

STICK and THROTTLE



December 2017

SAAFA

Pretoria Branch

pta@saafa.co.za

Tel/Fax: 012-651 5922

PO Box 21223
VALHALLA, 0137

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Christmas is the most joyous time of year, filled with festivities and gift giving and it is a great time to show appreciation to others not so fortunate.

We have had a lot of challenges in our work during the year but with your support and dedication, we have achieved success in all endeavours. As we reflect on the past year with all the monthly lunches, the air show, the SAAFA Golf day and many more activities, we are aware of those who have worked side by side with us to shape and grow our association. The only bad news was when the Chairman, Dave Jackson, resigned due to personal reasons and we wish him well for the future.

Our thoughts turn to your contribution, and we would like to say thank you for your dedication. The SAAFA Pretoria Branch is lucky to have dedicated members and would like to thank you all for your hard work and concern. May this Christmas season bring tons of success, good health and prosperity into your life.

From me and my committee, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and very prosperous 2018.

Hermann Ohlmesdahl

Chairman – SAAFA Pretoria Branch

WE REMEMBER



On 4 November 2017, Renier Feldtman from SAAFA Pretoria Branch with a group of veterans placed "Poppies" on the graves of fallen veterans from World War I and II in

different cemeteries in Pretoria and Cullinan. Renier represented the SAAFA that day and was just one member from 35 from different Associations



On 12 November 2017 Chairman Hermann Ohlmesdahl and Renier Feldtman represented the Pretoria Branch of the SAAFA at the Remembrance Sunday Service at Evenden House", Lyttelton.

THE FIRST EVER A380 SUPERJUMBO HAS GONE INTO STORAGE – SO WILL IT END UP ON THE SCRAP HEAP?

By Annabel Elliot – 15 November 2017

For the first time ever, an Airbus A380 superjumbo has been retired from service and stored. The aircraft was grounded by Singapore Airlines in June after only 10 years of use, and will now be stored, minus its engines, in France.



Singapore Airlines, its first customer, returned the plane to its German leasing company Dr Peters Group, where it was painted white and flown to Tarbes Lourdes Pyrénées airport, close to the Airbus factory in Toulouse where it was originally built, to a storage facility that will hold it until a new owner is secured.

But whether that new owner will materialise at all is up for debate, given the A380's struggling sales since it was launched amid much fanfare in August 2007. It remains the world's largest passenger jet, with a total capacity of 853.

Dr Peters told Bloomberg that it was "optimistic" about securing a new operator for the aircraft, despite expecting the return of three more Singapore Airlines A380s, the second already grounded at Changi Airport. If the company can't find new homes for these planes, they will be broken up for parts - worth at least £75 million (\$100 million) per plane. The A380's original list price was in the region of £190 million (\$250 million) a piece.

Which airline owns the most A380s?

Emirates, by a long way.

With a fleet of 100, it's one of the few carriers able to get the maximum value out of the four-engine A380, and has made it the core of its long-haul fleet. Other airlines have ordered them in far smaller quantities - British Airways, for example, has 12 of them in its fleet of 270 aircraft.

The future of the A380 has been hanging precariously in the balance for quite some time now, with Airbus eagerly awaiting a lifeline order of up to 38 updated models from Emirates.



The deal was expected to be announced at the Dubai Airshow on Sunday, but in a shock twist, Emirates announced that it was actually buying 40 of rival Boeing's 787-10 Dreamliners as part of a new \$15.1 billion (£11.5bn) deal. Emirates chief executive Tim Clark told CNBC that he wouldn't rule out buying more A380s in future, however, and said he would tell the manufacturer to "keep the (production) line going."

The UAE airline now relies solely on the Airbus A380 (it has 100) and the Boeing 777 (of which it has 165) for its flights, making it the largest operator of both.

According to Reuters, industry sources have said that in order to solidify new A380 orders from Emirates, Airbus will have to buy back or re-home some of the older models currently operated by the Gulf carrier, and guarantee it would not cancel production of the superjumbo going forward.

That, or convince other airlines to place orders.

Which Airbus models are proving more popular?

It wasn't all doom and gloom for Airbus at the Dubai Airshow, with its smaller, sleeker models proving to be a mammoth hit.

The European company signed a record-breaking \$49.5 billion (£37.6bn) deal on Wednesday to sell 430 aircraft to Indigo, a Phoenix-based private equity firm that owns Frontier Airlines.

In total, the order made up 273 A320neos and 157 A321neos - both smaller twin-engine, single-aisle planes which are popular thanks to their reduced fuel consumption. They will service Frontier-linked airlines including Chile's JetSMART and Hungary's Wizz Air.

