

# FLYING SPIRIT



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The Official National Newsletter of the SAAF Association

## MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

As we approach the end of another year it is worthwhile to look back and consider how these events influence our daily lives. While we may have learnt to adapt to the red light jumping antics of the deviant drivers on our roads, it appears as if this unacceptable type of behaviour has replicated itself at all levels in our country. The result of this behaviour is a growing sense of intense frustration in our society, which can easily lead to further irrational behaviour. In the SAAFA we have a strong bond of camaraderie and a strong sense of what is right and wrong, which we can use to help us weather this storm. It is an unfortunate reality that it is very often those that are nearest and dearest that are first to feel the brunt of this frustration. My appeal is that we use this awareness to counter this trend and continue to be a source of support and rational behaviour to those around us.

An organisation such as SAAFA cannot be successful without committed members, branch executives and national executives to live out our objectives. My appreciation goes to all of you that have made tireless contributions to the SAAFA over the past year. While we are sad to see some of our branches shrinking in size, we are boosted by the substantial growth in others, the revival of others and the very real possibility of establishing some new branches.

My heartfelt wish is that you all have a blessed and safe festive season with your families and friends and are able to start the New Year with renewed vigour.

**Hugh Paine**

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

## PARAMOUNT ACQUIRES FOUR MIRAGE F1s TO BOOST PILOT TRAINING

Paramount Group has announced it has acquired four ex-French Air Force Mirage F1B aircraft from the French government and will use them to enhance its pilot training capabilities.

The company, on 5 October said its subsidiary Paramount Aerospace Systems would use the twin-seat aircraft as part of its pilot and maintenance technician training services.

“The new acquisition of the Mirage F1 aircraft will inject additional ‘top gun’ capability into Paramount Group’s advanced pilot training programmes,” said Brian Greyling, CEO of Paramount Aerospace Systems. “One of the most important trends in today’s military aviation market is the increasing utilisation of legacy aircraft for adversary training by air forces. Paramount Aerospace Systems is now recognised as the only privately-owned aerospace company in the world that is capable of offering military type aircraft training from ab initio to supersonic fighter capability.”



France’s L’Echo Republicain reported last month that Paramount acquired the four Mirage F1Bs in June through Paris-based consulting firm Eurotradia International for around two million Euros. They were transported out of France at the end of August after five Paramount employees spent two weeks preparing the aircraft for transport. The wings were removed and fuel drained ahead of the move.

The Mirage F1s were stored with Entrepôt de l’Armée de l’Air 601 at Base Aérienne 279 Châteaudun. They were the last available for sale that were in good condition after the type was retired in 2014. In July

this year, France sold 63 Mirage F1s to Airborne Tactical Advantage Company (ATAC) in the United States, which is now part of Textron Airborne Solutions. France’s La Tribune said this sale was valued at an estimated 21 million euros.

Paramount is no stranger to the Mirage F1 – in 2003 the South African Air Force put 21 Mirage F1 aircraft up for disposal by way of Armscor and Paramount subsequently purchased the entire Mirage F1 package, including airframes, spares and support equipment in 2006. Paramount Aerospace has sold F1s to Congo Brazzaville and Gabon.

Paramount Aerospace Systems (initially a partnership between Aerosud Aerospace Systems and Paramount before Paramount’s acquisition in 2014) started out training pilots for F1 customers, but now operates a wide-ranging pilot training capability from ab initio to advanced fighter training in South Africa and customer countries. Paramount said it has extensive capability on the Mirage F1 with full airframe and engine overhaul capability, as well as the ability to upgrade, modernise avionics and mission systems.

Its pilot training school at Polokwane uses Cessna 172 and Alenia Aermacchi SF-260 propeller aircraft for ab initio training, followed by an Atlas Impala jet trainer and two-seat Mirage 5 for fast jet conversion. Paramount Aerospace developed a new F1 simulator for student pilots and also has simulators for the SF260 and Impala.

