3:30 p.m., Johnson bailed out of the Oxford and parachuted into the Thames Estuary. The airplane crashed into the river a short distance away and sank.

Amy Johnson’s parachute was seen by the crew of *HMS Haslemere*, a barrage balloon tender assigned to the Channel Mobile



HMS Haslemere

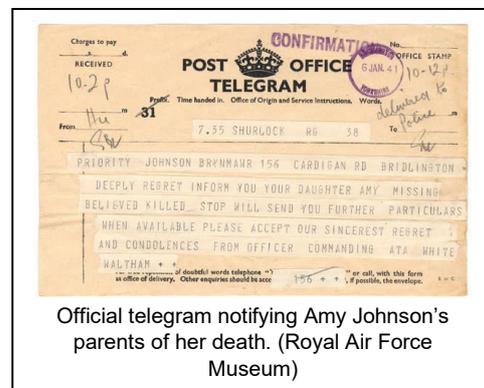
Balloon Barrage in the Estuary. They attempted to rescue her and, in the process, the ship’s captain, Lieutenant Commander Walter Edmund Fletcher, Royal Navy, dove into the water. In the cold temperatures and rough conditions, Fletcher died. For his

an effort to rescue Johnson, he was awarded the Albert Medal, posthumously.

Amy Johnson is presumed to have drowned. Her body was not recovered. Some documents related to her flight and personal belongings were found soon after.

In recent years, stories have emerged that the AS.10 was shot down after Johnson twice gave the incorrect response to a radio challenge. Tom Mitchell, an anti-aircraft gunner of the 58th (Kent) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Artillery Regiment, at Iwade, a small village along the shore of the Thames Estuary, said in 1999 that he shot her down under orders, firing 16 shells at the Oxford. The men of the battery were ordered to never mention the incident. There were contemporary reports that a destroyer had also fired on Johnson, though the Admiralty denied this.

More recently, former crewmen of *HMS Haslemere* have said that, rather than having drowned, Amy Johnson was killed by the ship’s propellers as it maneuvered to pick her up.



Official telegram notifying Amy Johnson’s parents of her death. (Royal Air Force Museum)

What is known, however, is that Flight Officer, Amy Johnson, C.B.E., died in the service of her country.

Amy Johnson, C.B.E., B.A., A.R.Ae.S., F.R.G.S., F.S.E., M.W.E.S., was a legendary pioneering aviator. Her accomplishments are far greater, and her skills as a pilot superior, to those of others who may have achieved greater public acclaim (especially in the United States). She is one of the great individuals in the history of aviation.

Sunderland Flying Boats of Lake Umsingazi



Short Sunderland 1714 N-RB

“Then something went terribly wrong”. The Sunderland stalled under full power and dived into the lake

262 Squadron RAF used Catalina Bay at the southern end of Lake St Lucia as a forward operational base in 1943 and '44.

Initially, they flew the sturdy Catalina flying boats, but these were gradually replaced by much larger four-engined Short Sunderland Mark 5 flying boats. These drew over five foot of water and St Lucia was too shallow for them. This forced the Squadron to look for an alternative landing site with deeper water. They chose Lake Umsingazi at Richards Bay, and the squadron relocated lock stock and barrel in 1944.

In 1945, there being so many South Africans on strength in 262 Squadron, it was decided to transfer the whole operation to the South African Air Force. This was duly done and 35 Squadron SAAF came into being. The squadron base was at Congella in Durban and this required the big flying boats to land in the harbor. They were forbidden to land there at night, however, due to various after dark hazards that included a large number of small “fishing” craft, and the flying boats had to land at Lake Umsingazi.

A 35 Sqn SAAF Sunderland with the registration letters RB-N crashed and sank there on the night of 1 November 1956 in bad

weather after a navigation exercise to Europa Island in the Mozambique Channel.

