

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 2.10 - March 2019



Welcome to the March edition of Tattler. We trust that you will find items of interest.

As always, please feel free to provide input, constructive criticism and opinion to me at jonathanagolding@gmail.com

From the Chairman

Armed Forces (AFD) celebrations have come and gone. It was nice to see that 8 SAN vessels participate. These ships were:

- *SAS DRAKENSBERG
- *SAS PROTEA
- *SAS AMATOLA
- *SAS SPIOENKOP
- *SAS GALESHEWE
- *SAS MAKANDA
- *SAS UMZIMKULU
- *SAS MANTATISI

One of the FSG's will be on an east coast patrol on completion of AFD 19.
Super rugby has finally kick off for this year. I strongly encourage members, their families and friends to join us in the Club and watch it on the big screen.
See you at the club.

From the Treasurer

The month of January, has presented the Club with another deficit, which was not unexpected, as this has been the norm for quite a few months now. Unfortunately, the Club cannot carry these losses for very much longer and some clever footwork is required to lure members back to their Club.

Costs have been carefully monitored and expenditure kept to a minimum throughout the year, so the main reason for the poor results is the lack of turnover. This can easily be rectified through more support from our members. Another worrying factor is the resignation of quite a few members, on receipt of their 2019/2020 subscription bills. This however, will be partially compensated for, by the number of new membership applications that have been received.

A concise review of the outlook for 2019/2020, suggests that the Club is going to suffer a heavy deficit. This is understandably not acceptable as it means our cash reserves will be plundered and, of course, we know what that means.

We cannot urge members enough, to support their Club in any way possible. Your committee is well aware of the circumstance's members face to be at the Club, and will be proactive in arranging several functions, which will not damage pockets and will provide entertainment for all. Encouraging members to visit the Club (and giving good reasons to do so) is seen as a priority this year and members' participation in these and any other ideas are most welcome. That's all for now (sorry about the negativity) see you at the Club!

Club Manager's Report

Birthdays

We take this opportunity to wish the following a happy birthday - may the year ahead be very kind to you all!

Capt A.J. Pembroke	01 March
Mr D.C. Fabre	03 March
Mr A.G. Roberts	04 March
Capt B. Wallace-Bradley	07 March
Cdr J.P. Bowman	07 March
Lt Cdr J.F. Kriel	13 March
Capt N. Otto	18 March
V Adm J.F. Reteif	20 March
Mr E. Hardman	20 March
Mr M.A. Seffert	21 March
Lt Cdr I. Fishley	29 March
Ms C. da Conceicao Fourie	31 March

January 2019 100 Club Winners.

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R. Beal – R300
D.C. Law Brown – R300
Forfeited – R300
D. Erickson – R1 000

February 2019 100 Club Winners.

T. Wise – R300
P. Rast – R300
T. Van Zyl – R300
J. Jordaan – R1 000

New Members.

The Club is pleased to announce that we have the following new members

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Lt Geordie de Jager (Ret), married to Elna and resides in Fish Hoek. Geordie holds a Commission with the substantive rank of Lt (SA Army). He is self-employed and is the son of the late Professor Jimmy de Jager a past Member of the Seven Seas Club for many years.

Mr Simon James Mc Donnell, married to Clare and resides in Fish Hoek. Simon is employed by Stat Medical (Pty) LTD. He is a Member of the False Bay Yacht Club and is also actively involved with the NSRI (Station10). Simon is an accomplished and well-known photographer.

Mr Gerhardus (Harri) Cornelius Marais, married to Johani and resides in Murdock Valley. Harri is an Estate Agent in the area. He is currently training to become a NSRI Coxwain at Station 10, Simon's Town.

Welcome to all of you!

Yours aye,
Glen

For your reading pleasure: Columnist, Nick Lee has submitted this most interesting article on a teacher that deserved to be murdered, some Pom bungling and the sad fate of the HMS Glorious

Yet another Carrier

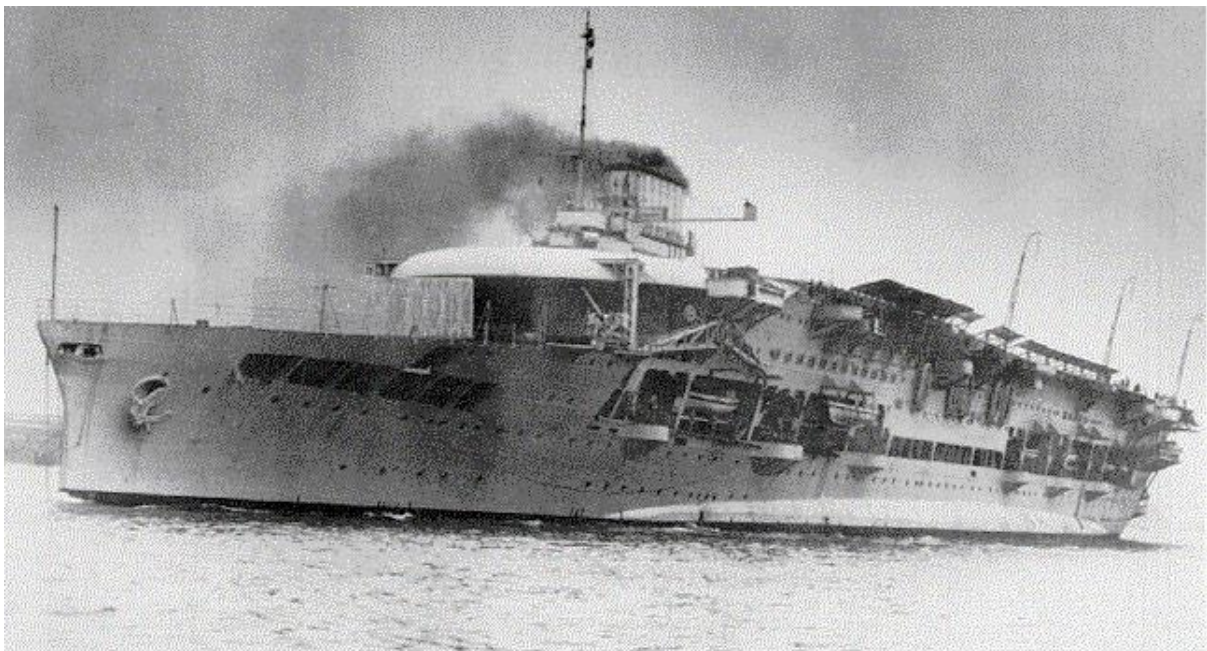
Sorry about this. It must seem to give the impression that I have a fixation on aircraft carriers. However, before I turn to other ships and boats like Battleships, Destroyers and U-boats etc., there was a maritime whodunnit that needed attention, and for this, we have to go back into the years of prelude to World War 2.