<sup>1</sup> Written by defenceWeb, Thursday, 05 October 2017. Picture: Tony Osborne

In addition to pilot training, a technical school also based at Polokwane trains ground crew to maintain and service aircraft. Their training course is three years long and they become qualified tradesmen. Paramount said the demand for pilot and technician services is increasing significantly due to the global shortage of well-trained military transport and combat pilots. "The global economic slowdown has reduced the defence budgets of most countries in the world resulting in cuts across many defence sectors including aircraft, naval vessels and military vehicles. Such budgetary constraints are driving the decrease in procurement of new military aircraft, helicopter and UAV's and place huge emphasis on more affordable solutions such as maintenance, repair and modernisation of existing equipment and the associated training requirements," said Ivor Ichikowitz, Group Chairman of Paramount Group.

"Through decades of expertise, continuous innovation and the strengthening of our aircraft upgrade, maintenance, integration, logistics and training solutions, Paramount Aerospace Systems is optimally positioned to provide this capability to any air force in the world. We are very proud of this world-class African capability that is critical for extending the service life of aircraft while reducing the high acquisition costs of new equipment. Paramount Aerospace Systems is well positioned to become one of the major global players in this space, and the acquisition and placing of these aircraft into service furthers this objective," Ichikowitz added.

## CMVO GOLF DAY

SAAFA Pretoria fielded two teams in the CMVO benevolence golf day held at Services Golf Club in September 2017.

Team 1: Hugh Paine, Michael John Louw, Craig Rene Stanton and Philip Weyers sported the new SAAFA golf shirt designed and purveyed by Riaan Von Bentheim Snr. Best dressed team!

Team 2: Was made up by DA Friends: Col Pannawat Boonchai (Thailand), Col Jeff Lin (Taiwan) and Lt Col Van Viet Coung (Vietnam). A great cause while flying the SAAFA flag amongst our fellow Veterans and enjoying the company of our Honorary Members



## MY VISIT TO THE AMERICAN AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

*Rev. Trevor Slade. SAAFA. NEC. Benevolence Port Folio. 2017*

During June this year I spent a most enjoyable Sabbatical working at an Episcopal (Anglican) Church in Summit, New Jersey. USA.

Before leaving South Africa I had made contact with Mr Howard Leach, the Treasurer of Chapter 195 (Branch) of the American Air Force Association in Chatham, New Jersey. My aim was to visit them, share news of our South African Air Force Association, learn about their activities, their Aims and Objectives and create camaraderie between our Associations.

I was invited to meet with Members of Chapter 195, known as the Shooting Star Chapter, on Saturday 17 June. We first met in the historic town of Morristown, New Jersey with a visit to General George Washington's Winter Headquarters in 1779. Washington and his American rebels were fighting for American Independence from Britain and the rambling Ford Mansion was used as Washington's H.Q. I quickly learnt that Americans are immensely proud of their heritage and their Memorial sites are meticulously maintained with guides willing and able to educate visitors.

We then proceeded to the town of Chatham and gathered at the Charley Brown Restaurant where Chapter 195 conduct their meetings. (I particularly remember the Salad Bar at Charley Brown's. It went on forever).



The Leaders of other Chapters in New Jersey were also in attendance. Mr Bill Fosina, President of Chapter 195 Shooting Star, who was also President of the New Jersey Air Force Association, welcomed me and I was invited to address the meeting with news of our Association. I read President Hugh Paine's Letter of Greeting to their Members and presented a SAAFA plaque to Chapter 195 and a SAAFA tie to President Bill

Fosina. In response I was made an Honorary Member of the American Air Force Association (which was established on 4 Feb. 1946) and presented with a copy of the 2017 United States Air Force Almanac. It was remarkable in that our Associations closely mirror one another's activities. They care for Air Force Veterans in need. Honour the Memory of those who have fallen in their Wars, those Missing in Action and Prisoners of War. They also liaise very closely with their Air force and enjoy Camaraderie with each other.

I was asked to convey their greetings to our President and all Members of SAAFA and was informed that President Hugh's letter will be posted on their Air Force Association news media.

It was a most enjoyable experience for me and I would encourage our members to make contact and link up with Air Force Associations when visiting other countries. It is an excellent way to grow SAAFA's liaison and camaraderie across the borders of the world.

## VEGVLEÏNIERS SE VLUK VAN VREDE

*This is an extract from BEELD newspaper dated 21 September 2017 and written by Sarel van der Walt.*

Op 27 September 1987 is die Suid-Afrikaanse Mirage-veg-vlieënier, kapt. Arthur Piercy, in die lugruim bo Angola deur 'n missiel uit Alberto ley Rivas, 'n Kubaanse vlieënier, se Russiese MIG-straalvegter getref. Nou, 30 jaar later, het hy in die VSA 'n emosionele ontmoeting met een van Rivas se kollegas gehad.

