SA SOLDIER
The official monthly magazine of the SA Department of Defence

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SANDF reached out to Mozambique flood victims

MAY 2011

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MAY 2011

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2005 - Winner of the National Ubungcweti Award (GCIS).
2005 - Winner of the Government Communicator of the Year Award (GCIS).

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SA SOLDIER is published monthly - 12 issues per year. The views and opinions expressed by the authors of articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of Defence (DOD). Acceptance and publication of advertorial and advertising matter in SA SOLDIER does not constitute DOD endorsement or warranty in respect of goods or services therein described. The DOD does not assume any liability in respect of any claims made in advertisements.

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FRONT COVER: SA Soldier, celebrating ten years of military journalistic excellence. (Graphic: Defence Corporate Communication, Ms Mpho Stambles)

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ABOVE: Two soldiers walking two admitted patients to a different ward with the hope of finding two more vacant beds. (Photo: Cpl Elias Mahuma)
As promised, here is the Special Birthday Edition of SA Soldier packed with previously published articles of the past ten years. As you walk (read) down memory lane you will realise once again how far we, as the Department of Defence, have come over the past ten years …

Not only is SA Soldier celebrating its birthday this month, but our Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, also celebrated her birthday on 10 May. The SA Soldier Team would like to wish her great health, wealth and happiness in the years to come.

The SA Soldier Team also wants to thank you, our loyal readers, for your vote of confidence in your very own magazine - SA Soldier - because without you SA Soldier would not be here today. We hope to enlighten, entertain and inform you regarding military issues for many years to come.

Viva SA Soldier! Viva!

Nelda Pienaar
Editor

Celebrating 10 years of
military journalistic excellence

The SA Soldier Editorial Team, fltr: Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela, Mr Jim Tshabalala, Cpl Ally Rakoma, Sgt Elias Mahuma, Ms Nelda Pienaar, Mr Lufuno Netshirembe, Ms Bibi Sibanyoni, Mr Kgabo Mashamaite and S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaoletse. (Photo: WO2 David Nomthshengwana)
I WILLL STAFF MYYSELF

This is to remind my colleagues in the DOD that it is a new year and registrations at educational institutions will take place. I want to share the following story with you.

I studied with a Private (SA Army) at Centurion College last year. He studied technical subjects, including mathematics. Because of his impressive results in mathematics his unit registered him with the Pretoria Technikon for 2003. This means in future this person will no longer be at the gate as an “RP”.

A TINGE OF SADNESS

On Monday 28 March 2011 we delivered the last copies of the SA Soldier magazine in terms of our contract with the DOD. A tinge of sadness has befallen us all at Coordinating Concepts as it was an absolute delight to have been of service to you, your teams and the DOD.

I personally feel somewhat devasted as I have been involved with the printing and distribution of the magazine in my capacity as manager at CTP Printers (1995 - 2000), Formeset zine in my capacity as manager at printing and distribution of the magazine for the past 27 months and currently Coordinating Concepts.

That did not want me to withdraw from the course and he motivated me when I needed it the most. Today, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Lt Col Dladla for assisting me during the difficult time I experienced during my course at the SA Army Combat Training Centre.

Through all this time I have come to know the editorial team and certainly am delighted to have been involved with the staff making up this team. We also got to know the staff receiving these magazines at the various bases as well. Once again, we thank you and the DOD for allowing Coordinating Concepts, a small black woman owned cc, the opportunity to produce your magazine for the past 27 months and hope to be able to do so in the future again. Many thanks and regards.

I want members to know that with education you will never cry about staffing in the DOD. Many people imagine you do not have to study, except what concerns your mustering. I am a qualified military policeman, but I am proud to say that I held an N5 Certificate in Electronic Engineering, for which I studied during evening classes at Centurion College between 2002 and 2003.

You can be in one corps and be interested in another - my advice is to study in the direction you desire. You will staff yourself because I know you will have qualifications that those who are already staffed do not have. You may be in the infantry, but if you can produce a diploma in policing I am sure you can be staffed as an “MP” if that is your dream.

Some are the days when the military was about physical strength. Now it is in education, qualification and technology. So invest in it. Cpl N. Ngcobo, Dequan Military Police letter was previously published in SA Soldier: May 2003, page 61.

THANKS

Thanks for a lovely business relationship we nurtured over the past two years. We were glad to have had the opportunity to read the magazine while we were engaging the Department, and we wish the team well in the future with all those lovely, interesting articles. Good luck.

Beverley Brown, Director Coordinating Concepts.

* Dear Brian & Bev, Thank you for your heartfelt farewell letters. We at SA Soldier will miss you and your dedicated team very much. The professional and passionate manner in which you and your team saw to the reproduction, printing and distribution services of SA Soldier over the past two years was most commendable. Thank you for so often walking the extra mile when required. We can unhesitatingly recommend you and your team’s expert service to any other print media. - Ed.

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MEMORIAL SERVICE - TRIBUTE

I feel honoured to be here to say goodbye to Col Rosa Nel. She was a great woman who used her life to serve us all. God uses good people to do great things.

I met Lt Col Rosa Nel in 2003 at the Central Procurement Service Centre in Garrison. The very first time we met we did not click as I regrettably relied on some rumours as to how difficult it was to work with her. On that day I gave Rosa no chance to answer any of my questions. I remember dismissing her and giving her an immediate warning. It took me a few months to understand how much an asset she was to the department. I sat back, collected, listened to her story, and realised I had wrongly been dismissive of her and she was the best person to work with. She later told me that the day I dismissed her went to confuse in her husband. AARD. Lt Col Nel contemplated leaving the Defence Force because of my unruly behaviour. I assumed that someone advised her to stay and do her work.

I later started working with her and realised how dependable she was. She became my Pillar of Strength. Hence I attended the SA Air Force's career management seminar and requested approval for her promotion to Colonel. From the day she was promoted, Col Nel excelled further with her work and decided to open the doors to listen to her advice as a colleague and some- times as a parent.

Col Rosa Nel was at work every weekday at 06:30 and worked until late during her full-time employment until her retirement. It was as if we did not have enough of her service and decided to recall the now retired Col Nel for a period of over two years. She helped me to solidify the Alternative Service Delivery dealing with the cost benefit analysis for all outsourcing of the DOD's non-core services. I was always able to dismiss the Auditor General's qualifica- tions and all media enquiries because of her help and commitment.

When I lost my wife to the same disease, i.e. cancer, exactly five years ago, Rosa supported me and I am now standing tall because of her support. She adopted my kids and advised them just like their grandmother every time they visited our offices. My little 9-year-old daughter would disappear from me and when asked where she was was Larisa played with Larisa Nel's granddaughter, during the school holidays. Two weeks ago, Rosa came to me and told me excitedly that Larisa qualified in athletics and was to run in Gauteng the next week. I never had a chance to hear how Larisa compet- ed because I was abroad.

