From the Cockpit

Hello Everyone. May I first start off by saying that this is my first letter as Chairman of the Friends, Ysterplaat for our newsletter. It is an honour to be afforded the opportunity to write this short note to you as the Chairman.

Over the last few months we have come a long way in leaps and bounds with increased visitors every Saturday. Our membership has increased and is still doing so on a regular basis with new young recruits joining us which is exactly what is needed as they will be the ones who will take over from us older bunch. It is of vital importance that we continue to drive the message to others so they may also heed the importance of keeping our heritage alive.

I hope you enjoy reading our post and please do comment if you wish to do so. Our contact details are at the end of the newsletter.

Have a lovely day and look forward to you visiting us soon.

John Wilson

CONTENTS

FAMOUS DAKOTA'S RESTORATION

By Ronnie Glass World Air News, August 2007

Douglas C-47 Dakota KOD 6832.

Tucked away in a hanger at Air Force Base Ysterplaat, Cape Town is a remarkable SAAF Dakota, a Douglas C-47A, number 6832, bearing the aircraft letters KOD, which is being restored to the pristine condition it was in when it was built by the Douglas Aircraft Company in the USA in 1943.

This aircraft played a unique, once-in-a-lifetime role in 1952 by being involved in the 'fish-napping' of a fish originally thought to have been extinct and flying it to South Africa to rewrite the history books.

Now a small band of super-aviation enthusiasts who call themselves 'The Friends of the SAAF Museum.' are working flat out in a bid to have the restoration of the aircraft completed in time to mark the anniversary of what has generally become known as 'The Flight of the Coelacanth'.

But these people need help - urgently - if they are to succeed in their task. The association is urgently looking for volunteers to assist them either personally by helping to work on the restoration project, or to help finance the project

The Dakota's fuselage will be restored to the colours she proudly wore 55 years ago - a polished aluminium skin with a blue nosecone with the engine nacelles bearing similar livery. To achieve this, eight coats of air force camouflage paint have to be removed. It is intended to paint a coelacanth on the fuselage beneath the cockpit window.
The Dakota will remain as a military-type aeroplane with benches fitted in the interior, instead of seats. Another special feature is that she will fly on her original piston engines, designed in the 1930s. Number 6832 last flew in 1992.

Almost Sci-Fi

The discovery of the coelacanth, its 'rescue' from an island in the Comoros, its flight in Dakota 6832 back to South Africa, and the involvement of the famous ichthyologist, Dr. (later Professor) J. L.B. Smith, of Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, read like a science-fiction novel.

Some people have likened the discovery of the coelacanth as being akin to finding a prehistoric dinosaur alive and kicking. Prior to this amazing story starting to unfold off the coast of East London, the earliest fossil record of a coelacanth was from about 320-million years ago and the most recent from 70-million years ago. No later fossil records were discovered. It was thus accepted that this fish had become extinct around that time.

But then, on December 22, 1938, a Captain Goosen threw his nets overboard from his fishing trawler one more time before returning to East London harbour. When the nets were pulled in an unusual fish was noticed which nobody recognised. On landing. the manager of I & J Fisheries made a call to the then East London Museum curator, Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer. She immediately rushed to the harbour, and on seeing the fish, realised that it was very unusual and took it to the museum and thereafter to a taxidermist in order to preserve it. Unfortunately, but this time it was already badly decomposed.

The following day she wrote to Dr. JLB Smith, who was on holiday in Knysna, enclosing a detailed drawing of the fish and describing its unusual characteristics. It was a large fish weighing nearly 58 kg with a length of 1,5 metres, she said. JLB Smith was immediately convinced it was a living fossil fish and within days confirmed it was a coelacanth. He found it described and accurately drawn in a leading reference book.

Unfortunately, the insides and gills had been thrown away and so Smith's quest for a second and better-preserved coelacanth began.

His feeling was that the fish had been caught rather far south and that other specimens would more likely be found in waters around Mozambique or Madagascar off the other French islands further north. So, he printed leaflets in French, Portuguese and English offering a reward for anyone landing such a fish. However, it was not until December 20, 19S2 that a similar fish was caught by a fisherman from the French Comoros island of Pamanzi. He took the fish to a Captain Hunt who had his fishing vessel berthed on the other side of the island.

