



# SAAF Association Port Alfred News



P.O. Box 296, Port Alfred, 6170 Tel: 073 231 1773  
Email: [waldee@border.co.za](mailto:waldee@border.co.za) Website: [www.saafa.co.za](http://www.saafa.co.za)

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## TALE DRAGGER

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### NEXT MEETING AND LUNCH SEPTEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup> 2012, 12H00 FOR 12H30 AT RSBC

However, advising Mike or Joan at 046 624 4076 by **NOON FRIDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> August**, whether you are attending or not, is of paramount importance, PLEASE!

Thanks a lot for helping us out with this.

### FUTURE VENUES?

While I am definitely opposed to moving away from the RSBC, we have to consider carefully, the problem some members have negotiating the stairs to our scenic and airy view from upstairs.

Consequently, Dave Cheater, one such "battling member", suggests, either move "downstairs" for lunch meetings, or, find a caterer to provide a meal, at reasonable cost, at the Country Club, alternating with the current RSBC?

We would appreciate your thoughts on the matter, please. Should Graham, Wanda and the RSBC, not be able to host us monthly, for any reason in the future, we would perhaps have to find a new venue? I hope not, in the "near" future!?

### WELFARE OF MEMBERS

To all our dear members suffering ill health, mentioned in previous despatches, we wish you well and hope and pray that your discomfort, aches and pain, are soon to be something of the past. Hang in there special friends, old age is not for sissies, or so they say?

### GRATUITY

The late general Tom Cockbain has kindly contributed R10 000 to our 39/45 Veterans requiring support for Care of the Aged; this grant should enable the Branch to provide

help to our members fallen on hard times, for a while longer than current funds will allow.

Thank you Tom, very much appreciated.

We salute you Sir. Rest in Peace.

### BIRTHDAYS FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

Stan Birch	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Liz Lynch Frans Nel	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lorraine Davis	6 <sup>th</sup>
Rob Masters Liz Lubbe	7 <sup>th</sup>
Jennifer Armstrong Patrick Jones	11 <sup>th</sup>
Anne McCreath	14 <sup>th</sup>
Bob Duggan Gavin Kendall	16 <sup>th</sup>
Jacobus Nel	18 <sup>th</sup>
Pierre Hendriks	20 <sup>th</sup>
Sam Gunn	21 <sup>st</sup>
June Tapson	23 <sup>rd</sup>
Tony Brown	24 <sup>th</sup>
Barbara Botha Chris Paul	27 <sup>th</sup>
Dirk de Vos (The Happy Aviator)	28 <sup>th</sup>

Have a sip of Vodka and be the Baas!?

Happy Birthday to you all; go well and take care!

### ANOTHER "GIANT" IN THE MAKING

This time not Russian, but American. Popular Mechanics advises that the worlds largest aircraft will have a simple job; take a two stage rocket to 9000 metres, drop it and "get the hell out of the way as it blasts into orbit".

Our mother craft has six Pratt & Whitney Turbo Fan, 747 – 400 engines, mounted to a wing span of 117m on a twin boom Fuselage 65 m bongi. Incredibly, this project has been in the development stage since 2003; Stratolaunch will be an air launch system giving greater orbital access to space with greater safety, for cargo

and manned missions, open to the public!  
Want to go flying?



By 2015, the 544 ton Stratolaunch, code named The Roc, will trundle out of its newly constructed hangar, wider than a rugby field, onto a 3800m runway, to prepare for test flights from Cape Canaveral. The test rocket will be 36m long mounted under the fuselages connecting spar; passengers, well buckled up in a capsule at the rockets tip, will have fantastic views of receding mother earth and finally go into orbit floating in their harnesses.

Anyone like to go along?

So, at the end of the day, this will give the USA "any orbit, any time capability".

In 1963, Nasa pilot Joseph Walker reached space three times in an x15 rocket plane dropped from a B52; Joseph was the first person to reach space more than once; 50 years ago!!

In less than 6 months time it will be Christmas 2012.