Unlike its bigger sibling, the popularity of Airbus' sleek A320s is so great that the company claims one takes off or lands somewhere in the world every two seconds.

Launched in 1984 and brought into service with Air France, its latest version, the A320neo, has won the accolade of being the fastest-selling commercial aircraft in history.

Why has the A380 fallen out of favour?

Industry commentators have long speculated that the A380 programme is on the way out, many saying that the gargantuan costs of operating such large aircraft were underestimated from the start. In July of this year, after a series of ups and downs, Airbus announced it was drastically reducing the number of A380s it would be producing in future.

Reporting half-year figures, it said that “considering the current order booking situation”, deliveries of the A380 will be reduced to just eight in 2019. At last year’s Farnborough Airshow the company said it would slow production to just 12 a year by 2018, down from a rate of 27 the year before.

Aviation analyst Saj Ahmad from Strategic Aero Research said in July. “Cutting the A380 underlines the marketing disaster that belies the programme and that Airbus is realising that even life support has to be turned off - and it’s evident that day looms closer.”

Calling the superjumbo a vanity project that “needs to be killed off”, he said it was almost definitely “facing the barrel of execution”.

The rise and fall of the Airbus A380

Independent Air Transport consultant John Strickland told the Telegraph. “The A380 is a well-regarded aircraft by airlines which operate it and by customers flying on it. Generally however, twin-engine aircraft such as the Airbus A350 and the Boeing 777 reduce the financial risks involved with filling capacity and operating costs.”

So with Singapore Airlines' return of the first A380, and its future with Emirates more tentative than ever, does this spell the end of the superjumbo? We shall see.

TOP 10 FASTEST BIRDS IN THE WORLD¹

Compiled by Crow Stannard

Last month I wrote an article on the highest flying birds but, what about the world’s fastest birds? Let’s take a closer look at who these fast birds are.

“Sure,” you’ll say, “the faster ones achieve their high speed in a dive”. Quite correct, but you guys and gals flying slower aircraft better watch out for a bird-strike on the wing’s trailing edge!

Starting with the slowest, here are 10 fastest birds in the world.

No. 10

The Canvasback² – 117kph



The Canvasback is a diving duck that inhabits in marshes and swamps across North America. They have a wingspan of 0.86 metres. In flight, they can achieve a maximum speed of 117kph.

It’s a migratory bird and they start migration at the beginning of winter when they trek towards the Great Lakes, located between the borders of U.S and Canada. They are often seen flying in a ‘V’ shaped formation while migrating.

¹ <https://themysteriousworld.com/10-fastest-birds-in-the-world/>

² Image - Calibas On Wikimedia Commons

No 9

The Grey Headed Albatross³ – 127kph



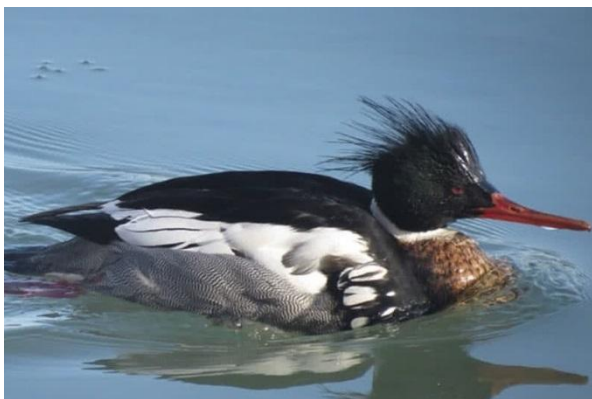
The Grey headed albatross is a large seabird that breeds mainly in the South Atlantic sector of Southern ocean. As the name indicates, they have a bluish grey head and neck and black grey tail. With 2.2 metre wingspan, the grey headed albatross can fly at maximum speed of 127kph. During foraging they travel at normal speed of 110kph without rest.

The wind conditions of the Southern ocean have a huge influence on the flight speed of the grey headed albatross. They take

advantage of strong Antarctic storms to fly faster. In such conditions, the large wingspan of the grey headed albatross also helps them to make a well balanced flight.

No 8

The Red Breasted Merganser – 130kph



The Red Breasted Merganser is a large diving duck. They are found in large numbers in the freshwater lakes and rivers across North America and Europe. The adult has a wingspan of between 0.6 metres to 0.8 metres. Before the arrival of winter, they migrate towards Northern Canada and Alaska from the interior lands of North America. During this journey they achieve a maximum speed of 130kph.