Short Sunderland 1714 N-RB rested on the bottom of Lake Umzingazi since a stormy night on November 1, 1956. One of only three Sunderland's still in service with 35

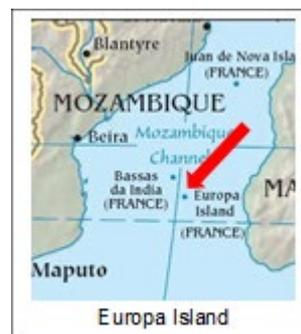


Capt John Naude

Squadron, SAAF, it had taken off from Durban Harbor that morning with Commandant Thys Uys, the squadron OC as the second pilot. At the controls was Capt John Naude, a pilot with a distinguished record in

Korea and maritime flying.

If the original target area, the Madagascar capital of Antananarivo, had been adhered to, the day might have ended very differently.



Instead, because of political pressure, the three aircraft were dispatched to Europa Island off the east coast of Africa on a

navigation and radar training exercise. The

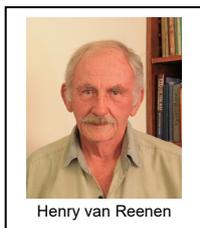
squadron was preparing for the delivery of the new Shackleton Mk3.

The operation began to turn sour as N-RB approached the vicinity of the island. Radar failed, visibility deteriorated, and several course changes were necessitated by waterspouts. In short, they were lost. A flight over Madagascar should have offered them some visual fixes.



After an unsuccessful creeping-line ahead search for Europa Island, they turned back home. They aimed for Durban, from where they would follow the coast to St Lucia and eventually, hopefully, reach the flying boat base at Umzingazi.

They found Durban well after dark, turned north towards St Lucia, and felt their way towards the flare path at Umzingazi.



Henry van Reenen

Henry van Reenen, the radio operator, was sitting in the wardroom on the lower deck with three other off-duty crew members. Looking out through the portholes, on the downwind leg, he could see the gooseneck flares through the rain.

Final approach was routine, if somewhat bumpy.

“Then,” recalls van Reenen, “something went terribly wrong. The Sunderland hit the water, having dropped some 50 or 60 feet. The impact was so severe that the aircraft was flung back into the air before bouncing again heavenly.

“Capt Naude decided to abort the landing and opened throttles. At what seemed to be an altitude of about 100 feet, the aircraft stalled under full power, nose-diving into the water; the nose was partly severed it hit the bottom of the lake.”

“I later learned that the OC was catapulted practically uninjured through the cockpit windscreen, landing some 200 meters

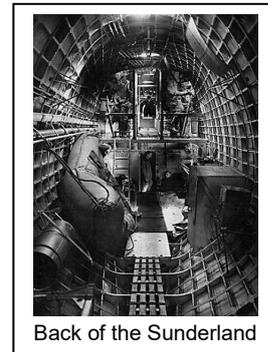
ahead of the aircraft. He was picked up by the seaplane tender.

“Capt Naude’s safety harness broke; he was flung against the instrument panel, causing him severe back problems for the rest of his life.

“There was chaos on the flight deck with crew members crashing into bulkheads or equipment panels, but all survived the impact.

“In the wardroom, it was a different story. With the fuel tanks very nearly empty and the port wing float having broken off, the Sunderland had assumed an attitude left wing low, nose below water up to about half the length of the fuselage, tail fin and elevator above water.”

“Seated at a starboard porthole, facing forward, I was not strapped in – providently, as it turned out.



Back of the Sunderland

“Next to me, strapped in and also facing forward, was navigator Lt E de Wit and opposite him, facing rearwards and also strapped in, was Air Corporal Miles Moodie. Both were killed on impact when the bolts anchoring De Wit’s seat to the

floor of the wardroom seared off and he was hurled, still in his seat, into Moodie.

Roy Albrecht was seated sideways against the forward bulkhead that had a door leading into the chain locker room from where the mooring of the aircraft was carried out. He too was not strapped in.

“I regained consciousness underwater in complete darkness. Crash-landing and evacuation drills, along with experience as a scuba diver, came to my rescue. Air trapped under the flight-deck floor above the wardroom allowed me a few lung-fulls before Finding my way towards the galley immediately to the rear of the wardroom. I was able to find the tiny T-bar latch that

opened the trapdoor leading to the submerged flight deck.