Capt. Hunt knew of Dr. Smith's quest and immediately contacted him describing the fish in sufficient detail for Smith to think that it was indeed the coelacanth for which he had been waiting 14 long years.

The already famous ichthyologist knew he was up against time in order to minimise the deterioration of the fish. He tried every contact he knew as he realised the only way to save the fish would be to fly it to South Africa.

Having exhausted every other source, in total desperation he asked the Durban telephone exchange to find out the whereabouts of the then Prime Minister, Dr. D. F. Malan. He first spoke to Mrs. Malan and thereafter to the Prime Minister, who was on holiday in the Strand, in the Cape. Dr. Malan readily agreed and instructed François Christiaan Erasmus, the Minister of Defence, to make an aircraft available to fly Dr. Smith to the Comoros.

Historic Flight

Left to Right: E Breton (Fisheries officer at Mayotte Island, Capt Eric Hunt, Dr. J L B Smith, Cmdt Jan Blaauw, Capt Peter Letley, Lt D M Ralston, Cpl J W van Niekerk, Cpl F Brink and Lt Willem Bergh.

Two days later, in the early morning, a Dakota landed at Durban's Stamford Hill Aerodrome under the command of Commandant J. Blaauw and was soon on its way to the Comoros with Smith on board.

A fuel stop was made at Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique. That night was spent in Lumbo, in northern Mozambique. The next day, the crew, with very limited navigational aids at their disposal, endeavoured to locate the island of Pamanzi, Comoros.

However, it was not known whether the Dakota could land there, both as regards the reception the crew and passengers might receive from the French officials and whether the landing strip built by South African forces during World War II would still be usable.

The small landing strip was found but all the time the weather was worsening as it was the cyclone season.

So, finally, on December 29, 1952, Smith was able to see this fish that had been caught nine days earlier, and he gratefully identified it as a coelacanth.

Captain Hunt had intentionally kept it on his vessel in a specially made metal-lined box and, on Smith's instructions, had injected it with a preservative, formalin. To the South Africans' relief, the officials on the island, after a short celebration, did not prevent the Dakota from taking off with the fish safely on board. Commandant Blaauw and his crew of five had their skills and the flying ability of the Dakota fully tested by the steadily deteriorating weather, but soon Smith arrived back in Durban to a hero's welcome from the press and the public.

Left to Right: Eric Hunt, J L B. Smith (stroking the coelacanth). Governor Pierre Coudert, the Dakota crew and island fishermen.

The distance covered was 7 400 kilometres. The following day they flew to Cape Town, landing at Ysterplaat Air Force Base, from where Prof Smith took the coelacanth to the Strand to show it to Dr. Malan.

The flight route of Dakota 6832(KOD): 28 December - 31 December 1952

Dr. Smith was not allowed back the next year to the Comoros as the French considered it was 'their' fish. However, in 1953, the French organised expeditions and managed to capture a third coelacanth and were thus somewhat appeased.

The coelacanth caught in 1938 is on display in the East London Museum and the second is on display in a glass case, at the S A Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, Somerset Road, Grahamstown.

Many coelacanths have since been seen and caught, some as far south as Sodwana Bay, in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

HISTORY OF DOUGLAS C-47 MK IIIA 6832 KOD

By Dave Smith - 6832 Project Co-ordinator

Douglas C-47 Dakota KOD 6832 prior to her second restoration.

She was commissioned in 1943, Dakota 6832 (SA number) rolled off the production line in early 1944. She first flew at the Douglas factory in Oklahoma City shortly thereafter and she was given serial number 12478 and fuselage number 700. Once she joined the USAAF she was given the serial number 42-108863. Not long after joining the USAAF, she was then purchased by the RAF under the lend-lease scheme in later 1944 and flown to South Africa where she was given the number she now carries, 6832. The C-47 Skytrain was developed from the civilian DC-3 and become known as the Dakota an acronym for Douglas Aircraft Corporation Transport Aircraft in the Commonwealth air forces. From March 1943 until August 1945, a total of 10 692 Dakotas had been built. The SAAF had serial numbers 6801 - 6892 in service. There may have been more as some numbers were duplicated.

