



SAAF Association Port Alfred News

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TALE DRAGGER

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We would like to start with:

A very Happy and Peaceful New Year to all Members, their families and friends. May your wishes and dreams for 2019 all come true. God's richest blessings to you all.

There is no lunch or meeting in January. Our next lunch will be in February and time and date will be announced in the February issue of the Tale Dragger.

WELFARE OF MEMBERS

Sick Bay: Denzil Goosen, Rev. James Hoyle and Vanessa Naude.

May 2019 bring you better health and remember, you are always in our thoughts and prayers.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR JANUARY:

2nd Denzil Goosen; 20th Cecil Jones-Phillipson; 22nd Allan Lubbe; 26th Natie Ferreira; 30th Trevor Underhill; 31st Michael Beaumont.

May you all have a wonderful day doing all the things that you like most to do!

OBITUARY

Words cannot express the devastation and loss we are feeling at the passing to Higher Service of our Chairman, Hugh Holmes. Wally van der Meulen has requested that his Eulogy from Hugh's funeral be published in this Newsletter. (Wally and Hugh were friends for many years.)

"Warm greetings to Helen, Craig, Gillian, Hal, Guy, Friends and Colleagues and Members of SAAF Association.

This is a most sad announcement of the sudden passing of our Chairman, Hugh Holmes, to Higher Office, on the 21st November 2018. Hugh was on the golf course when that horrible death icon struck, in the form of a heart seizure and nothing possible could be done to save Hugh from the inevitable consequence.

Sincere condolences to Hugh's family and friends, from the SAAFA President, National Executive, SAAFA Branches and Port Alfred Branch Members. In particular, may you all be given the support and love from above to help your grief through this unhappy period and wherever you may be, please remember that we are all here to celebrate Hugh's life with SAAFA that began when he and Jenny joined our Branch.

Bear in mind that neither of them knew anything about SAAFA at all at the time, but they both became Members, Jenny as EXCO Treasurer and Hugh first in EXCO and then Chairman, where he did a great job despite being "new" to the responsible appointment. Wally had passed his "sell by date" as Chairman so Hugh was an excellent stand-in when it became necessary. Thank you to the late Hugh and Jenny for being such wonderful SAAFA Members and friends.

It leaves Hugh's wife, Helen to "soldier on" and keep our SAAFA banner flying.

Helen, if SAAFA can be of any assistance to you, please just give us a call and we will gladly help."

RITUAL

**Hugh has severed the surly bonds of earth,
He has mounted up as on the wings of an eagle,
Put out a hand and touched the face of God.
Hugh shall not grow old as we who are left grow old,
Age shall not weary him, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
WE WILL REMEMBER HIM. WE WILL REMEMBER HIM.**

R I P dear friend, 'til we meet again.
God be with you, whilst in His care, with love.

If Helen needs us we will render support.
(Courtesy of Wally)

It is with regret that we announce the passing to Higher Service of Herman Heim on 13th December 2018 in Bloemfontein. Our deepest condolences to his family and friends. May God be with you and give you strength to get through this difficult time.

SAAFA PRESENTS: THE VICTORY CUP GOLF DAY

Where: Royal Port Alfred Golf Club
When: 5th January 2019
Time: 10 am onwards (first tee off)
Bookings for players to be done at the Golf Club.
Come and join us for fun and lots of prizes.
There will also be two raffles the proceeds of which will go to our Fund-raising.

In 1945 after the surrender of Japan (VJ Day), 43 Air School, then a military flying school as part of the Commonwealth Joint Air Training System training air crew for duties in World

War 2, presented the Victory Cup to the Royal Port Alfred Golf Club to commemorate that day. The Cup has been played for ever since and has always been a fun day.

Rumour has it that the first time that this was played, the dress code was Top Hat and Tails with players having just arrived from the New Year Eve's dance, together with other criteria which had to be adhered to which has been forgotten in the mist of time.



42 SQUADRON (Part 2)

As a Flight, however, even 42 appear to have suffered significantly from the shortage of qualified personnel brought on by requirements at 2 Squadron in Korea, as only two pilots are listed on strength in March 1952. Notwithstanding this, routine day and night flights were continued along with Brigade exercises in March.

42 Flight training and operational patterns changed little during the ensuing years. The cessation of hostilities in Korea brought with it a more equitable distribution of resources which saw the Flight's air crew and aircraft complement being increased. This coincided with the unit once again being transferred to

Army control in 1953. Five Auster Mk6's were received later in the same year, to be followed by two Mk9's four years later. This period also saw the establishment of No. 1 AOP Squadron, an ACF unit established to absorb surplus pilots who had completed training.