Most of the schoolteachers that I had through my rather chequered wanderings through the schools of England during World War 2 were mostly nice people who knew their jobs. However, there were some whom I yearned to meet on a dark night with a lethal weapon loaded and cocked in my hand, and in a way I still do. One was the worst teacher I ever had. He was the History master (if you

could call him a master of anything) whose idea of teaching us History was to say “Take out your history books, and start reading Chapter Four on page 42. I can’t learn this for you” and put his feet up on the desk, pulled out the Daily Mirror and started reading. I even tried to fix his chair so that it would collapse when he sat down on it, but alas, it didn’t work.

What peeved me so much was that he put me off History so much (Kings of England etc., etc.) that I nearly failed it in my School Certificate, whereas all my other subjects got to “Matric exempt” level.

When I finally started to take closer notice of History, I realised what I had missed, and so I’ve been catching up ever since, and there were some things that I noticed time and time again when I would come across a particular happening which triggered my thinking “What on Earth did they do that for?” and the fun came in trying to find out. Such a case was the sinking of the aircraft carrier “HMS Glorious”, although I could never regard that as ‘fun’. It was a major tragedy, and worse, it need never have happened.



HMS Glorious

Let us now cast our memories back to the late 1930s when World War 2 was becoming more and more likely, as Germany under Adolf Hitler’s chancellorship became more and more belligerent day by day. It was clear to anyone who knew the deficiencies of the Armistice that war was coming rapidly closer. As Field Marshal Foch observed when he first read the contents of the Armistice “This is not a victory. It is merely a pause for 25 years”. As the likelihood of a further war became more obvious a great deal of planning was necessary by the Royal Navy to try and work out where the Germans would strike first. It would appear obvious that Germany would invade France, and possibly Great Britain. However, this is where the names of two Norwegian towns enter our story. They were Narvik, and Trondheim (which I will leave until another day ...).

On the face of it, Narvik was just another small Norwegian fishing town in North Norway. However, there was another reason for its existence. It is not far from the Swedish border, and the two northern Swedish counties of Gällivare and Kiruna which contain huge resources of iron ore. If you have iron ore, you can easily turn it into steel, and Narvik was one of the major outlets for Swedish steel exports. It was therefore far more important than it seemed, mainly because you can’t fight a

modern war without steel. The other ports which were used for steel exports were down in the South East of Sweden. However, there was a snag. As the Scandinavian winter swings into play, the Gulf of Bosnia freezes over, so Narvik was the only port still available, and so it was a major strategic target. It was this that triggered off the plan of the British government to capture it before the Germans got there first. As it so happened, it didn't quite work out that way. You will all doubtless know the American Sitreps of SNAFU (Situation Normal All Fouled (?) Up, TARFU (Things Are Really Fouled (?) Up, and FUBAR, Fouled (?) Up Beyond All Recognition. As it turned out, the Narvik episode turned into a FUBAR quite early. For a start, the British Government were still not fully aware of the resolution of the German armed forces to use Blitzkrieg as their method of warfare. Quite simply it meant "If you are going into battle, go into it fast, fight it fast with everything you have, and then consolidate rapidly". As we all know, it usually worked. While the British Government tried to formulate its policy, and while the Navy, Army and Air Force argued with each other, the Germans rapidly headed towards Narvik, so it suddenly became far more difficult to capture.

So, having set the scene, let us now return to HMS Glorious and its fate. It was one of the ships that took part in the attempt to take Narvik, and carried a squadron of Hurricane fighters on board. As it became more and more obvious that things were not going to plan, and as it was decided to abandon thoughts of capturing Narvik, it was decided to abandon the fighters until the pilots offered to try and fly their aircraft back on board. This had never been done, and the Hurricane was a high-powered aircraft for its time, but didn't have such things as hooks for stopping once having landed on the short flight deck. Amazingly enough, they managed it!