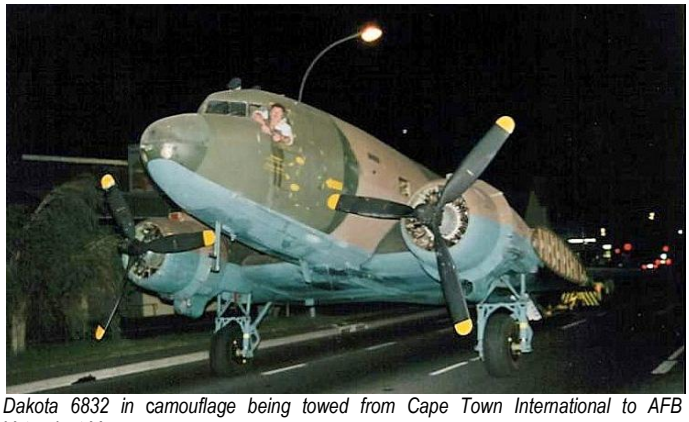
Douglas C-47 Mk IIIA 6832 in an earlier colour scheme. Image Louis Vosloo.

6832 then served with 28 squadron in 1945, 27 and 44 squadrons in 1946, from there to 25 squadron from 1975-1979 and finally ended up with 35 squadron at Ysterplaat doing maritime and transport duties where she served with impeccable distinction. 6832 was saved from turbo prop conversion at the request of some of her original 1952 crew as they thought she should be preserved in her 1952 colour scheme for historical purposes. She was thus retired from active service in 1992, and transferred to the S.A.A.F. Museum, Swartkop in 1994, and made its last flight on 3rd March 1995 back to DF Malan airport and stored in the 35 Squadron hangars and later moved by road to AFB Ysterplaat to be restored. She received her code of K-OD when she joined 28 squadron, king-oboe-dog in the phonetic alphabet of the time.

Her main moment of glory came in 1952 when she flew Dr. JLB Smith to fetch the World-Renowned Coelacanth fish hailed as a 'living Fossil' (pronounced SEEL-uh-kanth) on the island of Pamanzi in the Comoros Archipelago. The second one ever to be found at that time. It was this historic trip that led to her being preserved and saved for restoration. You can read up on that story. Google: 'The Flight In 1952 To Fetch the Second Coelacanth' and the article above 'Famous Dakota's Restoration' above. 6832 was saved from turbo prop conversion at the request of some of her original 1952 crew as they thought she should be preserved in her 1952 colour scheme for historical purposes. She was thus retired from active service in 1992.

Douglas C-47 Mk IIIA 6832 KOD was involved in an accident at D F Malan on 26th January 1966 when A/Sgt Smith who was inspecting the aircraft stepped back and was struck by the spinning propeller and severely injured. The aircraft suffered no damage.

It is amazing that in 1994 Majors Eric Pienaar and Peter Dagg flew the crew in Dakota 6832 to fetch Avro Shackleton MK3 J 1716, after her rebuild in Pretoria, 6832 was retired in the same year. Pienaar and Dagg were two of the pilots when 1716 crashed in Mauritania.



Dakota 6832 in camouflage being towed from Cape Town International to AFB Ysterplaat Museum.

My history with '6832', as she is affectionately known, starts in 2003 when I joined the appropriately named 'grubby rubbies', the team restoring her at that time under the team leader Kevin Furness. When I started, she had no wings, the engines weren't fitted and she was still in full camo colour scheme, it became our main mission at that time to remove all that paint (many, many layers) over the next several years. I was lucky also, due to my mechanical experience, to be able to help with the engines.

We eventually achieved a paint free airframe and finally had the wings and engines refitted.

Unfortunately, Kevin was no longer able to be involved due to failing health and he sadly passed away shortly thereafter. This was, of course, a major blow to the project and 6832 sat and the project stagnated for a number of years after. Unfortunately, corrosion set in on the duralumin skin during this time due to mistakes made in the early phases of the restoration process.

After a long break, I returned in 2021 and took on the mantle of team leader of the restoration project of 6832 and am pleased to report that we are making excellent progress in arresting the corrosion (it looks worse than it is) and hopefully she will be painted before too long. We have taken the decision to paint her silver instead of polishing her as this makes the most sense from a preservation perspective and was her original colour when it came off the production line. We are also working towards getting her ground running with the SAAF`s approval.

