

The arrival of our first submarine

By Lebohang Letaoana
Photos: Cpl Lebogang Tlhaole

There are only two kinds of vessels at sea: submarines and targets," R Adm Erich Topp, Federal Germany Navy (Submarine Service), said.

After 49 days and 6 600 nautical miles S101, the first of three submarines - Class 209 Type 1400 MOD diesel-electric submarines bought in terms of the Strategic Defence Packages - finally arrived in Simon's Town from Germany via Norway on 7 April 2006. For the families of the 34 crew members it was an emotional day, as they could hardly wait to see their loved ones.

The purpose of this acquisition is the rejuvenation of the SANDF - in this case the SA Navy. "This acquisition will improve and enhance our state of readiness," said Mr Mosiuoa



Fltr: Lt Gen Temba Matanzima, Chief of Human Resources, Mr Tsepe Motumi, Chief of Policy and Planning, and Chief Lekunutu Mmota from the Batlokwa Royal Family talking to Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, the Minister of Defence, while V Adm Johannes Refiloe Mudimu, Chief of the SA Navy, shares a moment with Ms Ruth Mompoti, godmother of the S101 submarine.

Lekota, the Minister of Defence.

Another reason for these acquisitions is that in terms of tonnage more

than 95% of South Africa's imports and exports and over 80% in terms of monetary value pass through the

country's ports. The SA Navy's primary function is to ensure that its seaborne trade is not threatened in times of tension or war. The Navy is mandated to fulfil its obligation as stipulated in the recently approved Parliamentary Defence Review by, among others, operating a minimum of three conventional submarines.



The SAS MANTHATISI flanked by our two tugboats, INDLOVU and TSHUKUDU, in Simon's Town harbour.

In his budget vote speech the Minister of Defence spoke about the readiness of the SANDF and how it will continue to be ready in the years to come. "As you know S101 has just completed a marathon passage from Germany via Norway under the command and control of our Navy personnel - something many thought would not be possible. Part of this passage was also completed alone when SAS DRAKENSBERG, her former escort, was called away elsewhere. This was an epic voyage for any small conventionally powered submarine. To achieve this in such a short time (just after receiving the submarine) speaks volumes for the kind of personnel on board. This, more than anything else, proves the SA Navy's capability and readiness to operate these submarines on such long deployments and to support them over huge distances," said Minister Lekota.

The S101 was delivered to the Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Refiloe Mudimu, by the Officer Commanding the S101, Cdr Gary Brian Kretschmer, who later handed over the submarine to Minister Lekota, who reported back to the ship's company.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Women's March against the pass laws in 1956. In order to celebrate this historic occasion Cabinet has decided that these submarines will be named after heroines of our country and S101 was named SAS MANTHATISI, warrior queen Manthatisi Batlokwa. The Executive Mayor of Naledi Local Municipality and the godmother of the S101 Submarine, Ms Ruth Segomotso Mompoti, did the honours by announcing the new name of the submarine S101: SAS MANTHATISI, and said she was honoured to be associated with such a great human being. Mme Ruth, as she is affectionately known, was one of the founder members of the Federation of South African Women in 1954 and she was an organiser and leader of the 1956 Women's March on 9 August. Following the repression of that period and the banning of the ANC, she left South Africa

(Continued on page 18)



Here they are after 49 days of commitment and dedication - the crew of the S101 submarine: SAS MANTHATISI



V Adm Johannes Refiloe Mudimu, Chief of the SA Navy (left), and Ms Ruth Mompoti, godmother of the S101 Submarine(right), after announcing the name of the S101 submarine: SAS MANTHATISI. Two female sailors proudly displaying the sub's new name.



Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, the Minister of Defence, presented WO1 M.L. White, Coxswain S101, with a medallion.

contributing meaningfully to the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA).

"Your Commander-in-Chief, President Thabo Mbeki, the Secretary for Defence, Mr January Masilela, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, and myself are confident that the crew will utilise the submarine to execute its tasks professionally, efficiently and effectively".

"It is with these sentiments therefore that we charge you all to continue with the excellent service you have been rendering to our country. To S101, we welcome you to the fleet with the knowledge that you are fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead. We commend you on your achievements thus far and wish S101

many successful deployments and a long and illustrious career in the service of both the SA Navy and the people of our country," concluded Minister Lekota.

The new submarines replace the decommissioned Daphne Class submarines that had been in use since the 1970s. 



Fltr: Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, the Minister of Defence, Cdr Gary Kretschmer, Officer Commanding of S101 MANTHATISI, Ms Ruth Mompoti, godmother of the S101 submarine, V Adm Johannes Refiloe Mudimu, Chief of the SA Navy, and Chief Lekunutu Mmota from the Batlokwa Royal family.

(Continued from page 17)

and went into exile. Between 1962 and 1964 she underwent military training as a combatant of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

Minister Lekota also reminded the ship's company in particular and the SA Navy in general of the new submarine's role. "To the Chief of the SA

Navy and the SA Navy in general, and to the officer commanding and crew of S101 whose special day this is in particular, I would like to remind you of the following: Your readiness is key if the department is to succeed in its support to Government's diplomatic initiatives to help eradicate conflicts in the region and continent, as well as



Finally at home: the S101, SAS MANTHATISI, arriving at Simon's Town Naval Base.