“More air trapped in the astrodome afforded me a few more gulps. I made for the machine-gun hatches just aft of the trailing edge of the wings.

“Opening the hatch leading to the weapon deck, I discovered that some of the smoke-floats had burst and the surface of the water inside the fuselage was aflame. I dived below the flames and swam to the port machine-gun hatch before surfacing. There cannot be a logical explanation for me to have done so in light of the substantial back, leg, and arm injuries I’d suffered in the crash.”

Van Reenen was pulled from the water by Jan Knoll, a veteran ship’s radio officer. His injuries rendered him comatose again before he could join his fellow survivors on the port wing.

Van Reenen spent another ten years in the SAAF before joining an instrument company.

“A life in instrumentation became dull and after some 12 years, I formed a company of my own, manufacturing antennas, masts, and towers,” he concludes. “Flying is still very much part of my life and I owned, in turn, a Cherokee 180 and a Beechcraft Travelair twin, spending many delightful hours roaming the skies.”

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| Dag. Day. | Uur. Hour. | Type. Type. | No./letter. | | |
| | | | | | |
| 1 | 0900 | SUNDERLAND | 1714/N | Capt Naude | Longrange mail to Europa Islands CRASHED ON LANDING WHEN RETURNING |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Logbook entry of that fatal day



Extracts from
 Jeff Gaisford (Sunderland Flying Boats of Lake Umsingazi)
 and
 Willie Bodenstein (Surviving the last flight of Short Sunderland 1714RB-N)

This is your Captain screaming

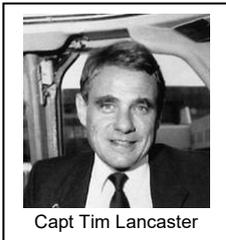


BAC 1-11

It was like something from a disaster movie and I still find it hard to believe I was at the center of it all. An aeroplane full of passengers, out of control at 17,000 feet, with the captain, stuck outside the aircraft.

I think about what happened every day. It was Sunday, June 10, 1990. It was a beautiful morning, and I was up early because I was working on the British Airways 7.30 am flight from Birmingham to Malaga in Spain. I was 36, had been an air steward with British Airways for 12 years, and loved my job with a passion.

I expected that day to be especially enjoyable. It was a holiday flight, so the 81 passengers would be relaxed, and the crew - Captain Tim Lancaster, stewards Simon Rogers and John Heward, and stewardess Sue Prince - had worked together, on and off, for years. The only member of the crew new to us was the co-pilot, Alistair Atcheson. The aircraft was a 43-tonne BAC 1-11, which was known as the jeep of the skies because it was a workhorse - reliable and easy to maintain.



Capt Tim Lancaster

The flight was delayed for an hour, so I wandered up and down the plane, making sure everyone knew what was going on. Tim made an announcement - "You'll be pleased to know the weather is sunny and dry in Malaga and we should be on our way shortly."

It was 13 minutes after take-off and we had just reached 17,300 feet, 5000 feet beneath our assigned altitude. I went onto the flight

deck and asked if they would like tea. I was just stepping out, with my hand on the door handle, when there was an enormous explosion, and the door was blown out of my hands. I thought, "My God. It's a bomb." Explosive decompression made the whole cabin mist up like fog for a second - then the plane started to plummet.

I whipped around and saw the front windscreen had disappeared and Tim, the pilot, was going out through it. He had been sucked out of his seatbelt and all I could see were his legs. I jumped over the control column and grabbed him around his waist to avoid him going out completely. His shirt had



Capt Lancaster being sucked out

been pulled off his back and his body was bent upwards, doubled over around the top of the aircraft.

His legs were jammed forward, disconnecting the autopilot, and the flight door was resting on the controls, sending the plane hurtling down at nearly 650km/h through some of the most congested skies in the world.

Everything was being sucked out of the aircraft: even an oxygen bottle that had been bolted down went flying and nearly knocked my head off. I was holding on for grim death, but I could feel myself being sucked out, too. John rushed in behind me and saw me disappearing, so he grabbed my trouser belt to stop me slipping further, then wrapped the captain's shoulder strap around me. Luckily, Alistair, the co-pilot, was still wearing his safety harness from take-off, otherwise, he would have gone, too.