So, to wrap up, things are going well with the project, we have an awesome team, both directly working on the project and a support

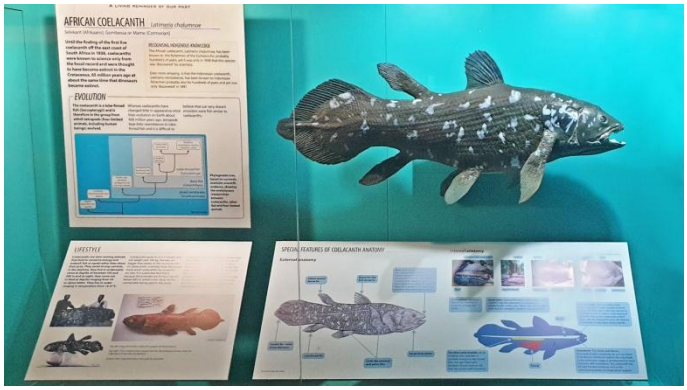
team behind the scenes. Funds remain a perennial issue of course and a major sponsor needs to be found, but in the meantime, we will continue to restore and care for 6832 as she deserves. More VOLUNTEERS are also in dire need to help with the restoration of 6832.

Wessel, Dave, Reggi, Nathan, Alvin and Adrian *of the 'Coelacanth Dakota' restoration team. Don was absent.*

The coelacanth was caught and recognised as unusual by Hendrik Goosen, the skipper of the trawler Nerine, near the Chalumna River, East London, it was examined by the curator of the East London Museum, Miss Marjorie Courtney-Latimer. She sketched the strange fish and sent it to Dr. James Leonard Brierly Smith, now known as Por. J L B Smith, a chemistry lecturer at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, then still only an amateur ichthyologist who recognised it as being in the Order Coelacanthiformes and named it after her and the river where it was caught, *Latimera chalumna*, now commonly known as a coelacanth. also as 'Old Four Legs'. In 1952 a 2nd coelacanth was caught off the Comoros and 6832 was made available to fly and collect it.

A live coelacanth seen swimming off Sodwana on the northern KZN coast

On 27 November 2000 while diving off the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park a coelacanth was photographed at a depth of 104 metres. There is a display at the Iziko, South African Natural History Museum in Cape Town.



Part of the display at the Iziko, South African Natural History Museum in Cape Town.

Please come visit us at the Ysterplaat museum and become a 'Friend' of the museum.

ORIGINS OF A LEGEND

By Martin Strümpfer - Mirage Project Co-ordinator

The seeds that would sprout the Mirage F1 were first spread in 1963 when the French Air Force issued a requirement for a low altitude, all-weather aircraft capable of supersonic interception with good short field performance. Dassault Aviation answered with a proposal for the Mirage III F. The envisaged aircraft broke away from the delta wing design used in the successful Mirage IIIC. In its place was a highly swept wing mounted high on the fuselage with low-set stabilizers. The wing included lift augmentation features that enabled the aircraft to have both good high and low-speed performance and handling.

Dassault Mirage F1CZ 213 in the incorrect PRU Blue as painted while at Thunder City.

The prototype Mirage III F, now called the F2, made its first flight on the 12th of June 1966. The aircraft was significantly bigger than the earlier Mirage III, seating two crew, and used a larger more powerful American engine. As impressive as the new aircraft was, the French Air Force was still not set on committing it to a production variant. Constant changes in their requirements for the new fighter saw a proliferation of variants like a single-seat variant of the Mirage F2, called the F3, and the bigger Mirage G-series that featured two engines and a swing-wing layout.

Privately, Dassault could however see that the Mirage F2/3 and G types were rapidly increasing in cost and complexity - risking cancellation from the French government. Privately the company started work on the Mirage F1. The F1 used many of the design features found in the Mirage F2 and F3, but in a scaled-down airframe designed around a French engine.

In the end, Dassault's gamble paid off and the small F1 piqued the interest of the French Air Force. The Mirage F1C prototype made its first flight on the 23rd of December 1966. The increased sales potential, lower risk (and a smaller price tag) spelled the end for the F1's bigger compatriots with the small F1 being selected by the French Air Force as its new interceptor.