On board the Glorious itself, things were not at all glorious. There had been an altercation between the Captain, a very prickly man indeed, and his Flight Commander who had been ordered to send his aircraft on a mission that he regarded as impossible, so refused. He was therefore put into open arrest pending a court martial. None of this was widely known at the time (except on the lower decks who always know everything). What happened next was bizarre. HMS Glorious left Narvik for Scapa Flow, its home base, the excuse being that she was short of fuel. Now how a ship could go ahead of its convoy on that pretext quite simply wouldn't wash. The probable real reason was that the Captain was keen to get back to Home Base and set up the Court Martial of his Flight Commander. Glorious steamed ahead with two destroyers as her escort, and 200 miles south of the main fleet ran into her nemesis in the form of the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisau. She didn't have a hope as they engaged and smashed her to pieces. She managed to send out one garbled SOS which was picked up by HMS Devonshire (which was at the time carrying the King of Norway and other Dignities into exile). However, apparently it was undecipherable.

So, that was the end of HMS Glorious, but not the end of those who still believe that a great wrong was done, and that a ship and all its crew were put into a disastrous situation unnecessarily.

Naval News

Two Navy warships sailed through disputed South China Sea waters on Monday 11th February

By: Geoff Ziezulewicz

Two U.S. destroyers steamed near islands in the increasingly contested South China Sea Monday as part of a continuing effort to counter Beijing's claim over those waters, officials confirmed. The guided-missile destroyers Spruance and Preble sailed within 12 nautical miles of the Spratly Islands "in order to challenge excessive maritime claims and preserve access to the waterways as governed by international law," Cmdr. Clayton Doss, spokesman for the Japan-based U.S. 7th Fleet, said in a statement.

These freedom of navigation operations, or FONOPs, are designed to challenge China's increasingly strident assertions that shoals and islets in international waters are their territory. China has built and fortified islands in the Spratly group, including added runways. Monday's FONOP focused on Mischief Reef, an atoll east of the Spratly group that China has expanded into an island and equipped with runways, hangars and other military facilities, according to satellite images.

The Navy's FONOPs are a delicate dance for both sides, with American officials expressing concerns that miscalculations could lead to military escalation.

The guided-missile destroyer Decatur nearly collided with an onrushing Chinese warship last fall during a similar FONOP.

Doss said Monday's FONOP followed international law and that U.S. forces routinely operate in international waters and airspace.

"The United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," he said. "That is true in the South China Sea as in other places around the globe."

"FONOPs are not about any one country, nor are they about making political statements," Doss added.

This latest FONOP took place less than a month after Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson travelled to Beijing and Nanjing to meet with his Chinese counterparts, part of an effort to get China's leaders to abide by international law and slow territorial claims over the South China Sea and other international flash points.

"As we manage these differences and continue to operate in each other's company in the South China Sea and increasingly around the world...we've got to behave in ways that don't make this more of a tense situation," the Associated Press quoted Richardson as saying.

Two U.S. warships sailed through the Strait of Taiwan last month in another effort to show the Chinese that they intend to keep such disputed waters international.

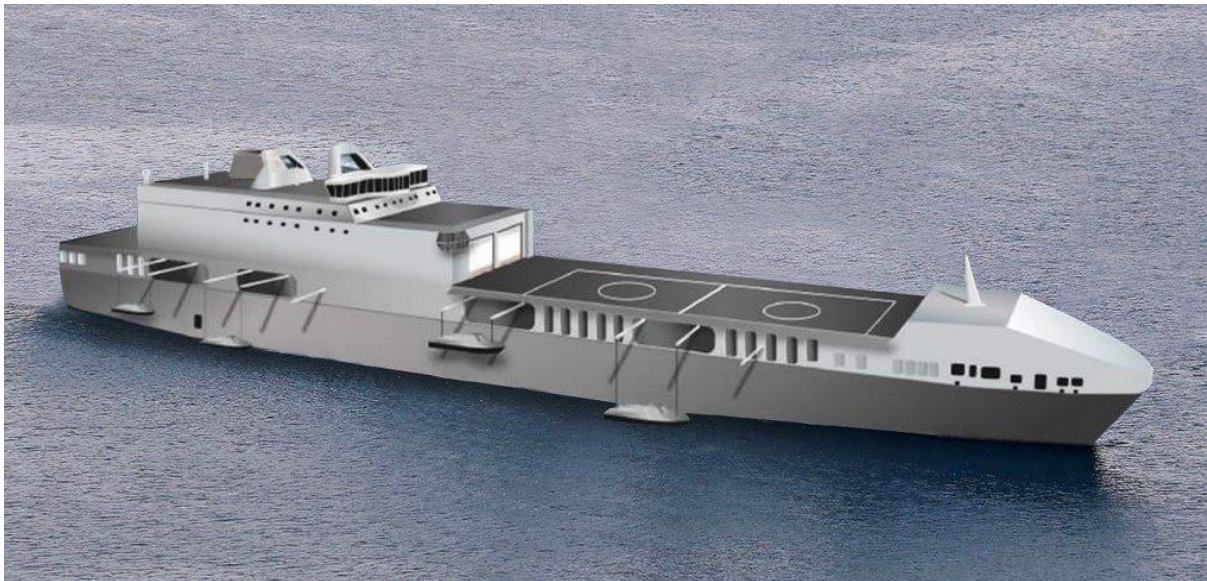
China expressed "stern complaints" to the United States after a similar FONOP in January, the AP reported.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said Chinese planes and ships were deployed to prod the guided-missile McCampbell to leave waters around its islands as they were sailing without China's permission.

"Relevant actions by U.S. vessels violate Chinese and international laws, infringe on China's sovereignty, and undermine peace, stability and good order in relevant waters," the AP quoted Lu as saying.