Rosa told me all about her challenges with her disease and led me to believe that a cure would be arriving from the USA within days. We waited patiently, but I think it was delayed and God recruited her to work for Him. She is now gone and sadly never had a chance to say goodbye and maybe send her with a message to my late wife. Last night, I told my little girl that her Timmie Rosa went to heaven and I could not stop her from crying.

Rosa taught me that life is short and the most important part of life is the people in it. Rosa, you have graced my life more than you will ever know. I hope that Rosa will continue to live on within our hearts and minds. The memories I have shared with her will forever be cherished and remembered. Rosa will forever live in my heart. In our hearts. "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" - Colossians 3:3. (God had a plan for Rosa's life as He has for all our lives. These plans He had even before we were born. His plans for us are connected to Christ. He says that if we want to know what God's plans are for our future, we need to know Christ better and bet- ter.) Kopano Peter Lebelo, Chief Director Materiel Governance in the DOD

BENCHMARKING GOOD IDEAS

When the idea of benchmarking was first introduced in the SANDF, I said to myself that the process was destined to fail.

My main concern was that it was still too early to embark on such a process because it was to be done with the so-called developed countries and South Africa was still going through a transition period. I thought that this was a Defence Force top brass' idea and the whole thing would definitely fail. However, I failed to look at the broader picture of the whole process. I reasoned on the assumption that it was doomed to failure.

The reality is that developed countries produce hi-tech equipment, and we cannot match their capabilities in designing and manufacturing. I thought that benchmarking was only a word with no relevance to us and that it would never materialise.

Although I know that consulting the experts was crucial to developing the integrated forces, I thought that our own experts should handle it.

As I am an ardent reader of SA Soldier I noticed that some overseas countries were interested in purchasing our equipment. I was speechless with surprise and wanted to know why they were acquiring equipment from a so-called Third World country.

I know that the quality of our products is usually doubted in most civilised countries. Let this fact not mislead you to think that I honour Western coun- tries, but I do have a high respect for their technological capabilities. My country will always be my country and I am an African.

We have conducted exercises and numerous operations with some of the foreign countries and they were appalled at our capabilities and standard of training. Our Chief of the SA Army is building bridges between countries. I congratulate him on spearheading the benchmarking process and showing the world our capabili- ties. Pie M.J. Kgoeile, 2 SAI Bin letter was previously published in SA Soldier; May 2004, page 6
BE YOURSELF
One’s appearance has become so important that most of us spend a lot of time trying to look and act a certain way to be part of a crowd. But when it comes to the battle of colour it is all about warfare. Often we look at people from the outside. We do not realise that we got so wrapped up in being different that we forget to be true to ourselves. Labelling others reinforces our own position of power. Being yourself means allowing others to be themselves. And this is far more important than belonging to a race or group.

To be part of this world is one of the greatest things to make one happy and to make others want to be associated with us because the Almighty gave us different skills so as to make the world a better place for all of us.

God created us and gave us the talent that God gave him. You can do your own thing with your skills to be successful in life and live a better life. Stop looking at other people and use the talent that God gave you. If you keep on looking at other people, you will eventually forget that you are talented too and you will never make a success of your own life. Using your own talents will ensure that the world becomes a better place for you.

A typical example is a child, because when he is born his hands are closed, but later his hands will be opened to show that he is using the talent that God gave him. You can do your own thing with your skills to be successful in life and live a better life. Stop looking at other people and use the talent that God gave you.

The General Officer Commanding, Brig Gen M.M. Moadira, mentioned that women had opportunities in the SANDF. He said the SANDF prohibits any form of discrimination against women employed in the Department. Women must be offered the same career opportunities and scope as men and enjoy the same service benefits. Women of Army Support Base Bloemfontein are so lucky to be commanded by Brig Gen Moadira because in 2005 he established a women’s forum in the base were women have been discussing women’s issues on a monthly basis for the past two years. Ladies, I congratulate you, you have done a good job, keep it up. Stop hiding yourself; show the men that you also can be leaders.

WHY NOT GIVE THEM FLOWERS NOW?
I dedicate this letter to members infected with HIV and AIDS, those who are suffering from this life-threatening disease, the terminally ill, AIDS orphans and those thinking of committing suicide.

"Take away my importance and you crush me," Samuel Johnson said. No human being can be genuinely happy unless he or she stands well in the esteem of fellow mortals. Why not give them flowers now, while they can be appreciated? Why wait until their hearts have stopped, their eyes are unseeing, and they are not listening.

I have a message for them all: The Lord is your shade at your right hand, He will keep you from all harm, He will watch over your lives and He destined you for glory before time began. There is no grief, which time doesn’t soften. Don’t feel shame, low self-esteem and embarrassment. You have a life ahead of you, your life is more important than the disease and the problems you are facing.

Don’t give up the essence of who you are. In the darkness of your hearts God is your light. He is the strength of your life. He will restore your souls and make you normal again. He will hold you and give you courage and faith. What God can be is quite beyond our powers. So if people fail you and give up on you, know that God cares, He will never fail you.

You may be tired and weary. You may stumble and fall. Have faith and put your hopes in the Lord and you will be renewed.

"The treaty you have made with death will be abolished, and your agreement with the world of the dead will be cancelled. When disaster sweeps down, you will be overcome." - Isaiah 28:18.

Always know that there are those who love and understand and will always be there when you feel most alone. Your presence is a present to the world. God has a reason for you to be here. I am hopeful and pray that when all human endeavours have failed, God will step in and lift you up. I wish you good health and God’s blessings. Lord, use us in service to others in need, that we may share your love with them. Amen. A.M. Rakoma, Moetladimo, Tzaneen (letter was previously published in SA Soldier: November 2005, page 6).

MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE
To be part of this world is one of the greatest things to make one happy and to make others want to be associated with us because the Almighty gave us different skills so as to make the world a better place for all of us.

We all have talents that bring out the best in us. We all have talents that bring out the best in us. We all have talents that bring out the best in us. We all have talents that bring out the best in us. If you keep on looking at other people, you will eventually forget that you are talented too and you will never make a success of your own life. Using your own talents will ensure that the world becomes a better place for you.

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MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE

As a leader, your subordinates look up to you to be an example. They expect you to be "perfect", and to say and do the right things at all times. They will emulate the way you talk and walk, believing that that is the way things are supposed to be. Remember, they believe in you as a leader. Should you not walk the talk, they will be quick to lose respect for you. They do not forget that easily. Experience has taught me that respect is earned and not demanded.

Military discipline must be a way of life for all of us in the SANDF. It should not be a choice or be determined by where you find yourself or the type of work or position or rank that you hold in the organisation.

As a military leader, discipline is about you first, whether you have self-discipline and respect. You need it for yourself. Remember, all human beings are equal before the eyes of the Lord. Your subordinates are in no way subhuman.