The F1 comes South

A profile of Dassault Mirage F1CZ 213 in camouflage. Illustration by Brent Best.

The Mirage F1's story in South Africa began in 1971 when the country started to look for a future successor to the Mirage IIICZ aircraft in service. A need for as many as 100 aircraft was identified although the initial order from Dassault would be for only 48 aircraft, comprising 16 Mirage F1CZ all weather interceptors and 32 Mirage F1AZ strike aircraft. Of interest - the "Z" suffix was added by Dassault to designate aircraft ordered by South Africa. Technical cooperation between South Africa and France would allow for a local Mirage F1 production line to be set up by Atlas Aircraft Corporation should the need arise/ The mandatory arms embargo against South Africa adopted by the United Nations in 1977 however put an end to hopes of a local production line.

The order for 48 Mirage F1s was however still fulfilled and on the 4th of April 1975 the first two F1CZs were delivered to the newly reformed 3 Squadron at AFB Waterkloof on 4 April 1975. Although of similar speed to the Mirage lll these aircraft were more manoeuvrable, used a shorter take-off and landing run, and has a much longer patrol endurance.

War fighter

The escalating war on the border of South West Africa (t*oday Namibia*) and Angola soon called the Mirage F1s into action. The 3rd of November 1978 marked 3 Squadron's first operational deployment with the F1CZ when five aircraft deployed to AFB Ondangwa to act as escort fighters to the photo-reconnaissance Mirage IIIR2Zs. (More on this type in a future newsletter) The deployment ended without incident and the Mirages were all back in South Africa by the end of 1978. Uneventful though this first deployment was, it was the start of a long campaign for the SAAF F1s. In the years following, the F1CZs would focus on escorting photo reconnaissance aircraft or standing alert to intercept Angolan aircraft detected on radar. If needed, they also assisted in the bombing role alongside their F1AZ siblings – a job the primarily air-to-air focused pilots of 3 Squadron performed to great satisfaction.

Mig killer

Cobus Toerien was Johan Rankin's wingman and later flew 213.

It was during Operation Daisy on November 6, 1981, that the F1CZs first drew blood when Johan Rankin shot down an Angolan Mig-21 with 30mm gunfire while flying F1CZ serial number 213. Less than a year later, on October 5th, 1982, while escorting a Canberra on a photo reconnaissance mission, Johan Rankin and his wingman Cobus Toerien again tangled with a pair of Mig-21s. The Mirages emerged victorious shooting down one of the Migs and damaging the other. (Decades later it emerged that both Migs managed to return to base, although both were written-off due to the significant battle damage incurred.)

By the mid - 1980's however, there was a shift in the power balance in the air war over Angola. The introduction of the Mig-23 into the theatre spelled the end for the SAAF's air supremacy. The Mig-23ML benefitted from far superior weapons and airframe combination to any type in service with the SAAF. On the 27th of September 1987 Mirage F1CZ 206 flown by Arthur Piercy was badly damaged by a missile fired from an Angolan Mig-23. Piercy would be paralyzed when his damaged aircraft overshot the runway inadvertently triggering his ejection seat. After this incident, 3 Squadron and the SAAF had to admit they were outclassed and the irreplaceable remaining F1CZs were restricted to base defence and escort duties.

Twilight upgrades

Several upgrades were planned for the Mirage F1s while in SAAF service. Proposals varied from minor equipment and weapon additions to extreme rebuilds featuring leading edge root extensions and A-4 Skyhawk-esque dorsal equipment humps.

In the end, only the weapons upgrades in the form of the all-aspect V3S Snake missile (a local copy of the Israeli Python 3) and the additions of an advanced Radar Warning System combined with chaff & flare dispensers materialized, unfortunately only after hostilities had ended.

Retirement

By the start of the new decade, the writing was on the wall for the F1CZs. The border war was over and South Africa was on its way to democracy. Defence spending was decreasing after the wartime high, and cuts needed to be made. 3 Squadron, along with a multitude of other Squadrons and aircraft types, were put on the chopping block with the official close-down ceremony held at AFB Waterkloof on the 30th of September 1992.

Two F1CZs, 205 and 209 however still had a twilight career with Atlas, being used for weapons test and development work. The last flight by an F1CZ in South Africa was serial number 205 on the 27th of March 1996.