FEBRUARY 11, 2019

Defence Secretary delivers radical vision for Royal Navy posture but raises more questions than answers



Speaking at the Royal United Services Institute, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson made a series of announcements about his vision for the future of UK defence. The role of the RN was front and centre of a positive and bold piece that focussed on innovations and increased global deployment.

The MDP statement of December 2018 promised to look at how UK armed forces could improve readiness and availability, rapidly modernise and embrace new technologies. It is clear that Williamson is driving this forward with some enthusiasm and open-mindedness. He recently even invited mid-ranking Army officers to submit 1,000-word essays directly to him on how to boost Britain's influence after Brexit. For the Navy the stand-out announcement today was the increased emphasis on amphibious capability and a determination to operate in the Pacific region. The Secretary of State said: *"Two new Littoral Strike Groups are to be created. Complete with escorts, support vessels and helicopters, one would be based to the East of Suez in the Indo-Pacific and one based to the West of Suez in the Mediterranean, Atlantic and Baltic."*

To hear the Secretary of State talking about *"bringing the fight from the sea to the land"* marks a remarkable turnaround from a year ago when the entire UK amphibious capability was under threat. Julian Lewis MP, chair of the Defence Committee noted: *"It is a profoundly welcome development, and shows what can be done when Treasury-led attempts to hollow-out the armed forces are successfully resisted."* Expeditionary capability centred on aircraft carriers and amphibious vessels is central to UK strategic thinking again. This marks a big step in the rehabilitation for the RN which suffered from the Continental Strategy of the Cold War and the COIN operations of the early 21st Century. If the RN is properly funded and deployed with strategic sense, the aircraft carriers that have been so maligned by so many may quickly prove their immense value.

The Future Littoral Strike Ship

Outlining a new Future Littoral Strike Ship (FLSS) concept, Williamson promised they would be delivered quickly, have a multi-role capability from disaster relief (HADR) to combat operations. They would carry the 'Future Commando Force' – Royal Marines and be maintained at high readiness. The FLSS concept imagery posted by the First Sea Lord today (main image above) looks very much like the MV Ocean Trader, a merchant ship conversion adapted for use as a low-profile base for US special

forces. The SD Victoria performs a similar role for UK special forces and the FLSS appears to be intended to have a much wider utility for logistics and amphibious support than the Ocean Trader. There are other concepts from the US that could be considered. The 'Expeditionary Mobile Base' is a logistics, aviation and MCMV support vessel. Although built from scratch, the hull is based on a commercial oil tanker with the tanks replaced by a mission deck, flight deck, hangars and stores. The FLSS procurement might also dovetail nicely with the plan for an aid ship, funded by DFID that recently gained support from the International Development Minister, Penny Mordaunt. The FLSS is intended to have an enduring presence, low running costs and flexibility. It is perhaps something of a misnomer to name them as 'strike' ships, they certainly are not intended to spearhead an amphibious assault but be a logistic and support hub. As a base for special forces operations, they could perhaps mount small independent 'strikes' but are otherwise auxiliaries. The FLSS could potentially relieve Bay class RFAs from their support and disaster relief duties so they could return to their primary amphibious role as part of the littoral strike groups.

The MoD is at pains to point out the FLSS is very much in the concept development phase. There have been no firm decisions about the specifications for the ship and how they will be manned. They could be a completely new design and build, an adapted existing design (such as the Point class Ro-Ro ships) or merchant ship conversions. They could be manned by the RN, RFA or even as a commercial charter ship, manned by merchant sailors. Assuming the FLSS are based on merchant ship design, they could be operated by a very small civilian crew but also carry a naval party for running military operations. For example, the Point class ro-ro ships are manned by just 22 merchant sailors, although they are sponsored naval reservists. As part of the plan to have an enduring overseas presence to provide visible reassurance to allies and promote trade and diplomacy, there may be some merit in designating them Royal Navy ships. A ship flying the White Ensign makes a bigger statement than one flying the blue or red ensign.

There is concern that FLSS might just be low-cost replacements for the LPDs (HMS Albion and Bulwark) but the SoS was quite clear he intends then to complement the existing ships. Williamson talked very optimistically about how *"If we ever need them to, our two LSS, our two aircraft carriers, our two amphibious assault ships Albion and Bulwark, and our three Bay Class landing ships can come together in one amphibious task force."* This would indeed be a powerful battle group, but manning and equipping the two QEC aircraft carriers to operate simultaneously is a new aspiration and it should be remembered that currently one of the LPDs has to be kept in mothballs, due to lack of cash and manpower. Reliance on foreign allies providing at least some of the escorts for such a group, is a virtual certainty given the RN's limited frigate and destroyer numbers.