Deployed to monitor the unrest in the Eastern Cape in 1961, the Flight suffered further loss when an Auster crashed on landing on a rough strip near Flagstaff. With its under-carriage broken off, the Auster skidded along the ground and burst into flames. Dazed, the pilot was attempting to clamber out of the wreckage before the fuel tank exploded, when a local villager ran to the burning wreckage and, with little thought for his own safety, pulled the pilot free.

No less than six non-fatal accidents had been recorded during the period, testimony to the nature of the reconnaissance pilot's role and the intensity of his training.

Following the evaluation of two Dornier Do27's for air observation, the SAAF settled on Cessna 185's and the first of these arrived in the country in May 1962. The Austers were finally withdrawn from service and placed in storage.

(Courtesy of George Armstrong)

WHY IT'S NICE TO BE A DOG

Your friends never expect you to pay for lunch, dinner or anything else for that matter!



BELUGA XL *One step closer to flight*

Airbus has issued an update on the Beluga XL programme as the first aircraft is prepared for

its maiden flight. The prototype, F-WBXL (c/n 1824) has passed a ground vibration test (GVT), a requirement for its certification.

The test's objective is to measure the dynamic behaviour of the jet and confirm theoretical models of flight conditions such as manoeuvring, gusty conditions and landing, data from which will help clear the aircraft's flight envelope.

The GVT trial was performed by the Office Nationale d'Etudes et de Recherches Aeronautiques (ONERA), the French national aerospace research centre in collaboration with Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR), its German equivalent, over eight days, using several hundred external accelerometers while the aircraft was stimulated by external shakers or seismic exciters.

Launched in November 2014, the Beluga XL – the new oversize air transporter based on the A330-200 freighter – will address the transport and production ramp up capacity requirements for Airbus. After the type's first flight it will begin a certification programme leading to service entry in 2019.



B-24 Liberator

ALPINE 44 CLUB

The night of 12/13 October 1944 is remembered as the greatest single loss of men and aircraft in the SAAF, when 48 members of 31 and 34 Squadrons died while on a mission

to drop desperately needed supplies to the Italian partisans in the Po Valley in the N W of Italy. Colonel Dirk Nel OC of 31 Squadron had the onerous task of committing twenty aircraft (B-24 Liberators) to the mission. The weather unexpectedly turned very bad with a change in wind direction, heavy cloud and rain.

Of the twenty aircraft only three located their drop zones. Eleven aborted the mission and returned to base. Five crashed in the Alps, and one presumably crashed into the sea off the Ligurian coast between Genoa and La Spezia. The wreckage was never found.

The community of Ostana buried the mortal remains of the crew of Liberator KG 874 and it was only in 1995 that one of the villagers, Giuseppi Berbaro, a keen historian believing that the American built Liberator belonged to the USAAF, saw fit to investigate the origins of the crew. His enquiries lead him to the USA, then England. It was there that an Italian couple, Nick and Kate Madina, living in the UK, assisted with the tracing of the origin of the crew. The search spread, and a man in Scotland recognised the name of a crew member and contacted the South African family who started a quest to find family of crew members of Liberator KG 874. Eventually families of five of the eight crew members were contacted and in October 2000 a commemoration service was held in Ostana and a cross and plaque were erected at the crash site.

The efforts of those involved in the search for family spread throughout the Po Valley and the crash sites of the other four Liberators were visited, identified and officially acknowledged as the crash site of the particular aircraft and crew.

By January 2011 two aircraft were still without plaques of remembrance – the crash site of KG 875 is high in the mountains and is inaccessible, and KH 158 remains to this day undiscovered. However, in May 2011 a plaque was placed for KH 158 at the drop site where partisans had waited in the hope of receiving supplies on the night of 12 October 1944.

Some time ago, Ivan and Heather Erasmus (PAB members) attended the annual commemoration service of the Alpine 44 Club, normally held at the Air Force Memorial at Bays Hill, but due to bad weather, the venue was changed at the last moment to Hangar 5 Swartkop Air Base.

The Air Force was marvellous in effecting the change of venue and created a beautiful setting for a moving service. Several wreaths were laid by various military organisations, and, for the first time, a wreath was laid on behalf of SAAFA Port Alfred Branch.

(Courtesy of Ivan Erasmus.)

ALL ABOUT HAPPINESS

To be happy with a man, you must understand him a lot and love him a little.

To be happy with a woman, you must love her a lot and not try to understand her at all!

Happy 2019 to all of you. If you are travelling, please be careful on our roads. If you are with family or friends – have fun – and if you are doing nothing special do it peacefully.

Remember that there is no lunch in January so we will have to wait until February before we see each other again.

God bless and keep you safe.

Editor: Lyn

The Editors extend their thanks for all contributions received. Opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Editors or SAAFA National Executive. The Editors reserve the right to amend or reject any editorial matter submitted for publication.