Nadat sy Mirage F1 deur die missiel getref is, het kapt. Arthur Piercy met sy beskadigde vliegtuig na die lugmagbasis in Rundu, in die eertydse Suidwes-Afrika (nou Namibia) teruggekeer en 'n noodlanding gedoen.

Hy is in die voorval verlam.

As deel van die proses om die gebeure van 30 jaar gelede te verwerk wou hy graag die man ontmoet wat hom raak geskiet het.

Dié droom is nie ten volle verwesenlik nie, maar hy kon darem nou, ná drie-dekades, vrede maak met een van maj. Alberto ley Rivas se eertydse kamerade. Rivas het die Mirage waarin Piercy (nou 58) daardie dag in 1987 gevlieg het met R-60MK infrarooi-missiel getref.

Dit was in die Slag van Quito Cuanavale in die omgewing van die Lombardivier waar hewige gevegte plaasgevind het.

Piercy het na die Rundu-lugmagbasis – sowat 300 km weg – tereruggekeer en gaan land. Die Mirage se remvalskerm was veggeskiet en min van sy kontroles het gewerk. Toe die vliegtuig deur die basis se heining bars, is die uitskietstoel geaktiveer, maar sonder om die valskerm te laat oopgaan.

Piercy se nekwerwels is gebreek toe hy – steeds in die uitskietstoel – die grondgetref het.

Piercy sê in 'n artikel, wat hy vir die webverf van die Lugmagmuseum geskryf het, hy en drie ander vlieëniers is die middag van 27 September 1987, 'n warm Sondagmiddag, omstreeks 15.00 opdrag gegee om hulle na hul Mirages te haas en so gou as moontlik in die lug te kom. Hul doel was om MIG-23's wat Suid-Afrikaanse stellings aangeval het, te onderskep.

Daar was nie tyd om bang te wees nie. Die adrenelien het gepomp. Die Mirages het aanvanklik laag gevlieg om die Angolese radarstelsel te ontwyk. Later, op 'n hoogte van 30,000 vt. Het Piercy 'n Mig-23 sowat 300 vt. onder hom gewaar.

“My eerste gedagte was: *Wow*, wat 'n mooi vliegtuig. Dit was die eerste keer dat ek so 'n vliegtuig gesien het,” sê Piercy. “Eers toe ek begin draai het, het ek die tweede MIG gesien.”

Piercy het sy Mirage begin draai: “Ek het in daardie stadium teen Mach 1.3 gevlieg”. Kort daarna het die MIG van voor (“so uit die een, tweeuur posisie”) gekom. Terwyl hy besig was om te draai, het Piercy sy Mirage se wapenstelsel geaktiveer. “As hy eerste in my sig beland het, sou ek 'n paar skote op hom afgevuur het. Ongelukkig vir my het hy die eerste skoot geskiet” sê Piercy.

Hy onthou die oranje flits uit die MIG se linkerkantse vlerk en iets wat gelyk het soos 'n vinnig beweegende “telefoonpaal” met wit rook wat agterna gekom het. In hul opleiding is Suid-Afrikaans vlieëniers geleer om in die rigting van die missiel wegtebreek om vir die missiel 'n opspoorprobleem te veroorsaak.

“In werklikheid het dit nogal wilskraggeverg om reguit af te vlieg op iets wat ek geweet het probeer my doodmaak.”

Piercy sê hy het gesien hoe die missiel oor sy Mirage se regte vlerk “gekurkrek” het voordat dit agter hom verdwyn het. “Ek het aanvanklik gedink hy het my gemis voordat ek 'n dowwe geluid gehoor en die vliegtuig liggies voel ruk het.” Die missiel het die Mirage se stert getref.

Die meters op sy paneelbord voor Piercy het nie dadelik gewys iets is verkeerd nie. Die MIG is bo-oor hom en het verdwyn. “Ek het onmiddelik die bevelvoerder laat weet ek vermoed ek is getref. Sy reaksie was: “Ouwei, kom ons gaan huis toe.” Die terugvlug Rundu toe was moeilik.