*Editor research*

### **THIS KITTY WANTS TO LIVE** from "AVIATOR" & closing remarks, Editor

It has been dubbed as the "aviation equivalent of Tutankhamun's Tomb". It's a UK Royal Air Force P-40 Warhawk that went missing in 1942, during WWII. It was found, almost intact and untouched, by Jakub Perka, a Polish oil company worker who was exploring a remote region of the Western Sahara desert in Egypt. He stumbled across the plane that was so perfectly preserved it still had guns and ammunition (later taken away by the Egyptian military after the discovery was made public). Although there was no sign of the pilot (nor of his remains) he survived the crash as his parachute was still attached to the fuselage; a sign that he probably used it as shade as he waited for a rescue that would never arrive. Also the radio and batteries were found outside the plane;

most probably, the pilot tried to contact someone to request help, before, eventually opting to walk his way out .... to his death. It is thought the pilot's remains are situated somewhere within a 20 mile radius of the crash site with little or no hope of ever finding his body. He was unfortunate enough to have crashed some 200 miles from the nearest town,



with no chance of rescue.

The RAF airman should be Flight Sergeant Dennis Copping, 24 years old at the time of the crash. He was the son of a dentist from Southend, Essex, and was a member of 260 Squadron, a fighter unit based in Egypt for the North Africa campaign during World War II. Later research disclosed that on June 28, 1942, Flt Sgt Copping and another pilot were tasked with transferring two damaged P-40's from one base to another to be repaired. During the short flight, Flt Sgt Copping probably lost his bearings and went off course until he ran out of fuel and crash landed in the desert. The hot and dry climate, along with the fact that the aircraft crashed far from any village preserved the wreckage for 70 years.

The British Ministry of Defense is very interested in the P-40, as it could be recovered, restored and then displayed at the Museum at Hendon London.

There are fears, now that everyone is aware of its existence, that locals would start to strip the aircraft of instruments. The MoD has requested the defense attaché at the British Embassy in Cairo to travel to the crash site and recover the serial number to confirm the true identity of the plane.

It has also been confirmed that search for Flight Sergeant Copping's body will be attempted in the hope that his remains can be found and military funeral honors rendered.

The plane's cockpit instruments were untouched, the fuselage was flak damaged consistent with the aircrafts records, which all adds up to an incredible time capsule; the plane has been lying in the same spot where it crashed 70 years ago.

It was not hidden in the sand, it just lay there. (Just like our Shackleton, Pelican, lies at her last resting place, so sad.)

The twisted propeller lies a few feet away from the fuselage. The identification plates are untouched.

The pilot must have survived the crash, because pieces of his parachute were found attached to the P-40 to shield him from the elements, waiting in vain for any rescuers, who never came, until he decided to walk into that unforgiving desert, ...."until he died"?

Dennis had also removed the wireless and battery, connected them up, in a futile effort to call for help. Dennis had obviously lost his way while ferrying a fighter to another base for repair, (just like Toby Louw did, also in a P-40, reported on in July issue). Dennis was never seen again. (Toby survived a hair raising flight.)

A plan is underway to recover the Kitty for museum posterity. A search will be launched for Dennis' remains failing which, the site will be marked as a war grave, in honour of an aviator who suffered a death too horrible to contemplate. RIP dear friend.

### **IF.... By Chris Green**

If you can start the day without caffeine;  
If you can always be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains;  
If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles;  
If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it;  
If you can understand when your friends and loved ones are too busy to give you any time;  
If you can take criticism and blame without resentment;  
If you can conquer tension without medical help;  
If you can relax without liquor;  
If you can sleep without the aid of drugs.....  
....Then You are Probably The Family Dog or Cat!?

## **WHA'S LIKE US? SCOTLAND THE BRAVE!**

"Damn Few and They're A'Deid"

The typical Englishman finishes his breakfast of toast and MARMALADE, invented by Mrs Keiller of Dundee, Scotland, and slips into his RAIN COAT patented by Charles MacIntosh from Glasgow, Scotland.

He walks to his office along an English Lane surfaced by TARMAC, invented by John Loudon MacAdam of Ayr, Scotland – or, he drives his English car which is fitted with PNEUMATIC TYRES patented by John Boyd Dunlop, of Dreghorn, Scotland. Before he acquired a car he used to travel to his office by train powered by a STEAM ENGINE invented by James Watt of Greenock, Scotland.