S A S O L D I E R
EXTERNAL DEPLOYMENT

The SA Government is playing a fundamental role in bringing peace and promoting talks among the fighting groups in the Sudan, the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and the Ivory Coast. Men and women deployed in these countries have left everything at home to be involved in peacekeeping missions to preach the gospel of reconciliation and peace in these war-torn countries.

I write this letter to commend the role played by our military commanders during our external military operations.

One of those committed members is Capt L.N. Mushwana from 7 SAI Bn, who started to deploy externally with me in 2002 in Burundi, and later in 2004 and 2005 in the DRC and this year in the Sudan. As you know, to be away from your loved ones for a long time is a challenge, but with Capt Mushwana as a commander you are with a father, brother, friend and a true example of a leader. This man handles all situations that come to his attention with the true spirit of a South African soldier. He is always with his subordinates in his spare time and engages them with various entertainment activities. This makes him identify challenges at an early stage. He also wins the hearts of the local communities because of his seriousness and commitment to peace missions.

I was a member of Alpha Company in 2005 in the DRC. It was commanded by him and his 2IC, Capt E. Masebe. During our months’ rotation around the GINA District, community members complained strongly when his term was over and they demanded that his stay should be extended. In a week he was commanded to go back to command Company to be deployed there.

He never stayed long at home, and was commanded to deploy with 14 SAI Bn and elements of the Military Skills Development System (MSDS), which was also a success. All this was a sign that this man understood the true meaning of the Code of Conduct of the SANDF. I came to the conclusion that we could make South Africans proud of us. With his subordinates he likes to say: “enjoy” and I also like our motto which says; “If you see something, don’t talk about it, do something about it”.

He manages to win the support of local leaders by organising soccer and volleyball games with the local soldiers. He managed to create sound relationships with private companies supplying services to the whole mission. One day I heard our Battalion Commander saying we were the best company so far in our mission. I believe him because he never says anything wrong. Let all commanders give their best in confronting challenges faced by deployed soldiers in our peace march to face African armed conflicts.

I was one of those South Africans who could not wait to leave this country quickly enough, that was until I attended the All African Golden Jubilee Christian Conference in Kenya. Whoever it was that described Africa as being the “Dark Continent” clearly did not experience Africa as I did, nor could they ever have been exposed to what I was exposed to.

Members from all over Africa were present. I met the most wonderful, genuine, beautiful people. People who have real, true, living relationships with God. I have been fortunate to travel from South Africa to a number of countries, and in all honesty I can say thank God for the wonderful people of Africa who I have met and learned to love in Jesus in such a short time. I was humbled and blessed all at the same time. With such people living on this beautiful continent I will never again think of Africa as the “Dark Continent”. For me it will always be the “Light Continent” because I know the calibre of people living on this continent and I am proud to be identified with them in Jesus. While Jesus is their and my Lord and Saviour there is always hope for our future as a country and continent. Thank you God for the awesome privilege of meeting your children in Africa.

I challenge anyone out there that thinks of leaving South Africa, do not. God is present in our land; find Him and you will find your peace and purpose here in “Light Africa”. WO1 Michele Bezuidenhout, SA Military Christian Fellowship KwaZulu-Natal Military Region (letter was previously published in SA Soldier: April 2009, page 6)

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A FRICA THE "LIGHT CONTINENT"

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A s the DOD celebrates ten years of its official monthly publication, SA Soldier, it becomes imperative to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work done by DOD members in telling military stories of the past decade in their own words.

This anniversary takes place against the backdrop of the third Budget Vote Debate that was delivered by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, to the National Assembly on 13 April 2011. During her address the Minister shared the successes and challenges faced by the Department and how these were being dealt with. The budget vote also gave the Minister an opportunity to articulate the way forward and describe the kind of a national defence force we are creating. In this regard a well managed and disciplined national defence force is what we are constructing.

When she took over the defence portfolio, there were enormous long-standing challenges that seemed impossible to overcome, but in the three years of her leadership hope has been restored in the hearts of many in the National Defence Force.

The first challenge that confronted the Minister was a declining budget in which the Department’s domestic obligations were defined in the Constitution, against the backdrop of the DOD’s growing international responsibilities, a deteriorating infrastructure and, very importantly, the pressing reality that conditions of service for the National Defence Force needed immediate attention.

In her first budget vote speech 2009, Minister Sisulu boldly stated the need for a separate dispensation for the DOD that would allow it to deal creatively with its own needs and the specificities of its own unique security requirements. This was reiterated by President Jacob Zuma in September 2009 when he said: “The SANDF may serve the public, but its members are not public servants. They may receive a salary at the end of every month, but they are not ordinary workers. The high standard of behaviour we expect from them necessitates that special attention be paid to their working conditions, their remuneration, their pensions and, generally, their place in society”.

To further advance this effort in 2010, the DOD submitted to parliament an Amendment Bill to the Defence Act of 2002. The bill proposed, among others, a separate dispensation for the DOD from the public service sector, which would give it legal standing and a permanent service commission. This is in the process of being established and the names of nominees have already been submitted for consideration.

Furthermore, salary increases ranging from 2% to 65% for all members of the SANDF on salary levels 2 to 12 were effected as from 1 December 2009. The increase was part of the DOD’s commitment to ensure that members of the SANDF are remunerated at levels that complement their responsibility.

In order to address the declining state of defence infrastructure, the DOD is
finalising the discussions with the Department of Public Works on the establishment of the Defence Estate Management mechanism which will result in the DOD progressively exiting from the current arrangement on Property and Facilities Management by the Department of Public Works. This objective and the rolling out of the Defence Estate Management mechanism to maintain and repair defence facilities will be implemented in this financial year.

The DOD has worked tirelessly over the last few years to eliminate audit qualifications arising from the Auditor General’s report. In the year prior to the appointment of the current leadership in the DOD, the department faced six audit qualifications. To fulfill this promise over the past financial year the DOD worked very hard to reduce qualifications to one, which raised the possibility of a clean audit in the next financial year.

In the words of a former American President, George Washington: “The morale and strength of the new nation’s military forces would be directly proportional to how well veterans who had served and sacrificed for the country were treated and appreciated”.

In South Africa these forgotten heroes, who served as soldiers of liberation, movements, were left for years to fend for themselves. Neither provisions nor support was available for many who, having served, struggled to integrate fully back into civic life and faced many socio-economic challenges.

The Department of Military Veterans was proclaimed as a separate and stand-alone department within the ministry. This was done in order to create a department within government whose sole responsibility was to govern and cater for the affairs of all former members of military organisations from before the dawn of democracy and those who served in the current South African National Defence Force (SANDF) after 1994. Now the Department of Military Veterans has been realised and as it was promulgated in 2009. The coming years will thus be characterised by initiatives to maximise the functionality of the organs of State through a reliable and dependable service delivery focused Department.