Dassault Mirage F1CZ 213 in the correct less visible grey. Image Jaco van Zyl.

Today these magnificent flying machines live on in various museums all around South Africa. F1CZ serial number 213 is preserved and cared for at AFB Ysterplaat. While she no longer is the fierce machine Johan Rankin used to shoot down a Mig-21 back in 1981, she still looks as menacing as ever, albeit now silent and restful after 17 years of excellent service.

Dassault Mirage F1CZ 213 being towed back to No 4 Hangar.

The Story of Buccaneer S Mk 50. 416

By Jon Durant - Buccaneer Project Co-ordinator

Hawker Siddeley Buccaneer S Mk 50 416 nearing completion, no undercarriage door.

Imagine flying at a hair under Mach 1, below 50ft above ground level, bearing down on a group of insistent enemy tanks who are attacking your paratroopers who are being airlifted out of the battle area. You have expended your load of Matra rockets- but you still press on. Scraping the belly of the aircraft on the gravel road, you pull up and hit the tanks with a sonic boom, that's surely bound to burst some eardrums. Thinking that you are on another attack run, the tanks retreat and your troops are safely extracted, by helicopter, out of the area. This act of bravery, in the face of danger, is deserving of the 'Honourous Crux' medal. 24 Squadron at its finest.

That was a very short account of the battle of Cassinga in southern Angola, during South Africa's border war on May 4th, 1978. The pilot of the Buccaneer was Andries Marais and his navigator- Ernie Harvey. The aircraft was Buccaneer S-Mk.50, tail number 416.

Out of the 16 Buccaneers ordered in 1962, 15 made it to South Africa, one being lost on its delivery flight into the ocean, when the initial 8 were delivered from Scotland. The remaining 8 airframes arrived by sea, afterwards.

The Blackburn (later Hawker Siddeley) Buccaneer was a revolutionary design. It was designed to be a low-level naval strike bomber and it was nuclear-capable. Its overall shape was designed with the "area rule" concept in mind. This design also helped minimize radar returns for such a large aircraft. The rotating bomb bay door was designed to minimize drag. Later aircraft had the conformal fuel tank introduced- noticeable by the bulged bomb bay.

Buccaneer S Mk.50 416 on her way back to Ysterplaat. Image Norman Tinkler.

Designed for the Royal Navy, the S1 version, with its two Gyron engines, resulting in a rather underpowered aircraft. The S2 version was quickly introduced, with two Rolls Royce Spey 101 non afterburning engines. The entire airframe had to be incredibly strong, as low-level flying, at high speed can be torture on any aircraft. To this end, many panels were machined out of a single slab of aluminium, with stringers and ribs incorporated. This made the panels far stronger than traditional riveted structures and also saved weight. SAAF buccaneers were essentially S.Mk2 versions, but with some added modifications.

The landing gear was slightly strengthened, the wing folding hydraulics were deleted and there were 2 retractable rocket packs fitted, under the tail, to assist with 'hot and high' take-off. (This system was later removed as it deemed impractical. The high-test peroxide oxidiser for the rocket fuel also spontaneously combusted anything it touched). Later, there was a 'mod 600' upgrade incorporated. This consisted of various avionics, radio and navigation upgrades.

Rumour had it that the wedge-shaped vortex generators, as seen on the upper outer main wings, were locally introduced. These small aluminium fins directed airflow inwards and made the wings more efficient. The airframe was designed to fit the below the deck height of Royal Navy carriers. It was also designed to have a smaller footprint. This was achieved by having the main wings, nose cone and airbrakes that could fold.

The Martin Baker Mk6 ejection seats were installed at different angles, from the centreline datum. This allowed stricken crews to safely eject at different trajectories. One could also eject from the aircraft underwater. To help with flight control, a system called 'boundary layer control' was designed, where high pressure air was tapped from the engines and forced through narrow slits along the leading edges and flying surfaces. This was on both the main wings and tail plane. It increased lift by approximately 15%. The landing gear had to be robust, to handle the rigors of carrier landings, and the arrestor hook was equally robust, to stop the jet on the carriers.

Apart from being a bomber, Buccaneers could also do aerial refuelling (hose and drogue) as well as receive fuel from other aircraft. SAAF buccaneers had the distinctive refuelling boom fitted in front and slightly to the right of the windscreen.