Piercy sê hy het jare lank wens hy kon Rivas ontmoet om saam met hom te deel van sy beoogde wêreldreis per vliegtuig saam met hom te vlieg. In sy lang soektog het hy uitgevind Rivas is in Kuba, maar kan nie Engels praat nie. Uit Kuba het hy ook nie veel hulp oor Rivas gekry nie.

Piercy het intussen op sosiale media in aanraking gekom met Lt.kol. Eduardo Gonzales, ‘n kollega van Rivas. Twee jaar gelede het Orestes Lorenzo, ‘n ander Kubaanse vegvlieënier wat in 1991 na die VSA uitgewyk het, hom uit die bloute op Facebook gekontak. Lorenzo het geskryf hy is bly om te hoor Piercy leef nog, want die storie in Kuba is dat hy in die aanval dood is. Hy het gesê indien Piercy ooit in die VSA is, hy hom met graagte op ‘n vlug wou neem.

Twee weke gelede het die ontmoeting in Orlando in die Amerikaanse deelstaat Florida plaasgevind. Piercy en sy vrou, Gerda, het met die geldelike hulp van vriende die bekende Oshkosh-lugskou in die VSA bygewoon. Daarna het hulle by Lorenzo gaan kuier.

Lorenzo en sy vrou, Vicky, het die Piercy-egpaar op die lughawe ontmoet. “Dit was soos ou vriende wat mekaar in jare nie gesien het nie. Ons het blad geskud en mekaar omhels” sê Piercy.”

Die Piercy-egpaar het ‘n week lank saam met Lorenzo en sy vrou gekuier. Hulle het onder meer oor die bosoerlog gepraat en staaltjies uitgeruil. Lorenzo het sy belofte nagekom en Piercy op ‘n vlug in ‘n L-39 [*Albatros*] opleidingstraler geneem. “Dit was baie spesiaal om saam met ‘n ou vyand van Angola-oorlog te kon vlieg. Toe ons na die vlug drankies gedrink het, het ek gedink 30 jaar gelede toe ons mekaar vir die eerste keer in die lug ‘ontmoet’ het, was dit ons doel om mekaar uit te wis.

“En nou sit ons en drink, soos ou vriende, saam drankies. Hy respekteer my nou en ek vir hom. Vir my het die woord ‘versoening’ nou ‘n ander betekenis. Dit was ‘n ongelooflike ervaring. ‘n Een-keer-in-‘n-leeftyd-ervaring” sê Piercy.

## “WEL EN WEE” NEWSLETTER,

For those members who regularly read the “Wel en Wee” distributed by Johan Vorster, he has the following to say:

### **Distribution of Newsletter**

*In the past month serious problems with reference to the distribution of the Newsletter have been encountered. In the past I had to organise 11 distribution lists each containing approximately 200 addressees. This took about an hour each to send. This created huge problems with the service provider even though I reduced the addressees to approximately 40 each. Other problems encountered were the recopying of each Newsletter which caused formatting problems because paragraphs moved and graphics no longer lined up.*

*You will understand that this has become a monumental task and I have unfortunately have to advise you that in the future and I will have to resort to making use of SADF Association and the Infantry Association webpages.*

*The Infantry webpage is [www.sainfantry.co.za](http://www.sainfantry.co.za), with the link <http://www.sainfantry.co.za/index.php/news>. This will take you directly to the Newsletter. On this webpage the last 15 Newsletters appear. Leon le Roux is the webmaster and his personal email is [leon@sainfantry.co.za](mailto:leon@sainfantry.co.za). With the illness of Daan Nell, the SANDF*

webpage, [www.SAWV.co.za](http://www.SAWV.co.za) is inactive for the moment, but it will hopefully be up and running soon.

Newsletter 14/2017 can now be accessed on <http://www.sainfantry.co.za/index.php/news> and also via the SAAFA webpage.

Best wishes.