Indeed, it can be attested that 2010 was an extraordinary year in terms of defence and security requirements. This experience would not have been possible without the efforts and contributions of our armed forces.

As host of the Soccer World Cup, and the first of its kind on the continent, we set out to ensure that the country provided iron-clad security for the duration of the tournament. The preparation, coordination and management of security fell under the auspices of both the National Defence Force and the South African Police Service. The SANDF undertook this challenge and delivered an extraordinary and exceptional service that made it the pride of the nation.

During the tournament our frigates and submarines patrolled our territorial waters and the approaches to the ports where soccer was being played, while the newly acquired Gripen and Hawk aircraft were flying air combat patrols over all the stadiums while games were in progress. In addition to the pivotal role these ships, submarines and aircraft played in securing those areas where none of the other government departments had the required capability, they formed a magnificent backdrop behind and above our stadiums while the various matches were being played, a vindication of government’s decision to acquire the strategic defence packages.

During the same period the National Defence Force was called to assume responsibility during the crippling three-week national health workers strike. This required deploying medical personnel and taking over 74 abandoned hospitals in eight provinces. In addition, members of the SANDF provided protection for those members who were prepared and had volunteered to assist in helping other services. The SANDF gladly undertook these responsibilities, “firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and the promise of citizenship”.

The DOD’s National Youth Service (NYS) Programme got off to an exciting start. The programme aims to build the youth through civic education and training in basic workplace skills while also encouraging self-respect, respect for others, integrity and societal responsibilities. The desired outcome is an individual who is reintegrated into the community and determined to help build his or her community, thus making a positive contribution to society at large.

On 17 March 2011, 500 students of the NYS Pilot Programme graduated at De Brug near Bloemfontein and were handed over to the Department of Rural Development and Land reform to complete the remainder of their NYS programme. This strengthens the DOD’s resolve to continue with the programme, and partnerships are envisaged with more government departments in the near future.

In support of the government’s foreign policy, under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU), the SANDF continues to support peace initiatives on the African continent. Democratic processes have taken place in states such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and the Central Africa Republic, to mention a few. This has earned the SANDF the accolades of being a credible and professional peace broker.

The work that has been done by the DOD leadership in a short space of time has been phenomenal. The DOD is in a better state than it was three years ago, though there is still a long way ahead. This is only the beginning of a new dawn for members of the DOD who have taken a pledge to serve this country and its people with their lives.

The DOD will not tire of seeking ways and means to improve the quality of its members and help them to take their rightful places in our society, which they continue to serve with dignity and honour. The road has been mapped out for the wheels of change.
Group 27 scores success in KwaZulu-Natal

By Dennis Hlubi (published in SA Soldier: June 2001, page 34)
Photo: Sgt Shelton Lawrence

Group 27 HQ is situated in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal, with its HQ at Eshowe - the traditional capital of Zululand. The Officer Commanding, Col Norman Ludick, and his Second in Command, Lt Col Deon Kruger, have a clear mission: to ensure the safety of the people, and to guard territorial sovereignty and international borders.

It is easy to notice that this Group is one of those that has a very big workload. On a daily basis the Group performs area defence and border protection operations. The areas that are covered include the Mozambican border, stretching approximately 100 km, and the Swaziland border, which is approximately 120 km long. It is noteworthy that Group 27 HQ, with limited manpower and resources, manages to score success after success in these widespread, rugged mountains of KwaZulu-Natal.

Of the three million Zulus resident in the Group 27 area of responsibility, about 60 per cent live in rural areas. These communities engage in subsistence farming. In some areas family members eke out a living by selling their labour in Gauteng due to a lack of adequate infrastructure. These people are frequently affected by violent crime, faction fighting, and sometimes political strife. The urbanised townships also experience a high incidence of crime. Recently, floods and the outbreak of the cholera epidemic posed a serious problem.

On the night of 5 February 2001 a joint operation was carried out by the Border Police and the SANDF contingent to search for illegal weapons. Four homesteads were targeted. The first was at Nxamalala Kwa-Khanyile, en route to Nkandla.

Inside the first homestead, a homemade shotgun and a small quantity of dagga were found. At the second homestead no weapons were found. At the third one, two pistols and one homemade shotgun were seized and home-grown dagga was uprooted from a garden. At the last house, one Baby Browning handgun was found. The operation ended at 02:35, after which the forces returned to their respective bases at Richards Bay and Eshowe.

Dundee/Glencoe Commando HQ members prepare to destroy a dagga crop.

Medics treated cholera in KwaZulu-Natal

By Mr Ian Crowther, Vice-Chancellor, Order of St John South Africa (published in SA Soldier: August 2001, page 34)

Some Order of St John representatives had been invited to meet Lt Gen Rinus Jansen van Rensburg, the Surgeon General, to visit KwaZulu-Natal to observe progress in the fight against cholera.

The delegation flew from Waterkloof Air Force Base to Durban. There they were introduced to members of the Department of Health in KwaZulu-Natal and other members of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) and St John. They then boarded an Oryx helicopter of 15 Squadron for Eshowe. There they were met by Col Norman Ludick, Officer Commanding Group 27, and Maj Freddie de Witt of the SAMHS. The guard turned out for the General and performed an excellent salute. The delegation attended an informative briefing on the work being done to eradicate the cholera epidemic. The slides, handouts and lectures were professional. It was obvious that a great deal of time and energy had been put into the whole serious business of fighting the dreaded Vibrio cholerae bacterium.

The SAMHS (who provide much-needed trained personnel, ambulances and other vital equipment) were working in partnership with the Department of Health (which alone could not cope with the numbers involved) and the Department of Water Affairs (responsible for the urgent preventative measures under the amazingly wide title of “health education”).

No fewer than 98 000 cases have been dealt with in the 9 months since the epidemic broke in August 2000. At the peak of the disease, 1 000 cases were treated a day, though by the end of May 2001 the cases were down to 200 a day. At peak there were 70 dehydration clinics in operation; now only twenty.

Because cholera is an internationally notifiable disease, the United Nations World Health Organisation is monitoring the situation in South Africa. They have communicated their amazement and congratulations that only 207 deaths have occurred (0.2%), as the international average is six per cent.
Kanimambo (thank you)
South Africa

By Nomonde Vuthela
(published in SA Soldier: September 2001, page 22)
Photos: F Sgt Christo Crous

As visuals of the devastating floods in Mozambique filled our TV-screens earlier this year, we watched with horror and felt the pain of the Mozambican people. But what really turned the tragedy around was the fact that people were not just sympathetic, they took action and did something about it.