The aircraft was losing height so quickly the pressure soon equalised and the wind started rushing in - at 630km/h and -17C. Paper was blowing round all over the place and Alistair couldn't hear air-traffic control. We were spiralling down at 80 feet per second with no autopilot and no radio.

I was still holding on to Tim, but the pressure made him weigh the equivalent of 500 pounds [about 200 kilograms]. It was a good thing I'd had so much training at rugby tackles, but my arms were getting colder and colder and I could feel them being pulled out of their sockets.

Simon came rushing through and, with John unwrapped Tim's legs and the remains of the doors from the controls, and Alistair got the autopilot back on. But he continued to increase speed, to lessen the risk of a mid-air collision and to get us down to an altitude where there was more oxygen. He dived to 11,000 feet in 2 minutes, then got the speed down to 300km/h.

I was still holding Tim, but my arms were getting weaker, and then he slipped. I thought I was going to lose him, but he ended up bent in a U-shape around the windows. His face was banging against the window with blood coming out of his nose and the side of his head, his arms were flailing and seemed about 6 feet [1.8 meters] long. Most terrifyingly, his eyes were wide open. I'll never forget that sight as long as I live.

I couldn't hold on anymore, so Simon strapped himself into the third pilot's seat and hooked Tim's feet over the back of the captain's seat and held on to his ankles. One of the others said:



"We're going to have to let him go." I said: "I'll never do that." I knew I wouldn't be able to face his family, handing them a matchbox, and saying: "This is what is left of your husband." If we'd let go of his body, it might have got jammed in a wing or the engines.

I left Simon hanging on to Tim and staggered back into the main cabin. For a moment, I just sat exhausted in a jump seat, my head in my hands, then Sue came up to me, very shaken. In front of all the passengers, I put my arms around her and whispered in her ear: "I think the Captain's dead." But then I said: "Come on, love, we've got a job to do."

By now, Alistair was talking to air traffic control, who was talking him through landing at Southampton Airport. All pilot training is done based on two pilots, one to fly and one doing the emergency drill, but Alistair was alone, with a crew he did not know and relying on memory because all the manuals and charts had blown away. He asked for a runway of 2500 meters because he was worried that the plane was so heavy with fuel, a tyre would burst or it would go off the runway, but all they could offer was 1800 meters.

Over the intercom, he told the passengers we had lost the windscreen. Some of them could see Tim out of the window but the cabin was silent as the grave. We walked up and down, preparing the passengers for an emergency landing. People gasped as they saw the blood on my face. The plane was very shuddery, very rocky. I remember one man, at the very back, with a baby on his knee, saying to me: "We're going to die," and I said, "No, we are not," lying through my teeth.

All I could see out of the windows was a line of trees, and I thought we'd either smash into those or the housing estate beyond. I had a partner, Jean, and a stepson, Jamie, but I was thinking most about my Mum. She'd lost my brother in a car crash the year before, and I couldn't bear to think how she'd take the news. But, despite everything, Alistair did the most amazing landing, what we call a greaser - completely smooth and stopping the aircraft only three-quarters of the way down the runway.

There wasn't even any need to use the emergency chutes. We got all the passengers down the steps in an orderly fashion, although I did have to shout at a couple of people who were trying to get their handbags from the lockers. The whole time

from the explosion to the landing had been 18 minutes, but it seemed like hours.

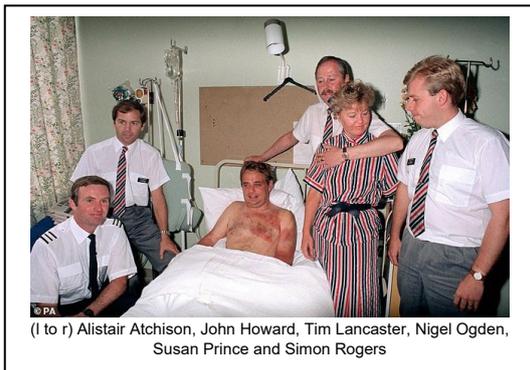
I got back on board to check everyone had left. The paramedics had Tim in the cockpit on a stretcher and I went in to see him.