The Great Lakes and marshes and wetlands of Northern Canada are the main

breeding sites of the Red Breasted Merganser. To attract the female the male bird stretches his neck and makes a purring sound. The female bird will lay up to 10 eggs. They mainly feed on fish, crabs and shrimps.

No 7

The Spur Winged Goose⁴ – 141kph



The Spur Winged Goose is a large waterfowl found in wetlands across Africa. Their status in South Africa is “common” with the exception of the drier North-western regions. They are highly gregarious and can be seen in flocks of up to 2,000 birds.

They can have a length between 0.75 to 1.14 metres and weigh up to 7 kg, with a wingspan between 1.5 to 2 metres.

³ Image - Gregory 'Slobirdr' Swift On Flickr

⁴ Image - Dick Daniels on Wikimedia Commons

With a maximum speed of 141kph, the Spur Winged Goose is the fastest goose in the world. They are also the largest family of perching-ducks. Still, they can fly faster than any other perching-duck in the world.

No 6

The Frigate Bird⁵ – 153kph



The Frigate Bird is a large sea bird that can be found in tropical regions around the world and are a very rare vagrant to the Natal and Cape seas. They have a wingspan of 2.3 metres. Compared to body weight ratio, the Frigate Bird has the largest wingspan in the world. They can achieve a maximum speed of 153kph and are also known to stay on the wing for a week. They appear to only come to land to rest and breed.

Unlike other fast birds, Frigate Birds can't walk easily on land, especially on seashores.

To catch their prey such as flying fish, crabs and crustaceans they will glide through the air and pluck their prey at the right moment.

No 5

The Eurasian Hobby⁶ – 161kph



The Eurasian Hobby is a small member of the falcon family. They are found in open woodlands, river edges and forests across Africa, Europe and Asia. The Eurasian hobby is a long distant migrant bird that migrates towards Central/Southern Africa and Southern Asia to spend the winter. They can fly at a maximum speed of 161kph and are also known for their rapid, aerobatic flight.

They eat mainly insects and other smaller birds as well as bats which they hunt after sunset.

No 4

The White-throated Needletail – 169kph



The White-throated Needletail is a large Swift that inhabits the rocky hills of Siberia and Asia. They are also known as Spine-tailed Swift. At a maximum speed of 169kph, they are the fastest bird in flapping flight. They have long curved wings and a powerful body. This helps them to achieve exceptional speed in flight.

The Spine-tailed Swift is a migratory bird and before the start of winter they move towards South Asia and Australia. At the end of winter they return back to their breeding grounds.

⁵ Photo - Greg Lasley.

⁶ Credit of Image - Lilly M On Wikimedia Commons.

No 3

Gyrfalcon⁷ – 209kph



The Gyrfalcons are known for their high speed dive and long pointed wings. They are the largest falcon in the world and can have a length between 0.5 to 0.6 metres and weight up to 1.3 kg. They dive steeply to catch the prey from great heights.

During a dive, a gyrfalcon could reach a maximum speed of 209kph. They also have exceptional control over their speedy dive.

The dive of gyrfalcons includes many phases. They increase or decrease their speed by changing the position of their wings. They have broad pointed wings and their wingspan measures 1.27 metres from one tip to another.

The Gyrfalcon has long been associated with humans, primarily for hunting and in the art of falconry. It is the official bird of Canada's Northwest Territories. The white falcon in the crest of the Icelandic Republic's coat of arms is a variety of the Gyrfalcon and is also the official mascot of the United States Air Force Academy.

No 2

The Golden Eagle – 321kph



Now we are coming to the really fast babies. The Golden Eagle is the largest raptor in North America. This powerful eagle has a length between 0.65 to 1.0 metres and weighs up to 7 kg. Golden Eagles also have a wingspan 2.3 metres and dive upon their prey from great heights. During a dive, they can reach a maximum speed of 321kph.

With their long, broad wings they can soar in the air for a long time. They have a very strong vision and can spot their prey from huge distances. Once a Golden Eagle spots its prey, the eagle dives upon it with an astonishing speed. With their high speed in the dive and sharp talons the prey

has little chance of survival.

⁷ The first part of the word may come from Old High German *gîr* (cf. modern German *Geier*) for "vulture", referring to its size compared to other falcons or from the Latin *gýrus* for "circle" or "curved path" - from the species' circling as it searches for prey, distinct from the hunting of other falcons in its range. The male gyrfalcon is called a *gyrkin* in falconry.