It was no surprise then that the people of Chokwe, a town in Mozambique that was worst hit by the floods, wanted to say Kanimambo/thank you to all those who came to their rescue in their time of need. The Department of Defence subsequently received an invitation from the Mozambican Government, which invited the SANDF participants in the flood rescue mission to the Kanimambo function hosted by the community of Chokwe on 21 July. This was a great opportunity indeed to celebrate our love for humanity and the ability of Africans to help one another.

In an interview with SA Soldier, Col J. van Zyl from Chief Joint Operations, who attended the function, said that it was a very humbling experience. A wooden sculpture and a certificate were awarded to the SANDF, non-governmental organisations and the many other organisations and individuals that helped to save lives.

Ms Graça Machel, wife of former President Nelson Mandela, hosted the event, praised Africans in her speech for setting precedents and reaching out to one another without waiting for the outside world to intervene first. She said: "We appreciate very much the way in which you assumed your responsibility." The guest list also included Ms Jesse Duarte, South Africa’s High Commissioner to Mozambique.

Kanimambo is “thank you” in Shangaan and this is, quite simply, what the occasion was about. The people of Chokwe were thankful for the lives saved and for the great interest shown.

The Chokwe community came to say thank you to the SANDF.
The finalisation of Operation MOUFLON

Compiled by Nelda Pienaar
(published in SA Soldier:July 2001, page 12)
Photo: Sgt Shelton Lawrence

On 26 May 2001 a press conference was held at Regional Joint Task Force South in Port Elizabeth on the finalisation of Operation MOUFLON: the destruction of all surplus, redundant, obsolete and confiscated small arms and spare parts.

Lt Gen Temba Matanzima, Chief of Joint Support, delivered the following speech at the press conference:

“The DOD has, since 28 June 2000, destroyed more than 262 000 small arms of various calibres currently stored in the inventory of the SANDF.

“This programme, to destroy nearly 263 000 redundant, obsolete, unserviceable and confiscated small arms and spare parts, is in line with international guidelines to curb the proliferation of small arms, as specifically mentioned in the United Nations Secretary General’s Report on Small Arms, compiled by a panel of international experts for the General Assembly of the United Nations.

“The Secretary General’s report recommended that countries should exercise restraint with respect to the transfer of surplus small arms manufactured solely for possession and use by military and police forces.

“The National Conventional Arms Control Committee thus took the decision to effect disposal by means of the destruction of State-held surplus, redundant, obsolete, unserviceable and confiscated semi-automatic and automatic weapons of the calibre of 12.7 mm and smaller. This decision was ratified by Cabinet and is in accordance with Government policy on non-proliferation and arms control.

“In keeping with the decision of the National Arms Control Committee, the DOD took a decision in 1998 to destroy such weapons. This exercise became known as Operation MOUFLON.

“Insufficient funds for the destruction of these weapons has been one of the main reasons for the delay in the physical destruction of these weapons.

“On 12 February 2000 the Norwegian Government signed an agreement with the DOD to donate an amount of 520 000 Norwegian Kroner (approximately R403 000) to the funding of the project.

“Sufficient funds were collected by

31 May 2000, and contracts were signed with two companies in Benoni and Port Elizabeth, who were able to comply with laid-down specifications and criteria to destroy the weapons and render them scrap.”

Lt Gen Temba Matanzima, Chief of Joint Support, standing in front of some of the weapons before they were destroyed.

Masibambisane

Compiled by Nomonde Vuthela
Graphic: courtesy Visual Communication

HIV and AIDS is a disease threatening not only the peace and security of our nation, but that of the continent as a whole. Seen against this background, the Department of Defence’s HIV beyond awareness campaign - “Masibambisane” - was launched in Pretoria on 1 August 2001. The campaign was motivated by the recognition that the military community is unique and that uniformed members of the SANDF find themselves within a high-risk environment with a specific vulnerability and susceptibility profile.

Within the military community Masibambisane aims at informing members and employees of the DOD of the management of HIV and AIDS, including current policy and strategy. The campaign is specifically aimed at reaching a level of awareness that goes beyond mere knowledge of the disease to bring about an actual change in behaviour.

SA SOLDIER stories from 2001

MAY 2011
Airborne Africa

By Col H. Schobesberger, SSO
Com SA Army (published in
SA Soldier: June 2001, page 28)

Parachute Battalion of the SA
Army celebrated its 40th anniver-
sary on 1 April 2001. The culmina-
tion of this event was an international
airborne combat-readiness competi-
tion - Airborne Africa - held from 22
March to 3 April 2001. Preparation
for it was done in Bloemfontein,
while the actual competition took
place at the Madimbo Training Area
in the Northern Province.

Military parachutist teams from
Belgium, Botswana, France, Ghana,
Great Britain, Jordan, the
Netherlands, South Africa, Tanzania
and the United States of America
took part in this event - the first of its kind
to be held on South African soil.

Meet our first black female pilot

By Capt Fundile Siyongwana (pub-
lished in SA Soldier: August 2001,
page 27)

Photo: Sgt David Nomtshongwana

In the afternoon of 2 July 2001 SA
Soldier held an exclusive inter-
view with the first black female pilot,
2Lt Annabel Macauley (21) at
Waterkloof Officers' Mess in Pretoria.
2Lt Macauley was born in Sierra
Leone.

She started with her primary
schooling in Sierra Leone and then
moved to Nigeria, where she stayed
for seven years, completing her pri-
mary education. She had to leave
Nigeria and headed to Botswana for
a very short stay. After she left
Botswana she came to South Africa
where she started Standard five at
Mmabatho High School, and here she
stayed until she completed her
matric.

2Lt Macauley worked very hard
at school and was in love with aero-
planes from a very young age. She
did not know what she wanted to be.
She said that at one point she studied
accounting, but this bored her. Then
she realised that she wanted to be a pilot. She
said: "Luckily the SA Air Force came to my
school. I applied and went for psychometric
tests. That is how I got the job in 1996."

The first South African black female
pilot, 2Lt Annabel Macauley, in a
piece of machinery that she has fallen
in love with.

Youth Foundation Training Programme

By Capt Fundile
Siyongwana (published in
SA Soldier: September
2001, page 18)

The Department of Defence launched the
DOD Youth Foundation Training Programme at the
Denel Training Academy in
Kompton Park on 20 July

The programme underscores the Government's
commitment to uplifting the lives of the youth by creating
and providing work oppor-
tunities, and thus actively
contributing to social deliv-
ery and advancing the goals
of the African Renaissance.

It is a small beginning,
with the retraining of some
175 formerly disadvantaged
students, but there is virtual-
ly an ironclad guarantee that
this project will grow to be
one of the main pillars pro-
viding South Africa with a
new generation of decision
makers and future leaders.

The programme will go a
long way towards reversing
this situation, and will
ensure the continued mainte-
nance of professionalism
within the SANDF.