He was lying there, covered in blood, but to my amazement, I heard him say: "I want to eat." I just exclaimed: "Typical bloody pilot."



Luckily, he'd been in a coma throughout the ordeal, his body had just shut down. I went out onto the front steps and shouted at the others "He's alive!" and then I cried my eyes out.

Air steward Nigel Ogden was left with a dislocated shoulder, frostbitten face, and some frostbite damage to his left eye.



Amazingly, Captain Tim Lancaster suffered only frostbite, fractures to his arm and wrist, and a broken thumb. Within five months he was flying again.

After Incidents

First Officer Alastair Stuart Atchison and cabin crew members Susan Gibbins and Nigel Ogden were awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air; Ogden's name was erroneously missed from the published supplement. Atchison was awarded a 1992 Polaris Award for his ability and heroism.

The aircraft was repaired and returned to service, eventually being sold to Jaro International in 1993. It continued to operate with them until Jaro ceased operations in

2001, the aircraft going on to be scrapped the same year.

Investigation

Police found the windscreen panel and many of the 90 bolts securing it near Cholsey, Oxfordshire. Investigators found that when the windscreen was installed 27 hours before the flight, 84 of the bolts used were 0.026 inches (0.66 mm) too small in diameter and the remaining six were correct diameter but 0.1 inches (2.5 mm) too short (0.7-inch vs. 0.8 inches). The previous windscreen had



also been fitted using incorrect bolts, which were replaced by the shift maintenance manager on a like-for-like basis without reference to maintenance documentation, as the plane was due to depart shortly. The undersized bolts were unable to withstand the air pressure difference between the cabin and the outside atmosphere during flight.

Investigators found that the shift maintenance manager responsible for installing the incorrect bolts had failed to follow British Airways policies. They recommended that the CAA recognise the need for aircraft engineering personnel to wear corrective glasses if prescribed. They also faulted the policies themselves, which should have required testing or verification by another individual for this critical task.

They also faulted the policies themselves,



which should have required testing or verification by another individual for this critical task. Finally, they found the

local Birmingham Airport management responsible for not directly monitoring the shift maintenance manager's working practices. by another individual for this critical task.

This was published 15 years ago in The Sydney Morning Hera

CALL BACK THE PAST

SAAF Bomb kills six in Kuruman



Six people died in Kuruman after a bomb was accidentally dropped on the crowd during a military “bombing display” in 1924.

Several sources say it was a semi-political rally by the SA Party, others say it was a farewell function for a local military man. Whatever the truth, there was an election later that same year, and the SA Party lost their seat in Kuruman as the public believed the rumour that the bomb had been dropped deliberately.



DH9 Bomber

At the enquiry, the pilot of the DH9 bomber, Lt PS Joubert, was exonerated of liability on charges of manslaughter, although he did resign from the fledgling SA Air Force because of the tragedy.

There were supposed to be two DH9's taking part in the display but at a forced landing on the way to Kuruman – somewhere between Postmasburg and Olifantshoek – one of the planes was too damaged to continue. Unbeknown to Lt Joubert, his aeroplane was also damaged during the forced landing. There had been some damage to the bomb rack which would have fatal consequences later in the day.

During the display, five of the six bombs were dropped on the target about 620 metres from the crowd but one bomb had stuck due to damage to the bomb rack.

As the aeroplane flew over the crowd this 20-pound bomb came unstuck, fell, and landed



Headstones of the three people killed instantly.
Kuruman cemetery

among the spectators. Three died instantly and three from their wounds. Casper (54) and his wife Anna van der Walt (52), as well as Gert Erlank (39), were killed instantly. Christina Alida Claassens (8) died of her wounds during the night. She was the daughter of Matthys and Lila Claassens. Piet van der Linde (21) and Abraham Erasmus died of their wounds at Kimberley Hospital, van der Linde within days while Erasmus died 13 days later and had a semi-military

funeral. His eldest daughter, Catharina, was hit in the head with shrapnel, which was not removed. There were at least 33 others wounded in the tragedy

A distraught Lt Joubert had to be protected from the crowd and for his safety was kept in the Kuruman prison that night.