In his office he deals with mail bearing ADHESIVE STAMPS invented by John Chalmers, of Dundee, Scotland, and makes frequent use of the TELEPHONE invented by Alexander Graham Bell, born in England, Scotland.

At home in the evening he dines on his favourite traditional ROAST BEEF from Aberdeen Angus, raised in Aberdeen- Shire, Scotland – and then he watches TELEVISION – an invention by John Logie Baird, of Helensburgh, Scotland – about JOHN PAUL JONES, father of the United States Navy, born in Kirkbean, Scotland.

His son prefers to read TREASURE ISLAND written by Robert Louis Stevenson, born in Edinburgh, Scotland, whilst his daughter rides her BICYCLE, an invention of Kirkpartric MacMillan, of Thornhill, Scotland.

It is impossible for an Englishman to escape the ingenuity of the Scots!

In desperation he turns to the BIBLE only to find that the first person mentioned in the good Book is a Scot – King James VI, who authorised its translation.

He could, of course, take to drink, but Scotland makes the finest WHISKEY in the world. Nearing the end of his tether he could uplift a rifle to end it all, but the BREECH-LOADING RIFLE was invented by Captain Patrick Ferguson, of Pitfours, Scotland.

Anyway, if he escaped death he could find himself injected with PENICILLIN, discovered by Sir Alexander Fleming, Bacteriologist, of Davel, Scotland or given CHLOROFORM, an

anaesthetic first used by Sir James Young Simpson, of Bathgate, Scotland.

Out of the anaesthetic his mood would not be improved if his Surgeon told him that he was as SAFE AS THE BANK OF ENGLAND, which was founded by William Paterson, of Dumfries, Scotland.

Perhaps, in order to get some peace, he should request a transfusion of guid Scottish blood so that he too would be entitled to ask:

WHA'S LIKE US?

"Damn Few And They're A'Deid!"

*Retha Allison*

*Note – any resemblance between our aforementioned Scottish Heros/Pioneers and SAAFA members is purely coincidental.  
Editor.*

**HAWKER HARTBEES FIRST DAY COVER. NO 30. 11 MAY 1987. CELEBRATING THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAAF FIGHTERS FIRST FLIGHT ON 25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1937**

The Hartbees was designed by Hawker Aircraft Ltd in Britain according to South African specifications to replace the Wapiti and was generally similar to the Hawker Hind and Demon. It was built to fulfill the roles of artillery fire direction, reconnaissance and the drop of messages, etc.

Four of these aircraft were originally built in Britain and the fifth one, No 805, was the first of the series to be built here and was flown for the first time from Zwartkop Air Station by Col H.C. Daniel, MC, AFC, the then Officer Commanding of Aircraft and Artillery Depot at Roberts Heights (later 1 Air Depot at Voortrekkerhoogte). This first flight took place on 25 June 1937. A total of 65 were built eventually and these aircraft served in WWII with distinction with No's 11, 13, 40, 41 and 43 Squadrons.

In order to commemorate this historic event, the Air Force Museum Board decided that a



commemorative cover should be issued on 25 June, 1987. 7000 Covers were issued of which 3000 were signed by Brig H.J. Bronkhorst, who at that stage was second in Command of Central flying School at Zwartkop Air Station.

Due to the fact that only one of these aircraft still exists today, eg No 851 at the SA National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg, it was decided to fly the covers from AFB Swartkop in an Alouette II of the SAAF Museum, to the National Museum and to hold a limited ceremony at the said aircraft. This cover will be the 30<sup>th</sup> in the SAAF Museum's series and probably the last of this year.

**STRANGE ATTITUDES?**

If a crazed person rushes in to the cockpit and tries to kill the pilot at 35 000 feet, and the passengers kill him instead, the mother of the crazed deceased ..... blames the airline!?

So, if I die while my "old wrinkled ass" is parked in front of this PC, I want all of you to blame Bill Gates!

Have a nice day!

**OVER AND OUT**

God Bless you and take care.

*Wally Vandermeulen*

**NOTE**

The Editor extends his thanks for all contributions received. Opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or SAAFA National Executive. The Editor reserves the right to amend or reject any editorial matter submitted for publication.