It was also recognised at
the outset that the enterprise
was not to be conducted by
the DOD alone. It was there-
fore decided to outsource the
programme by entering into
a public-private partnership.

After due tender process, the
Denel Consortium was
selected as the service
provider. The whole project
is co-managed by the Joint
Training Formation on
behalf of the DOD and Denel
Personnel Solutions.
The course forms part of the Directorate’s commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities. According to Mr M.J. Swart, SO1 Disability, the course is divided into two learning phases, namely an experiential and an actualisation phase.

The University of Witswatersrand trains and employs unemployed deaf people to teach the students sign language. Mr Swart said that the DOD employed some 430 people with disabilities. The skills gained will therefore assist the DOD to understand the needs of people with disabilities within the Department.

November, and in various other cities in our country and all over the world. At this Memorial Service various communities and military veterans’ associations also remembered the families of those who never returned and, of course, those men and women who were disabled during their service.

This day in November is one of the major memorial services throughout the world. The remembrance service is held annually on the Sunday nearest to 11 November (Armistice Day) and this is then known as Remembrance Sunday. This year the date happened to fall on a Sunday.
Our deployed ambassadors

By Lt Col Dup Martens (published in SA Soldier: April 2002, page 13)

The lazy hum of flies in the sweltering heat adds to the picture of dejection and squalor in the city. Half-built dilapidated buildings, with their grime and cracks belie the colonial dreams of a once thriving and vigorous society.

These are the first (and lasting) images of Kinshasa - the present headquarters of the SA National Defence Force’s United Nations peacekeeping contingent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

WO1 J.J. Jacobs, Warrant Officer of the SANDF, recently paid a visit to our troops in the DRC and Burundi. SA Soldier wanted to know from him what the purpose of his visit was and how our troops had been acclimatised to the foreign surroundings.

“Well, the whole visit was the culmination of an action which started about seven months ago,” he said. “I made a suggestion to the Plenary Defence Staff Council (PDSC) that we should do something to show our appreciation for the sterling work our troops were doing there. You know, in our military history we once had a ‘dankie sê tannie’, who regularly organised parcels to be sent to our troops on the border.

Remembering those days, I know how well such parcels are received.

“I asked the Military Council whether we could not do likewise, and that I and a few officers would then hand over these parcels to our troops in the DRC and Burundi. They said ‘yes’, and I immediately started a fund-raising campaign. Our target was R30 000. With the goodwill of various sponsors I managed to collect about R27 000. The SA Forces Institute (SAFI) sponsored the shortfall and they also made up the packages containing biltong, sweets, dried fruit and chocolates. These parcels we handed over to Gen S. Nyanda, Chief of the Defence Force.

“Three senior staff members, namely Lt Gen R. van Rensburg, the Surgeon General of the SANDF, Maj Gen L. Fitso, Chief Director Counter-intelligence, Maj Gen (Rev) F.S. Gqiba, Chaplain General, and myself, with our wives and Ms L. Momberg, representing the Citizen newspaper, left on 27 December 2001 to hand over the parcels. We made a stopover in Burundi to offload some personnel and left a short while later for Kinshasa in the DRC.”
Ensuring the smooth running of the World Summit

The SANDF played an integral part in the whole process, right from the start.

By Lt Col J. Zietsman, SANDF Media Spokesperson at the WSSD
Photo: Sgt David Nomtshongwana

From 26 August to 4 September 2002 South Africa played host to more than 40 000 delegates from around the world, all of them participants in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). More than 105 Heads of State took part in the discussions, which in years to come could improve the lives of millions of people around the globe.

With the eyes of the world focused on Johannesburg for the duration of this event, it meant that nothing could be left to chance. There was no room for error, especially as far as the safety of the thousands of delegates was concerned. That there were no serious incidents involving safety aspects during the Summit says a lot for the dedication and commitment of all the security forces involved.

The SANDF played an integral part in the whole process, right from the start. All in all the SANDF deployed 1 500 people in various roles to ensure the smooth running of the World Summit. From all over South Africa liaison officers were appointed to the various delegations to ensure that the chief delegates were well looked after. This meant that they had to be available day and night for the duration of the Summit.

Each and every accredited visitor to the Sandton Convention Centre was escorted on a daily basis by motorbike. The men from 12 SA Infantry Battalion did a splendid job, each motorbike rider travelling up to 350 km a day. Apart from having to know the various routes by heart, they also had to contend with the notorious peak hour traffic in Gauteng. That all the delegations arrived safely and on time says a lot for the dedication of these soldiers.

Members of 21 Battalion and 121 Battalion were deployed for the duration of the Summit on the outer perimeters of Gauteng and Sandton areas. Their presence, together with that of the SAPS, meant that no incidents of violence occurred at all.

The SA Air Force and medical personnel played just as vital a role. Two Oryx helicopters assisted with the trooping of SANDF and SAPS members to set up roadblocks in the Gauteng area, and were also on standby to assist with any emergency tasks. A fixed-wing aircraft was also available for daily reconnaissance tasks.

SANDF medical personnel were deployed at all the headquarters’ hotels to look after the well being of the foreign delegates. The service that they rendered was excellent. 7 Medical Battalion was deployed to deal with any potential biological or chemical threat.
Competing in the first Africa Military Games

By Lt Col Louis Kirstein, SO1 Media Liaison DOD (published in SA Soldier: April 2002, page 38)

They came from all over Africa, 2,000 soldiers from 26 countries, to fight it out on the sports field. But it was no ordinary sports event; it was the first-ever Africa Military Games in Nairobi, Kenya, and was held over the period 15 to 26 April 2002. The goal of the Africa Military Games was to provide accredited defence forces from all the over African continent an opportunity to compete with each other on the sports field in order to reinforce friendship ties and to ensure the dream of peace and stability in the continent.

Women crossed another bridge

By Lt Colleen Ferreira (published in SA Soldier: November 2002, page 22)

SA Infantry Battalion, Specialist Centre of Excellence, India Company, presented the Visual Tracking Course in 2002. The duration of the course was seven weeks, and it was presented at the Madimbo Training Area along the Limpopo River.

The course commenced on 9 April 2002 and continued until 24 May 2002. What made this course different was that it was the first time that women were accepted as students on the course. After the selection process three women, Lt Colleen Ferreira, Rfn Roxanne Slabber and Rfn Lika Hartzenberg, were identified and nominated for the course. They were placed among the men so that no section consisted of more than one woman.

The pre-course preparation for the upcoming visual tracking course consisted of different routes of approximately 8 km. These were within the cut-off times, and the participants had to run in complete battle dress and overcome certain problems, for example serious blisters, stress factors and physical and mental fatigue.

A real morale booster for the women was that Rfn Hartzenberg came first overall on the course. Another bridge had been crossed for women in the SANDF.
United we stand, divided we fall! Viva Africa! The 40th anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU), at the Johannesburg Stadium on 25 May 2003 was a celebration of the rebirth and renewal of the African continent.