## **LAUNCH OF BOOK BY AIR VICE MARSHALL HUGH SLATTER - EX ZIMBABWEAN AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF**

Hugh Slatter was a Squadron Leader and helicopter pilot in the Rhodesian Air Force when he was nominated to attend the South African Air Force's Air Staff Course no 12 from 28 February to 6 October 1972 at the Air Force College. Fellow SAAF course members were inter alia Dan Zeeman, Pierre Gouws, Dries van der Lith, Marty van der Linde, Blondie Cilliers, Julius Kriel and Daantjie Retief. After successfully completing the course he was seconded to the SAAF and posted to Langebaanweg and later to AFB Durban. During his stint at AFB Durban, the current national president of the SAAFA, Hugh Paine, got married and Hugh Slatter was part of the guard of honour at the wedding.

On completion of his tour in the SAAF he returned to the Rhodesian Air Force, where he had a successful career eventually ending up as the Chief of Staff with the rank of Air Vice Marshal in the then Zimbabwe Air Force. During the early hours of 25 July 1982, an act of sabotage took place at Thornhill, Zimbabwe's main airbase when a series of explosions left several fighter aircraft destroyed and many others severely damaged. Six officers, including Hugh Slatter, were accused of cooperating with the saboteurs and were duly arrested. Two weeks later, after being held incommunicado, they were said to have confessed. They were held in custody for nearly nine months before appearing in court on sabotage charges. During the lengthy court case it soon became evident that their confessions were made after being subjected to severe torture, and they were acquitted on all charges. However on his release, Hugh was immediately taken to Harare Airport and deported to England.

From England with the assistance of a USA senator he and his family made their way to the United States and here he obtained employment with General Electric Aviation, the manufacturers of Boeing aircraft engines. At General Electric he followed a very successful second career retiring a few years ago as one of their executives. He now lives on the Pacific coast in the state of Oregon.

Hugh has now written a book about his life experiences called "Pilot, Prisoner, Patriot". The book was launched a few weeks ago by a South African publisher called Ex Montibus Media. Details of the book are available on their website [www.exmontibusmedia.co.za](http://www.exmontibusmedia.co.za) and can also be ordered from the publisher via their website. All the proceeds of the book will be donated to Military Veterans organisations in South Africa and the United States.

## **IS YOUR WAR OVER? – MEMORIES FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT.**

*Sadly I have very personal memories of a very good friend that suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). But, in those days nobody could diagnose such things and later he tragically ended his own life. I think the following article by Rev. Trevor Slade. SAAFA .NEC Benevolence Portfolio really needs a little more attention than a cursory glance: Ed*

"War I believe, says a Veteran, dare not be commented on by those who have yet to have experience of it. Until you kill other human beings for survival, what could you possibly say about it? It assaults all your senses, the smell of death and the machines that cause it. Noises so loud you feel like an ant under a lawnmower. It is incomprehensible. On my best days I tell myself I killed to survive, on my worst my mind tells me I committed acts of

madness so that I didn't go mad. There are a lot of grudges that I hold close to my heart, in some sense it means that I will always be at war...at war with myself and at war with those around me. My wife and kids left me after they could no longer stand my drunken anger and sometimes violent assaults. When I could sleep I often woke up screaming. I became hooked on sedatives and lived in a cloud of separation from reality. War cheated me out of the reality of a normal life."

A wife has this to say, "I am married to someone with PTSD. The crazy thing is I'm hurting and my heart is breaking. My husband came home from work....didn't sleep...drank an entire bottle of Tequila...and started arguing...broke the TV...threw bottles around...got really aggressive and I got scared because he was escalating. I called the cops and he ran away. I have been abused physically and mentally. I can't stop the tears. I love my husband and I want him home and to get better. He desperately needs therapy and medication. I'm crying so much".

These intense emotions reflect the story of many Veterans and their families striving to overcome past war experiences and to come to terms with their resultant disability. This disorder is importantly becoming more recognised by Medical professionals today.

They have this to say, "PTSD has been an under realised condition among Military Service Members and Veterans. It can be caused when a person was exposed to death, actual or threatened serious injury by either direct exposure or witnessing the trauma, or indirect exposure. The traumatic event is then persistently re-experienced in the following ways: Intrusive thoughts. Nightmares. Flashbacks. Emotional distress after exposure to traumatic reminders. and/or physical reactivity after exposure to traumatic reminders.