Aspiration meets reality

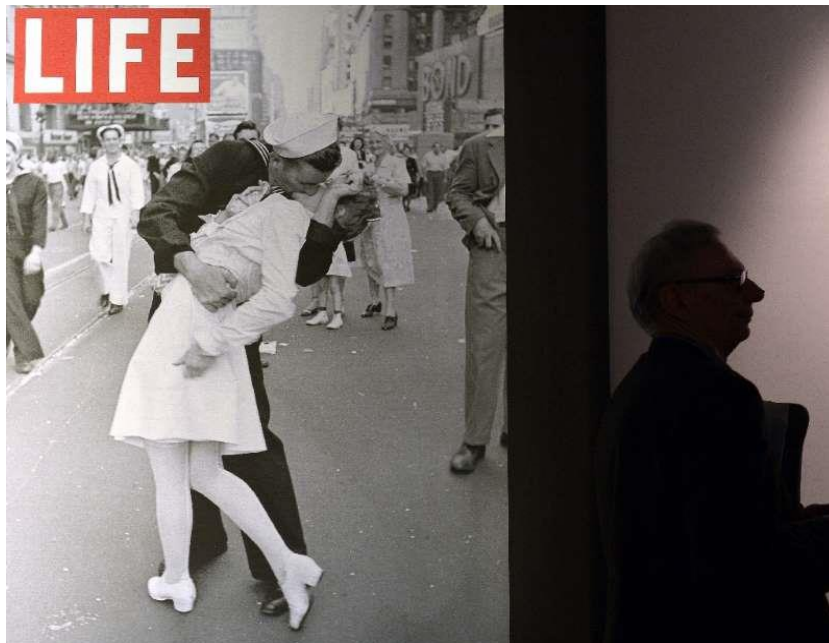
It is encouraging to hear a secretary of state who has the vision to grow and expand capability and is fighting in Whitehall for more funding. This is in marked contrast to many such speeches of the past that were merely thinly veiled attempts to be positive about the managed decline of UK forces. Unfortunately, Williamson's bold statements seem rather disconnected from the realities of the present. There are big obstacles that make the dreams of sustaining significantly higher naval force levels in at least two theatres simultaneously

The RN lacks the manpower it needs just to operate the ships it currently has and is stretched to find the ships companies for both aircraft carriers. It is possible that better recruitment and retention strategies, together with slightly lower manning requirements for the future frigates, could improve the situation within a decade but this is far from certain. Adding new ships, or at least enduring overseas commitments will only be possible if the manpower situation has stabilised and does not place additional pressures on those serving.

Unless the MoD is about to get a major injection of funds in the next Comprehensive Spending Review, it will have enough problems balancing its existing budget without further pressures. The Defence Secretary implied that new capabilities and concepts announced today, not just for the Navy, but also the Army and RAF would be paid for from the 'Transformation Fund'. This consists of £160M for 2018-19 ring-fenced for innovative new military capabilities with an aspiration for a further £340 million available as part of the Spending Review. £7M has already been earmarked for the development of various concepts including the FLSS and drone swarms for the RAF. The Commons Public Accounts Committee says there is a £14.8bn shortfall in the MoD 2018-28 equipment plan, the efficiencies that the MoD still hopes to achieve across the board are unlikely to make much of dent and hopes for two semi-permanently deployed littoral/carrier battle groups look wildly optimistic.

Gavin Williamson will undoubtedly have moved on when someone else has to make the really tough choices about what gets cut and if any of these ambitions can be realised. It is imperative that the military chiefs do not enter into a conspiracy of optimism and sign off on plans that they know to be unaffordable, which was partly the case in the 2015 SDSR.

George Mendonsa, the sailor pictured kissing a woman in Times Square as people celebrated the end of World War II has died at age 95, his daughter told the Providence Journal.



Spotlight

After not featuring it for a while, our Spotlight is back! In this edition we feature **Theuns Thiert**, a likeable self-confessed rugby nut.

Theuns was born on a farm next to the Olifantsriver, near Lutzville and raised on Dwarskersbos (about 11 km north of Velddrift).

Both his parents have passed on. He has a younger brother who lives in Malmesbury, and a younger sister in Belville.

He enjoyed his Primary schooling on the farm school on Dwarskersbos ("no shoes or ties – heaven") and attended secondary schooling at Velddrift ("with ties and shoes – terrible").

His post school education - Obtained Higher National Diploma (Elect) in 1983, BComm in 1995, MPhil in 2010. Did Junior (1985) and Senior (1995) staff courses and ENSP in 2005.

He is married To Tina (14 Dec 1985), no children.

He relates his Career as follows:

First and only job was Technical officer in the SAN. His progression saw "normal promotions" from Mid (1976) to Capt (1999).

After studies at Stellenbosch and SAS Wingfield, he was posted to SAS PROTEA, occupied several posts in Durban (1982 – 1999), finishing 31 May 2017 in Simon's Town. Enjoyed working with Pony Moore, Chris Dooner and Adms Green, Bester and Visser.

He says that his interesting experiences were preparations for and execution of missile firings off Durban. Highlights were the day-to-day challenges as a young technical officer in Durban in the heydays of Strike craft.

On "Life in General":

"Mad about rugby (played, coached and managed SANDF sides). Also, like reading and fishing."

He admires people who think before they speak.

He likes most music, from boere musiek to opera, from classic to country. Entertainment is watching rugby, of course.

Current life:

Theuns enjoys being a pensioner, doing house-keeping tasks and assisting his wife in her business. Regarding the Seven Sea Club - He became a member in 1982, cancelled membership when moving to Durban and re-joined once back in Simon's Town (cannot remember exactly when). Been a committee member for some time.

His club ambition - "Looking forward to being part of placing the club on an even keel for time to come."

Editor - And there you have it folks, a man of few words who is clearly modest about everything in his life. Good to know you Theuns and may you be around for many years. I will enjoy the odd rugby discussions, but will think carefully before saying too much!

A salute to the Staff

We live in a world where one's ability to be critical has been profoundly extended by the various forms of social media - venting or letting rip has been made overly simple. The impression that lingers is just how less frequently we see bouquets being presented.

Tattler believes that far too little appreciation is shown to those who keep our club immaculate, those that rarely slip up on any aspect, those who always seem to have a smile, and those that look after us when we visit.

I have been a member of many clubs over the years, both sports and others. Most have had a lot to offer, some great staff, reasonable maintenance and decent service. But ours, I feel surpasses what one receives at most clubs and matches the very best.