No1

The Peregrine Falcon – 389kph



With a top speed of 389kph, Peregrine Falcons are the fastest living creature on Earth. It is a most common bird of prey and is found in every continent except Antarctica.

The Peregrine Falcons display a spectacular stoop while hunting. They dive upon small birds from huge heights and normally the strike can kill its prey immediately due to the astonishing speed of the dive. Unlike other birds the Peregrine have a strong heart and highly efficient lungs, so that their body gets

enough oxygen supply even at the high speed they achieve during a dive.

In South Africa it is migrant bird and a debate exists as to how effective a hunter it is. Respected researchers like Peter Steyn believe it is able 'to capture prey with little difficulty and there are long periods of inactivity when it merely loafs about on its favourite cliff.'

Research cited in Roberts VII indicates, however, that the Peregrine Falcon may sometimes fly too fast for its own good. The study claimed it had a poor strike rate relative to other raptors, and that only 7.5% of attacks made by the Peregrine resulted in a kill, compared to the 90% success rate of Ospreys.

The adult Peregrine has long pointed wings with powerful muscles, which gives them exceptional speed in flight. The stiff feathers on their wings also avoid reduces the drag.

ooOOoo

Regardless, all of those that venture into the blue yonder should be aware that there could be a 389kph feathered rocket approaching from your 6 o' clock!

EMPTY COCKPIT SYNDROME - US AIR FORCE STRUGGLES TO PULL PILOT PLUNGE OUT OF TAILSPIN⁸

This seems to be a theme that we in the SAAF have heard many times. Now the USA can't even get it right. Ed.

By Jamie McIntyre Nov 13, 2017

These are desperate times for the US Air Force.

To carry out its assigned missions at a time of rising tensions with North Korea and increasing demand for air power to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Air Force is losing too many of its best pilots. They're not being lost to enemy fire, but to the lure of higher salaries, more flying, less stress, and an all-around better quality of life in the civilian world.

"The big thing is we can't keep up with the airlines. Their pay continues to go up and up," said Brig. Gen. Mike Koscheski, the Air Force's air crew task force director, who's charged with fixing the problem.

⁸ Washington Examiner - 16 November 2017

One Air Force pilot, who just retired after 24 years, told the Washington Examiner that while he loved serving his country and flying one of America's front line attack planes, the constant moves and the increasing workload required by a smaller number of people in his squadron drove him to put his family first. "The airlines made it easy," he said, asking not to be named because he has just accepted a job with a major airline. "In my second year with the airline, I will be making \$30,000 a year more than I did in my last assignment as a colonel in the Air Force," he said.



US Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson, left, and Gen. David L. Goldfein, right, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force, have raised concerns about retaining people as many pilots leave for better pay in the

The colonel's story is typical of a steady stream of pilots voting with their feet.

"And at some point, families make a decision that they just can't keep doing this at this pace," said Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson. "That's the biggest thing we're facing, is we're burning out our people, because we're too small for what the nation is asking."

Today's US Air Force requires 20,000 pilots to fly everything from top-of-the-line fighter jets to transport planes to helicopters to drones. This year, the service reported it was down 1,500 pilots. But the latest figures released Friday show the problem is only getting worse, with a shortfall of 1,926. That's nearly one of every 10 who have left without being replaced.

With the civilian airline industry projected to double over the next 20 years, this isn't a cyclical trend the Air Force can ride out. Gen. David Goldfein, the Air Force chief of staff, says the problem in the country is simply not training enough pilots to meet the demand in both the military and the civilian sector because it takes a lot of time and money, and airlines are happy to let the Air Force do the heavy lifting.

"I mean, you do the math, right? Takes 10 years to raise a fighter pilot," Goldfein said. "Takes you \$10 million. You're 1,000 short. That's \$10 billion of capital investment that just walked out the door."

One sign of the Air Force's desperation is a new program to lure recently retired pilots back to active duty for a one-year stint. The idea was to get experienced pilots to man staff jobs, or serve as instructor pilots to free up younger officers to get more training, and more hours in the air, which is one key to retention. The program had a modest goal of attracting 25 to return to active duty, but the one-year term of service turned out to be not much of a draw.

So far, only three pilots have signed up. So, the Air Force requested and received authority to offer more appealing three-year assignments in the hope of getting about 200 retired pilots to re-up to help out during the crunch.

But it's not just competition from the airlines that has the Air Force sucking wind. It's also the years of congressionally-imposed spending caps and budget uncertainty that has made it difficult for the service to ramp up its pilot training to meet the demand. The Air Force can train about 1,200 pilots a year. It's hoping to get the number up to 1,400 and then eventually to 1,600, an increase of 25 percent in training capacity over the next few years.