Treatment for PTSD is certainly available to those suffering this Disorder and to their families struggling to help their loved one. Therapy aims at focussing on the memory of the traumatic event or its meaning. Different techniques help the patient process the traumatic experience. Some involve visualising, talking, or thinking about the traumatic memory. Others focus on changing unhelpful beliefs about the trauma. The good news is that help is available.

The Council for Military Veterans Organisations has taken the important initiative to provide SAAFA with Guidelines for the Management of PTSD among our Members:

The CMVO, with the help of professionals, will be able to address groups of Veterans (and their families/spouses) on the identification and handling of War Stress. This should be the first line of support to our Members and a good opportunity to diffuse most of the anxieties and questions. Member Organisations are encouraged to structure such opportunities. In this regard SAAFA Branches are urged to appoint a Branch Chaplain or identify a local Cleric or skilled Counsellor to provide the above service.

The CMVO Chaplain is available to assist our Branch Chaplains to direct Members suffering PTSD to Psychologists and/or other skilled support. (This service would be paid for by the patient).

Any SAAFA Member who thinks or knows that they are suffering PTSD may, however, report to any Military Sick Bay or Hospital for support and evaluation. This service is available only to Registered Military Veterans. Branches please get your SAAFA Members registered with the DMV. Brig Gen (RTD) Rev. Marius Cornelissen, the CMVO Chaplain, is available at [mariusco@lantic.net](mailto:mariusco@lantic.net) to provide further information. I may also be contacted at [tslade1946@gmail.com](mailto:tslade1946@gmail.com) or phone me at 083 391 1215.

One of the founding Pillars on which our South African Air Force Association is built clearly states that we, "Provide support for, and take care of, the general wellbeing of our needy Members".

This we will continually strive to do.



## TAIL PIECE – THE PILOT AND BEER LOGIC!

*A pilot and his wife are having a conversation.*

*Wife: "Do you drink beer?"*

*Pilot: "Yes."*

*Wife: "How many beers a day?"*

*Pilot: "Usually about three."*

*Wife: "How much do you pay for a beer?"*

*Pilot: "\$5, which includes a tip."*

*Wife: "And how long have you been drinking?"*

*Pilot: "About 20 years I suppose."*

*Wife: "So a beer costs \$5 and you have three beers a day which makes it \$450 each month. In one year it would be approximately \$5400?"*

*Pilot: "Correct."*

*Wife: "If in one year you spend \$5400, the past 20 years you are spending at \$108 000?"*

*Pilot: "Correct."*

*Wife: "Do you know that if you didn't drink so much beer, that money could have been put into a savings account? And after 20years, you could have bought an aeroplane?"*

*Pilot: "Do you drink beer?"*

*Wife: "No."*

*Pilot: "Where is your aeroplane?"*

*Please send any contributions to the Editor:*

*Crow Stannard: [crowbar@lantic.net](mailto:crowbar@lantic.net)*

### HOW TO REGISTER ON THE CMVO DATABASE

The CMVO want to compile a database for all the military veterans from the statutory forces, which must not be confused with the National Database for Military Veterans which is compiled by the Department of Military Veterans

For that **we require all the military veterans from the Union Defence Force, South African Defence Force and South African National Defence Force** to register their details on the CMVO website.

As custodians of the interest of the military veterans from the statutory forces the CMVO must determine the extent of its member's base, and by gathering this information it can also assist the CMVO to help those veterans in joining the suitable recognised military veterans organizations affiliated to the CMVO where they will feel at home

This will also make it much easier for the CMVO to assist the military veterans from the statutory forces with their interaction with the Department of Military Veterans.

Simply go to: [/www.cmvo.org.za/cp/19395/how-to-register-on-the-cmvo-database](http://www.cmvo.org.za/cp/19395/how-to-register-on-the-cmvo-database) and follow the prompts.



### **ROSENTHAL GUEST HOUSE**

Rosenthal is situated in Eldoraigne near Swartkop Air Base and has a 4 Star Tourism Grading.

For those members that are visiting from afar or family members, Rosenthal offers a special rate for SAAFA members.

Simply mention when booking that you are a SAAFA member and your membership number.

**Rates:** R550.00 for single and R650.00 for double sharing. Breakfast is included. Secure undercover parking, free Wi-Fi, air conditioning, and DSTV

**Contact:** 012 654 0754 or email: [info@rosegh.co.za](mailto:info@rosegh.co.za).