Therefore, I am "raising a glass to Glen, Frans and Theo" with our thanks. I must also make mention of Sean Gourlay who does a lot of the maintenance work, much of it pro bono or way below fair price. Thanks Sean, Glen, Theo and Frans!

HISTORY



1969: Concorde flies for the first time (2nd March 1969)

The supersonic airliner, Concorde, has made a "faultless" maiden flight.

The Anglo-French plane took off from Toulouse and was in the air for just 27 minutes before the pilot made the decision to land.

The first pilot, Andre Turcat, said on his return to the airport: "Finally the big bird flies, and I can say now that it flies pretty well."

The test flight reached 10,000ft (3,000m), but Concorde's speed never rose above 300mph (480kph).

The plane will eventually fly at a speed of 1,300mph (2,080kph).

Mr Turcat, his co-pilot and two engineers taxied to the end of the runway at about 1530GMT. Strong winds meant the test flight was in doubt for much of the day.

Spontaneous applause

Two previous test flights had to be abandoned because of poor weather conditions.

Concorde sped down the runway and there was a spontaneous burst of applause from watching reporters and cameramen as the wheels lifted off the ground.

The noise from the four Olympus 593 engines, built jointly by the Bristol division of Rolls Royce and the French Snecma organisation, drowned out any noise from the crowd.

Less than half-an-hour later, the aircraft was brought back down to earth using a braking parachute and reverse thrust.

The crew emerged at the top of the steps, led by Mr Turcat, who gave the thumbs up signal with each hand.

The first British test pilot, Brian Trubshaw, who watched today's flight from the news stand, said, "I was terribly impressed by the way the whole flight was conducted. It was most professional and I would like to congratulate Andre on the way he handled this performance."

The British government has so far invested £155m in the project. It is hoped Concorde will begin flying commercially in 1973, when it will cut the flying time between London and New York from seven hours 40 minutes to three hours 25 minutes.

And, on 3 March 1969

Apollo 9



*Apollo 9 official mission patch, Credits: Nasa
"Spider's First Mission..."*

Mission Objective

The primary objective of Apollo 9 was an Earth-orbital engineering test of the first crewed lunar module, or LM. Other prime objectives included an overall checkout of launch vehicle and spacecraft systems, the crew, and procedures. This was done by performing an integrated series of flight tasks with the command module, or CM, the service module, or SM, the joined command and service module, or CSM, the LM and S-IVB stage while they were linked in launch or various docked configurations, and while they were flying independently. The LM was to be tested as a self-sufficient spacecraft, and was also to perform active rendezvous and docking manoeuvres paralleling those scheduled for the following Apollo 10 lunar-orbit mission.

The flight plan's top priority was the CSM and LM rendezvous and docking. This was performed twice - once while the LM was still attached to the S-IVB, and again when the LM was active. Further goals included internal crew transfer from the docked CSM to the LM; special tests of the LM's support systems; crew procedures; and tests of flight equipment and the extravehicular activity, or EVA, mobility unit. The crew also configured the LM to support a two-hour EVA, and simulated an LM crew rescue, which was the only planned EVA from the LM before an actual lunar landing.

The LM descent and ascent engines fired on orbital change patterns to simulate a lunar-orbit rendezvous and backup abort procedures. The CSM service propulsion system, or SPS, fired five times, including a simulation of an active rendezvous to rescue an LM that had become inactivate.

After separation of the CSM from the SLA in Earth orbit and jettison of the SLA's LM protective panels, the CSM was to perform a transposition manoeuvre to dock with the exposed LM. The docked modules were to separate and the spacecraft was to adjust its orbit 2,000 feet away from the S-IVB stage. The S-IVB engine was then to restart twice, placing the stage in an Earth-escape trajectory and into solar orbit. This would simulate a translunar injection of the stage for Apollo 10

and subsequent lunar missions. Other objectives included the multi-spectral photographic experiment for subsequent crewed spacecraft.

All prime mission objectives were met. All major spacecraft systems were successfully demonstrated. The few off-nominal conditions that developed did not affect achievement of the major goals.

Mission Highlights

Apollo 9 launched from Kennedy Space centre on March 3, 1969, into a nominal 117 by 119-mile Earth orbit with Commander James McDivitt, Command Module Pilot David Scott and Lunar Module Pilot Russell Schweickart aboard.

On the first day, and after orbit injection of the combined S-IVB stage and its SLA-LM-CSM payload, venting of the S-IVB propellant tanks changed the orbit to 123 by 127 miles. The CSM separated and the SLA panel walls jettisoned, transposing the CSM to 180 degrees toward the LM atop the S-IVB. The CSM docked with the LM in the second orbit. The linked modules ejected from the S-IVB, and the thrust placed the CSM-LM a safe distance away for a 62-second restart of the S-IVB, which raised the apogee to 1,895 miles. To achieve a hyperbolic orbit for the planned escape trajectory, the S-IVB restarted a second time for four minutes, two seconds. It resulted in a less than desired maximum velocity increase and was off nominal by about 11 percent. While this did not affect the Apollo 9 flight, a lunar mission might have been aborted. Before the third S-IVB burn, the CSM SPS fired for five seconds, placing the CSM in an orbit of 125 by 145 miles. The firing improved orbital lifetime, checked the capability of the guidance and navigation system to control the burn, and performed a hard check of the LM's ability to withstand thrust acceleration and vibration.