"Our long-term fix to the pilot crisis is to grow our way out of this," Koscheski said. "It's going to take a while to get in place what we need to start producing more pilots, and obviously, one of the biggest things we need is stable and predictable budgets." Right now the Air Force is doing what the other services are doing while they wait for an infusion of cash that

Congress is promising to deliver before Christmas. It is prioritizing overseas operations and sacrificing readiness back home with the pilots, planes and aircrews that are waiting in the wings.

“The biggest threat to us right now which is the Budget Control Act,” said Wilson, noting sequestration, which caps spending at last year’s level, is still the law of the land. “If we go through sequester again, a 2,000-pilot shortage will be a dream. People will walk.” “It’s a crisis, because it affects our warfighting,” Koscheski said. “Our numbers are low, and when you look at our readiness, our pilot experience, our manning is directly related to our readiness and our combat lethality.”

COMMUNICATION WITH BRANCH MEMBERS.

Communication with Pretoria Branch Members has fallen badly along the wayside over the past years. The Pretoria Branch is in all earnest now addressing the problem and hopes that matters will improve. Please provide feedback so that the committee can iron out any hiccups.

All official branch correspondence will be done via e-mail. The official SAAFA Facebook Group still exists but our branches main communication method will be done by e-mail.

Here are just some of the e-mails you will receive:

- a. Notifying of upcoming branch activities.
- b. Bookings for monthly lunches.
- c. Confirmation of lunch bookings.
- d. Sending of annual accounts.
- e. Information the members need to know.

If anybody has ideas to improve the system, feel free to notify the branch office of your idea in order for us to address the issue.

This system is new and there may be some teething problems. Please be patient as we correct these problems.

IMPORTANT DATES TO DIARISE

Event	Date
AGM for 2018.	9 February 2018
Congress 2018 – Cape Town	25-26 May 2018

THE STORY OF THE POPPY

The inspiration behind the poppy as a symbol of Remembrance

During the First World War (1914 – 1918) much of the fighting took place in Western Europe. Previously beautiful countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over again and again. The landscape swiftly turned to fields of mud. Bleak and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow.

Bright red Flanders poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) however were delicate but resilient flowers and grew in their thousands, flourishing even in the chaos and destruction. In early May 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, Lt Col John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies to write a now famous poem called “In Flanders Fields”.



McCrae's poem inspired an American academic, Moina Michael, to make and sell red silk poppies which were bought to England by a French woman, Anna Guérin. The British Legion, formed in 1921 ordered 9 million of these poppies and sold them on 11 November that year. The poppies were sold out almost immediately and that first ever "Poppy Appeal" raised over £106,000, a considerable amount of money at that time. This was used to help WW1 veterans with employment and housing.

The following year, Major George Howson set up the *Poppy Factory* to employ disabled ex-Servicemen. Today the factory and the Legion's warehouses in Aylesford produce millions of poppies each year.

The demand for poppies in England was so high that few were reaching Scotland. Earl Haig's wife established the '*Lady Haig Poppy Factory*' in Edinburgh in 1926 to produce poppies exclusively for Scotland. Over 5 million Scottish poppies (which have four petals and no leaf unlike poppies in the rest of the UK) are still made by hand by disabled ex-Servicemen at *Lady Haig's Poppy Factory* each year and distributed by the charity '[Poppyscotland](#)'.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' Fields.

Take up your quarrel with the foe,
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch" be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

The poppy is:

- A symbol of Remembrance and hope
- Worn by millions of people
- Red because of the natural colour of field poppies

The poppy is not:

- A symbol of death or a sign of support for war
- A reflection of politics or religion
- Red to reflect the colour of blood

TAIL PIECE

Eulogy to Frank Carson (an Irish comedian)

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake-fluid. When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop any time.”

I went to the cemetery yesterday to lay some flowers on a grave. As I was standing there I noticed 4 grave diggers walking about with a coffin, 3 hours later and they're still walking about with it. I thought to myself, they've lost the plot!”

“My daughter asked me for a pet spider for her birthday, so I went to our local pet shop and they were £70! Blow this, I thought, I can get one cheaper off the web.”

“I was at an ATM yesterday when a little old lady asked if I could check her balance, so I pushed her over.”

“I was driving this morning when I saw an AA van parked up. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable. I thought to myself, that guy's heading for a breakdown.”

Please send any contributions to the Editor:

Crow Stannard. - crowbar@lantic.net