The Buccaneer was the first operational military aircraft to have a HUD (heads up display). The Blue Parrot radar is still considered to be an incredible piece of engineering.

Buccaneer S Mk 50 416 after arriving back from Cape Town International Airport.

After retirement in the early 90's, 416 was flown to Ysterplaat Airbase for the museum collection. Due to some very strange turn of events, she was transferred by road to Thunder City, along with several museum airframes, for a static exhibit. Whilst there, she was spuriously repainted in an overall grey scheme. After a while, some aircraft were returned to Ysterplaat museum, but Bucc 416 remained there. In 1997, she was towed to the old 35 Squadron hangars, opposite the terminal at Cape Town International Airport. There she remained, outside, with no protection from the elements. These

"elements" included souvenir hunters, who removed many components from the jet, both externally and internally. We are struggling to find replacements or make these parts from scratch. (Many access panels have been fabricated from aluminium.)

Buccaneer S Mk 50 416 down to the flesh in Hangar 4.

In December 2012, after intense planning and permissions from the Cape Town City Council, 416 was finally returned to Ysterplaat museum. A hefty main landing gear cradle had to be fabricated for the flatbed truck trailer to carry the airframe. A transport route between the airport and the airbase was approved to avoid any overpasses such as bridges and walkways. To the planning team who were involved- a massive "thank you!"

Alwyn, Wessel, Martin and Jon of the Buccaneer restoration team.

Her transformation from 2012 till now has just been fantastic and as if she was airworthy, she would do the SAAF proud. She now stands mighty looking over all the other museum planes and helicopters. A true SAAF legend.

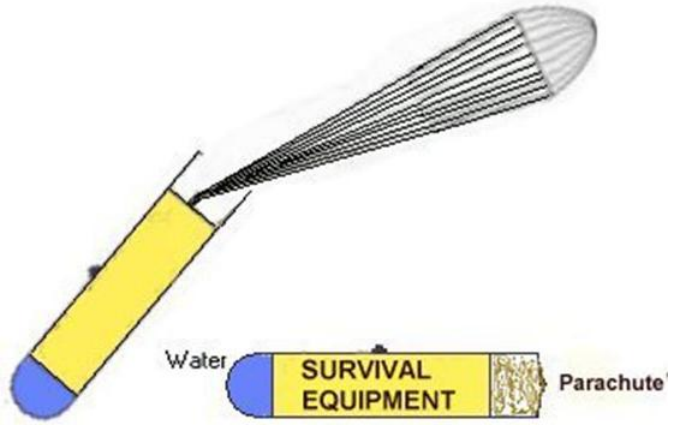
Buccaneer S Mk 50 416 being towed back to her Hangar after Heritage Day.

Saunders-Roe SARO Mk 3

We have retrieved the 9 m Saunders-Roe SARO Mk 3 number 3 airborne lifeboat one of three purchased for use with the Shackleton. It was powered by a Vincent Motorcycles HRD T5 11 kW engine and had enough provisions to supply 10 people with food and water for 14 days. The SARO Airborne Lifeboat was carried under the aircraft with bomb bay doors closed. The boat was made from metal and was heavy resulting in a lot of drag and limiting the range of the aircraft. Unfortunately, number 2 was test dropped at Langebaan lagoon that sunk as it hit the water due to the front parachute, not opening and was replaced with Lindholme-gear.

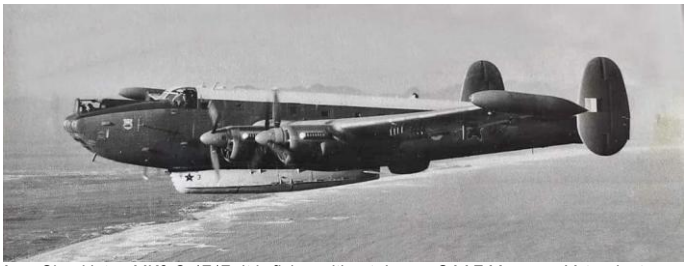
Saunders-Roe SARO Mk 3 airborne lifeboat.