The second SPS firing for one minute, five seconds occurred on March 4. It changed Apollo 9's orbit to 123 by 213 miles and tested the structural dynamics of the docked CSM-LM under loads similar to those of a lunar mission. A third SPS firing the same day for four minutes, 42 seconds, changed the orbit to 126 by 313 miles. The fourth burn, which lasted for 28.2 seconds, was an out-of-plane change.

On Flight Day 3, McDivitt and Schweickart put on spacesuits and transferred to the LM through the tunnel connection to perform a systems checkout. This included a 367-second firing of the LM descent engine to simulate the throttle pattern to be used during a lunar landing mission. McDivitt controlled the final 59 seconds, varying the thrust from 10 to 40 percent and shutting it off manually. This was the first crewed throttling of an engine in space and increased the spacecraft's orbit to 130 by 300 miles. After nine hours, McDivitt and Schweickart transferred back to the CSM with Scott. Then, the SPS fired for the fifth time as the final shaping maneuver prior to the rendezvous exercises to be performed two days later. The firing placed Apollo 9 into an orbit of 142 by 149 miles.

On Flight Day 4, McDivitt and Schweickart re-entered the LM. Because of nausea, Schweickart's scheduled two-hour EVA to simulate external transfer rescue techniques was scrubbed and then rescheduled. Instead, he climbed out of the LM porch for a 37.5-minute EVA, testing the EVA mobility unit, including the portable life support system backpack.

On Flight Day 5, with McDivitt and Schweickart again aboard the LM, it separated from Scott's CSM. The LM descent engine fired once for 24.9 seconds to place the spacecraft into a 137 by 167-mile orbit. If fired again for 24.4 seconds to circularize the orbit about 154 by 160 miles, some 12 miles higher than the CMS. Four hours later, horizontally 113 miles away from the CSM, the LM descent stage jettisoned for a first-time firing in space of the ascent stage engine. It lowered the LM orbit by

11 miles and placed it 75 miles behind and 10 miles below the CSM, leaving it able to commence a rendezvous. Six hours later, the CSM and LM redocked. The LM ascent stage jettisoned and was commanded to fire its engine to fuel depletion.

Although postponed by one revolution on Flight Day 6, a sixth firing of the CSM SPS lowered the orbit to 121 by 138 miles. On the seventh day, the crew performed Earth landmark tracking over the U.S. and the South Atlantic. On the eighth day, a seventh burn of the SPS altered the orbit of Apollo 9 to 113 by 288 miles. No major mission activities were scheduled for the ninth day.

Two telecasts were made to Earth from Apollo 9. The first, on March 5, lasted for almost seven minutes. The second telecast on the following day lasted about 13 minutes, and only showed interior views of the LM. Photographs taken as part of the multi-spectral terrain photographic experiment were successful.

On March 13, the tenth day, re-entry was delayed by one revolution because of heavy seas in the primary recovery area. Six hundred miles into its 152nd revolution, Apollo 9 splashed down at 23.25 degrees north, 68 degrees west. The crew was within three miles and in full view of their recovery ship, the USS Guadalcanal, about 341 miles north of Puerto Rico. The flight totaled 241 hours, 53 seconds - 10 seconds longer than planned. The S-IVB stage reached heliocentric orbit and the LM ascent stage reached a higher orbit. The LM descent stage decayed March 22.

Crew

James A. McDivitt, Commander
Russell L. Schweickart, Lunar Module Pilot
David R. Scott, Command Module Pilot

Launch

March 3, 1969; 11:00 a.m. EST
Launch Pad 39A
Saturn-V AS-504
High Bay 3
Mobile Launcher Platform-2
Firing Room 2

Orbit

Altitude: 118.63 miles
Inclination: 32.552 degrees
Orbits: 151 revolutions
Duration: 10 days, one hour, 54 seconds
Distance: 4,214,543 miles

Landing

March 13, 1969; 12:01 p.m. EST, Atlantic Ocean
Recovery Ship: USS Guadalcanal

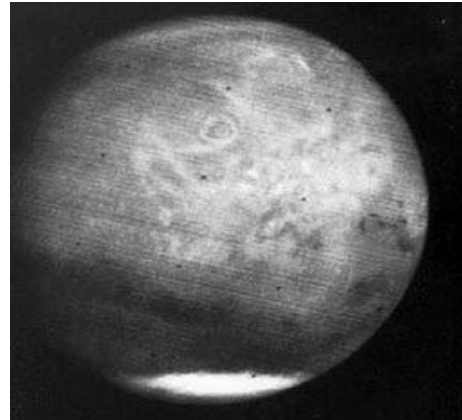
NASA - Missions to Mars

MARINER 6 and 7

Mariner 6 Launch: Feb. 24, 1969; Flyby: Jul. 31, 1969 Mariner 7 Launch: Mar. 27, 1969; Flyby: Aug. 5, 1969. Mariner 6 and 7 were the second pair of Mars missions in NASA's Mariner series of solar system exploration in the 1960s and early 1970s. As with the other Mariners, each launched on an Atlas rocket with either an Agena or Centaur upper-stage booster, and weighed less than half a ton (without onboard rocket propellant).

Image right: Mars, seen by Mariner 7. Image credit: NASA/JPL.

In 1969, Mariner 6 and Mariner 7 completed the first dual mission to Mars, flying by over the equator and south polar regions and analyzing the Martian atmosphere and surface with remote sensors, as well as recording and relaying hundreds of pictures. By chance, both flew over cratered regions and missed both the giant northern volcanoes and the equatorial grand canyon that was discovered later. Their approach pictures did, however, show that the dark features on the surface long seen from Earth were not canals, as once interpreted in the 1800s.