The AU represents an equal partnership of the 53 African States or Governments that make up the organisation. In order for Africans to face the future with renewed vigour in a world that is increasingly changing technologically and otherwise, President Thabo Mbeki announced: "We have transformed the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union".

Through the AU the President has sworn that the slaughter of one African by another will be stopped. "We will do our best to end this senseless killing," said President Mbeki. He continued: "Tutsi and Hutu are African, Hausa and Yoruba are African."

As Chairperson of the AU, President Mbeki also stated that the organisation would continue to assist war plagued countries, such as the Central African Republic and the Côte d’Ivoire to return to democracy. The President also touched on the Burundi Peace Agreement and the Sudan, and applauded the ongoing talks between the Sudanese Government and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement.

At President Mbeki’s request a moment’s silence was observed in remembrance of the two thousand people killed in the recent earthquake in Algeria. The Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF then made mention of the fact that the SANDF would deploy troops in Algeria in an endeavour to assist. The SANDF is second to none and does us so proud! Not only does the National Defence Force protect our borders and beyond, but it has also successfully adapted to the versatile role of being a service provider and a show-stopper.

Members of the SANDF brought life to the stadium long before the public poured in. In the biting cold, so typical of a “Jo’burg” winter morning, members took to song to fend off the chill. Carrying all 53 flags of the AU member countries the National Ceremonial Guard paraded in detailed precision around the field to the rhythm of the bands of the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service, which maddened the crowd with excitement.
Life in a Congo village

By Capt Mohau Modise (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 15)

On the arrival of the command group on 22 April 2003 Kindu was a ghost town with a handful of people. This was because many of its inhabitants were living in the bushes nearby in fear of the rebel group, known as the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) - GOMA. The RCD rebels are mostly children ranging in age from ten upwards, who have been supported by the Rwandan Army during the four years of war in an attempt to overthrow former President Laurent Kabila.

After Kabila’s assassination in January 2001, his son Joseph took over and to date he is trying hard to push for peace and an interim government has been sworn in.

The town is war-torn and its buildings are dilapidated. Unemployment is the order of the day due to a lack of good governance. Although mineral resources are abundant, the people see this as a curse rather than a blessing, because they believe that these resources, eg gold and diamonds, lead to lives being lost, and suffering and torture being inflicted by the rebel groups, as these have a vested interest in these minerals.

It is amazing that in the midst of hunger and poverty the Congolese are still very keen to utilise their remaining resources. They are very intelligent despite being disadvantaged by having to attend school in war conditions.

Capt Mohau Modise, SO2 Info OPS (MONUC III), at one of the schools during Project QUIPS.

South Africa plays a role in the peace process

By Lt Col Annelize Rademeyer, SO1 Public Liaison AMIB (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 14)

One could easily wonder what South Africa’s forces have to do in Burundi, close to the equator, far away from the southern tip of Africa. Our former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, played a leading role in negotiations to establish fertile ground for the peace process in this relatively small country in the Great Lakes region. Although Mr Mandela is not part of the process anymore, South Africa still plays a role in it.

The SANDF started Operation FIBRE in Burundi in November 2000 with the main objective of safeguarding politicians returning to the country. Following the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in August 2000, the deployment of the South African Protection and Support Detachment (SAPSD), and further regional initiatives, the signing of two ceasefire agreements on 7 October and 2 December 2002 took place. The African Mission was established in Burundi.

The mission is to oversee the implementation and verification of the ceasefire agreements, and to assist in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes.

On 3 February 2003 South Africa was appointed by the African Union (AU) as Lead Nation to plan and implement the African Union Mission in Burundi (AUMIB). Other countries contributing soldiers are Mozambique and Ethiopia. Elements from these countries with the main force are already deployed at the AMIB HQ.

The Mission will be conducted in five phases, namely pre-deployment (planning and preparations), establishing the mission (HQ deployed and transition of SAPSD), (phased) deployment of main force elements and preparation of cantonment areas, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and subsequent operations that include the possibility of being relieved by a UN mission.

Negotiations are still taking place between the various role-players on how exactly the DDR process should be conducted. Currently there is one cantonment area, which is almost 30 km north-east of Bujumbura (the capital of Burundi) in the province of Bubanza. Other regions for the establishment of cantonment areas are under investigation.

Current key posts are the AMIB Force Commander (Maj Gen S.Z. Binda - RSA), the AMIB Deputy Force Commander (Brig Gen Gebrat Ayelle - Ethiopia), the AMIB Chief of Staff (W. Very - RSA) and the RSA National Contingent Commander (Col N.J.K. Mabilu).
Commandant appointed as Professor Extraordinary

By Maj Arina Hanekom, Communication Officer Military Academy (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: July 2003, page 17)

The University of Stellenbosch Business School has appointed the Commandant of the Military Academy, Brig Gen L.S. Mollo, as Professor Extraordinary for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2006. The University of Stellenbosch created this category of appointments to give recognition to individuals for their proven specialised expertise, and/or their eminence in their profession and field of study, and to involve them in the academic programmes of the relevant department or school. This appointment will also strengthen the relationship between the Military Academy and the University of Stellenbosch Business School.

Brig Gen L.S. Mollo.

Learners displaying the spirit of Siyandiza

By PO Dennis Ndaba (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 35)

Photo: F Sgt Tania Kettles

The Schools Aerospace Challenge was held in the United Kingdom over the period 14 to 28 August 2003. This was a joint venture by the Cranfield University (a world-renowned aerospace teaching facility), the Royal Air Force and aviation industry partners in the UK. It is an annual event in the UK that aims to attract top achievers to further education and ultimately a career in aerospace.

This was the third year that various schools and Air Training Corps squadrons in the UK competed for the coveted top prize of £5000.00. To top it all the SA Air Force via the Air Adviser in London was invited to enter a team consisting of five members. The SA team was the first outside the UK ever to participate in this event, which turned it into an international event, and the fully representative team was selected from the Aviation Academy at the Waterkloof High School. The Aviation Academy paid the expenses of the team, which did not participate directly in the competition this year as their entry was not processed in time. This meant that the SA team was automatically short-listed without prior evaluation of their competition paper.

This competitive mechanism was used to stimulate the youth in the field of aerospace sciences in order to secure our own aeronautical/aviation future. The venture holds mutual benefits for our country, defence industries, the education fraternity and the SA Air Force, not to mention the impact on the youth of South Africa.

The visit was also used to kick-start a process of broad-based South African participation in future, with a view to creating awareness among the youth and to encourage the pursuit of a career in aeronautical engineering in the SA Air Force. It will also add much value to the plan to ensure that there are enough engineers in the SA Air Force in the future.
First black Reserve Force military judge sworn in

By Capt (SAN) E. van der Walt (Ret)

Col Victor Sibeko (50), an advocate from Brakpan on the East Rand, was one of the first legal practitioners to apply for appointment as a Reserve Force officer in the SANDF. Because of his seniority he was given the rank of Colonel.