(TODAY IN KIMBERLEY'S HISTORY 28 MAY)



Memorial Services 2021/22

| Date | Time | Service | Venue | Town |
|-----------------------|-------|---|----------------------------------|---------------|
| FEBRUARY 2021 | | | | |
| 21 | 10h00 | SS Mendi Memorial Service | Soweto | Johannesburg |
| 21 | | Armed Forces Parade | Polokwane | Polokwane |
| MARCH 2021 | | | | |
| 7 | 10h00 | SS Mendi Memorial Service | Gamothakga | Pretoria |
| APRIL 2021 | | | | |
| 3 | 10h00 | Koevoet Veterans Memorial Service | Voortrekker Monument | Pretoria |
| 4 | 10h00 | RAFA Memorial Service | Bays Hill | Pretoria |
| 18 | TBN | Gunners Ass Memorial Service | | Potchefstroom |
| MAY 2021 | | | | |
| 16 | 10h00 | SA Air Force Memorial Service | Bays Hill | Pretoria |
| 23 | 10h00 | Heritage Foundation Wreath Laying | Voortrekker Monument | Pretoria |
| 23 | 15h00 | Smuts Memorial Service | Smuts House | Irene |
| JUNE 2021 | | | | |
| 6 | 11h00 | SAPPERS Memorial Service | Sappers Rust | |
| JULY 2021 | | | | |
| 11 | 10h00 | Delville Wood Memorial Service | Burgers Park | Pretoria |
| 11 | 10h00 | Delville Wood Memorial Service | Soweto | Johannesburg |
| 25 | 10h00 | Korean War Veterans Ass Service | Bays Hill | Pretoria |
| AUGUST 2021 | | | | |
| 15 | 11h00 | Border Boys Parade | Eloffsdal | Pretoria |
| 21 | TBN | 61 Mech Memorial Service | Ditsong | Johannesburg |
| 21 | 10h00 | SAP COIN Memorial Service | Doornpoort | Pretoria |
| SEPTEMBER 2021 | | | | |
| 5 | 11H00 | WARSAW Flight Commemoration Service | | Johannesburg |
| 12 | 10h30 | RLI RAFA Battle of Britain Service | Bedfordview | Johannesburg |
| 12 | 09h00 | International Day of Peace Service | NGK Raslow | Pretoria |
| OCTOBER 2021 | | | | |
| 10 | 10H00 | Alphine 44 Memorial Service | Bays Hill | Pretoria |
| 24 | 11h00 | Battle of El Alamein Pretoria District MOTH | Coal Box MK2 | Pretoria |
| NOVEMBER 2021 | | | | |
| 7 | 09H30 | Italian Prisoners of War Memorial Service | Italian Cemetery | Zonderwater |
| 11 | 17h30 | Cornwall Hill Service | Cornwall Hill | Pretoria |
| 14 | 11h00 | Remembrance Sunday Memorial Service | Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery | Johannesburg |
| DECEMBER 2020 | | | | |
| 5 | 09h00 | SAMHS Veterans Ass Memorial Service | 1 Mil | Pretoria |



The
Editor's
Desk



Ring in the New Year is a cause for celebration, for spending time with friends and family, and for offering Happy New Year wishes.

May this year bring new happiness, new goals, new achievements, and many new inspirations to your life.

Wishing you a year fully loaded with happiness. I hope that this new year will be the best year of your life. May all your hopes be fulfilled and all your dreams come true.

Personally, my main wish and goal before my term as an editor come to an end here at the Flying Spirit, is to finally get **all** the branches, every single one to participate in the Branch news section at times this seems like a lofty goal but nonetheless achievable if we all work together.

My POA: "When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals; adjust the action steps." – Confucius

Here's to another year of laughs, memories, and good food!



C-130

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Des; Philip; Marianne; Christel.



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