Music Albums in March 1969

Album	Artist
<i>Dr. Byrds & Mr. Hyde</i>	The Byrds
<i>From Genesis to Revelation</i>	Genesis
<i>Tons of Sobs</i>	Free
<i>Freedom Suite</i>	The Rascals
<i>Mothermania</i>	The Mothers of Invention
<i>Happy Trails</i>	Quicksilver Messenger Service
<i>Yer' Album</i>	James Gang
<i>Odessa</i>	Bee Gees
<i>Dusty in Memphis</i>	Dusty Springfield
<i>At Your Birthday Party</i>	Steppenwolf
<i>Blue Matter</i>	Savoy Brown
<i>Bull of the Woods</i>	13th Floor Elevators
<i>Family Entertainment</i>	Family
<i>Just to Satisfy You</i>	Waylon Jennings
<i>My Way</i>	Frank Sinatra
<i>New! Improved!</i>	Blue Cheer
<i>Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud</i>	James Brown
<i>Scott 3</i>	Scott Walker
<i>Spooky Two</i>	Spooky Tooth

<i>The Velvet Underground</i>	The Velvet Underground
<i>Wheatfield Soul</i>	The Guess Who

Movies released in March 1969

March 5

The Big Bounce

March 10

The Assassination Bureau (U.K.)

March 12

Where Eagles Dare

March 26

100 Rifles

The Illustrated Man

Support Your Local Sheriff!

And some rugby from 1969

Team	Pts	Pts	Team	HT	HT	Series	Ground	Date	Match
South Africa	30	11	Australia	19	6	Australia tour	Johannesburg	2 Aug 1969	Details
South Africa	16	9	Australia	8	6	Australia tour	Durban	16 Aug 1969	Details
South Africa	11	3	Australia	5	0	Australia tour	Cape Town	6 Sep 1969	Details
South Africa	19	8	Australia	6	3	Australia tour	Bloemfontein	20 Sep 1969	Details

Interesting fact - Just 8% of the world's currency exists in actual physical form. The rest is digital.

An elderly couple was having dinner one evening when the husband reached across the table, took his wife's hand in his and said, "Martha, soon we will be married 50 years, and there's something I have to know. In all of these 50 years, have you ever been unfaithful to me?"

Martha replied, "Well Henry, I have to be honest with you. Yes, I've been unfaithful to you three times during these 50 years, but always for a good reason.

Henry was obviously hurt by his wife's confession, but said, "I never suspected. Can you tell me what you mean by 'good reasons?'"

Martha said, "The first time was shortly after we were married, and we were about to lose our little house because we couldn't pay the mortgage.

Do you remember that one evening I went to see the banker and the next day he notified you that the loan would be extended?"

Henry recalled the visit to the banker and said, "I can forgive you for that. You saved our home, but what about the second time?"

Martha asked, "And do you remember when you were so sick, but we didn't have the money to pay for the heart surgery you needed? Well, I went to see your doctor one night and, if you recall, he did the surgery at no charge."

"I recall that," said Henry. "And you did it to save my life, so of course I can forgive you for that. Now tell me about the third time."

"Alright," Martha said. "So, do you remember when you ran for president of your golf club, and you needed 29 more votes?"

Wacky fact - It is illegal to pretend to practice witchcraft in Canada. It is, however, completely legal to actually practice witchcraft in Canada.

Three guys selling snoek on the corner shouts:

"Hiers djou snoek"

The guy in the car says:

"Wat vra julle vir daai snoek?"

One guy replies: "Ons vra hulle niks, wil dji hulle iets vra?"

To close, some humour at the club (submitted by Doug Law-Brown)

(Background - Ancient Mariners do not pay subs. A standard letter was sent out covering subs and other items)

Who says witty repartee is a lost art destroyed by modern digital communication methods?

The following exchange between Dave de Wet and the Club secretary (Doug Law-Brown) regarding the membership subscription email sent out towards the end of January would seem to indicate that the art is still alive and well (almost)

From Dave (Who is an Ancient Mariner and thus not liable for membership subs):

"Dear Mr. D. C. Law-Brown,

Thank you for your kind Email advising me that my membership subscription for the period 1 March 2019 to 28 February 2020 is due. I congratulate you Sir, on the layout and content of the notification. It is precise, concise and complete, and leaves no scope for dodgers to avoid making timeous payment.

As stated in your notification, the due amount of R00.00 is in the bank account of the club and I hereby confirm to you the correctness of that statement.

Yours faithfully,

David Pierre de Wet"

Reply (with no attachment) from Doug:

"Hi Dave

Thank you for your speedy settlement of your account – please find your discount for early payment attached.

Jokes aside, I trust that you did appreciate the confirmation of your membership number and status and that we did not have any mistaken beliefs regarding your participation in the 100 Club.

We do realise that for a few members, the "standard" mail template used is somewhat over the top.

Cheers

Doug"

Repost from Dave:

Hi Doug.

Ja. Your intention to inform was understood and appreciated. The discount awarded even more so.

Thanks.

Dave.

Post action "wash-up" in the Club on Friday Night:

Dave – "I could not find any discount attached. I assume that was intentional"

Doug – "Not really, Unfortunately I could not find any way to transmit the discount (in bitcoin) as the local cryptocurrency exchange would not process the transaction into your bitcoin wallet - it kept reporting a multiply by zero problem!"

Well that's it for March. Stay safe!