The Shackleton has a massive bomb bay. Four cross-mounted bomb racks could carry a wide variety of bombs, torpedoes and depth charges. In the air search and rescue role, two sets of Lindholme-gear were carried. A set consisted of 3, rope-connected, cylindrical containers with supplies, - including a 10-man dinghy, in the middle container. The Survival canisters were carried in the bomb-bay, on the cross-mounted AV-211 bomb rack. The Survival-equipment was packed in metal cylindrical canisters which were about 1 metre in length and 40 cm in diameter. The front end was a hemi-spherical metal dome filled with water to make the canister nose heavy, for



The Lindholme-gear canisters

dropping. On the rear end was a short cylinder of equal diameter, which housed the parachute. The canisters were normally dropped from a low height above ground or water, to prevent the wind from depositing them too far from the survivors. Practice drops were normally done at Ysterplaat (Daks) and DF Malan (Shacks) when a gale force South-easter was blowing – to simulate real conditions. The armourer appies sometimes rode those parachute-dragged containers – like motorbikes or horses – for hundreds of metres. The training canisters were filled with rags and sand. The “operational” ones were filled with blankets, food, water containers, water purifying tablets and signal equipment.



Avro Shackleton MK3 O 1717. It is flying without. Image SAAF Museum, Ysterplaat.

The SARO Mk 3 number 3 airborne lifeboat is now undergoing restoration and when complete it is hoped to her to sea with sails and engine all in working order. The sails are at the Restoration Centre along with the engine, the oars and all of the other bits

Darryl, Tony, Paul and Nathan Working on the SARO Lifeboat.

Paul Tubb is the Project Co-ordinator on the SARO lifeboat.

The Museum its Aircraft and Exhibits

In 1810 the farm 'Yzere Plaat' belonged to a Mr. J. P. Eksteen. It later became known as Maitland Common and eventually belonged to Sir de Villiers Graaf. In 1917 Aero Services operated from Brooklyn with the manager's house, now occupied by the base Transport Section and a lean-to Hangar, now the Museum Restoration Centre. Next to the manager's house the 1920 Hangar, was built sometime in the 1920s, and subsequently moved to its present spot at the museum.

The first jet to fly from Ysterplaat was a Meteor III that was assembled on the base and was piloted by Captain Jack Meaker from 14 May 1946 till about October 1946. The SAAF did not purchase the Meteor but instead received 45 single and 6 two-seater Vampires that were assembled at Ysterplaat and transferred to the training base at AFB Langebaanweg.

The SAAF Ysterplaat was created as a satellite museum in 1982 with premises allocated in 1984. On 23 October 1987, a well-equipped Museum was presented to the SAAF by the Cape Town Friends during a gala function. With the rationalisation of the SAAF between October 1990 and December 1992, the Museum received a Wasp, Mirage IIIR2Z, Super Frelon, Buccaneer, Albatross, Shackleton, Impala MkI and Mirage F-1 CZ, and is all on display. The museum received the 'Coelacanth Dakota' 6832 that was retired in 1994 on the 3rd of March 1995, a Westland Whirlwind HAS22 WV224 (Sikorsky S-55), and a Marmon Herrington armoured car all having been restored. The Museum houses various display boards, aircraft models, uniforms, and equipment while the 1920 Hangar houses a Lockheed PV-1 Ventura GR5 6447, De Havilland Vampire FB5 208, 40mm Bofor anti-aircraft gun, and a Marmon Herrington armoured car. There are various aircraft engines including a Junkers Jumo 004 B-1 turbojet used in the Messerschmitl Me.262. Recently the museum has recovered a SARO rescue vessel and various vehicles. Restoration is ongoing by a team of highly motivated volunteers.

Bits and Pieces

Dear Friends, welcome to the second Issue of Pelican Post compiled by Norman Larsen. See my contact information below. Pelican Post will be an occasional newsletter depending on all you folk supplying articles to fill the pages. The name is related to the call sign of the Shackleton's of 35 Squadron.

The Friends would like to wish 22 squadron on their 80 celibration of dedicated service to the nation in all the tasks they fulfil including resques and fighting mountain fires. We salute you. Current and past helicopters from 22 squadron are featured below.

Denel TP-1 Oryx.

Westland Super Lynx 300 Mk 64

Sud Aviation SE 316b Alouette III

Westland Super Lynx 300 Mk 64

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