After his appointment Col Sibeko had to undergo an induction programme on military culture. This had to be done in his spare time. He first completed a military orientation course after which he was schooled in military legal subjects, such as military law, the law of armed conflict, operational law, law of evidence and criminal law. He passed his examinations with flying colours.

Before he could be sworn in as judge he had to sit under instruction to familiarise himself with the military justice system.

On 6 May 2003 Col Sibeko was sworn in as military judge by Brig Gen Annemarie Myburgh, Director Military Judges, in one of the courtrooms in Thaba Tshwane. He was to begin his duties with immediate effect and he said he was ready and willing to play his role in the SANDF.

Col Sibeko will preside as a senior military judge when and where required, especially in cases involving senior SANDF members from the rank of major upwards, but he would also be able to handle disciplinary cases involving junior members.

The scope of Col Sibeko’s duties will include having to preside over cases involving SANDF members in other countries, such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) whenever such a need arises.

In 1979 Col Sibeko obtained his BA Law degree and in 1981 his LLB degree at the National University of Lesotho. Thereafter he was admitted as advocate in Lesotho in 1981. During his career as a legal practitioner he worked, inter alia, as a negotiator for Mobil and was an adjudicator for the Gauteng Housing Transfer Bureau where he later served on the appeal panel. In 1993 he opened his own legal consultancy.

The French and our soldiers learn from each other

By Capt (SAN) Stan Slogrove,

Planning staffs of the SANDF and FASZOI (French Forces in the Indian Ocean Zone) under the command of the Task Force Commander, Col Johan Blaauw, and his French counterpart, Capitaine de Vaisseau (Navy Captain) Francois Cloup-Mandavialle, had met earlier in the week, as March turned into April, at the underground military facility on Durban’s Bluff, to conduct a Command Post Exercise (CPX).

The aim of the theoretical phase of this Peace Support exercise was to validate and harmonise the doctrines and tactics that would be used in the practical phase. Language difficulties were overcome and the two force components sized each other up as they ran through the various activities of the scenario.

On completion of the CPX, the planning staffs moved up the coast to Richards Bay and occupied the tented camp that had been set up in advance. The cargo from FNS La Grandiére soon became an evacuation control centre manned by French and South African medical and administrative personnel. For the first time, members of the South African Red Cross Society were also involved.
As the aircrew were busy concentrating on a safe landing in Bujumbura, you could see through the window that the stage had been set to welcome the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Siphiwe Nyanda.

The Chief’s entourage included the Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, and other senior leaders in the DOD. The Chief’s visit coincided with the announcement that the United Nations had agreed to lead the mission in Burundi. One of the tangible achievements of the DOD during the ten years’ celebration of freedom was the deployment of soldiers abroad.

The aim of the Chief’s visit over the period 23 to 26 March 2004 was to be briefed about the situation in Burundi, the progress of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), to meet with the relevant representatives, to acquaint himself with the political situation, and most importantly to hear from the soldiers on the ground.

The South African Ambassador in Burundi, Mr Welile Nhlapo, told the delegation about Burundian political progress and that the Burundian people appreciated the extra mile taken by the soldiers of the AMIB. Gen Nyanda and his delegation visited the Chief of Staff of the Burundi Armed Forces, Maj Gen Germain Niyoyankana, who praised the AMIB.

Maj Gen Sipho Binda, the Force Commander of the AMIB, and other senior officers briefed Gen Nyanda on the latest progress made and mentioned that the soldiers had settled in very well regardless of the circumstances they found themselves in. Their role is to facilitate the implementation of the ceasefire agreements in Burundi. No one can forget the VIP protectors working day and night to ensure the safety of the Burundian VIPs.

Looking at our South African soldiers who are deployed outside our country tells a story of its own - commitment, discipline and going the extra mile to perform their duties - it is truly amazing! (It does not mean that they are lazy when they are at home.) The situation in Burundi taught our soldiers something, namely that the Burundian people use every available resource in order to survive.

Our ambassadors abroad serving unselfishly

The United Nations had agreed to lead the mission in Burundi.

United Nations soldiers (including our soldiers) welcoming Gen Siphiwe Nyanda, the Chief of the SANDF, at the Kindu airport in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Our soldiers patrol the streets in Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United Nations had agreed to lead the mission in Burundi.
The recent visit by the Portfolio Committee on Defence and the Joint Standing Committee on Defence to the soldiers deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi over the period 28 to 30 October 2003 is a clear indication of support and augurs well for the morale of the soldiers.

The parliamentarians were led by Ms Thandi Modise, Chairperson of both committees, which consisted of members from different political parties, while V Adm Martyn Trainor, Chief of Corporate Staff, led the SANDF delegation. Before their departure from Waterkloof Air Force Base Maj Gen Mbuyiselo Mgwebi, the General Officer Commanding Joint Operational HQ at Chief Joint Operational Division, briefed the delegation and the members of the media on the situation in the DRC and Burundi. The first stop of the visit was Kindu, and after a briefing the group left for Bujumbura.

In Bujumbura they were welcomed by Maj Gen Sipho Binda, the Force Commander of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), and his contingent. Also present was Ambassador Mamadou Bah, the special representative of the African Union, who was the Chairperson and the Head of Mission of AMIB.

He informed the delegation about progress in Burundi, especially in terms of disarmament, demobilisation and repatriation. Ms Modise urged the ambassador not to forget that women and children were part and parcel of the whole procedure to be implemented.

The ambassador emphasised that it was in their best interests not to leave others behind or to fail to acknowledge their contribution. The inclusion of women and children who had participated in the struggle for a transitional government was very important because it was their right to be involved in the process. Although political, it is a major challenge to realise those requirements, but there is still hope because of progress on some agreements.

The delegation also visited the offices of the United Nations (UN) in Burundi where they met Mr Ayité J-C KPAKPO, the Senior UN Adviser for the Burundi Peace Process Implementation Monitoring Committee. The parliamentarians wanted to know when the UN was going to be involved in taking over the deployment of the soldiers in Burundi. Even though the members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence were engaged in other commitments in Burundi, their mission was to visit the soldiers and to see if they had been properly resourced and were performing their duties as expected. The visit by the members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence also helps Parliament to decide what the requirements or the challenges are that face the AMIB.
Believe one can only reflect on a situation once you are not “in it” any longer. After deployment to the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) for a six-month period - from August 2003 to February 2004 - and now back for four months, it is perhaps a good time for reflection.

Did all the other women and myself make a difference in serving the Peace Mission in Burundi? Nowadays when I watch the news and I hear the word Burundi, I tend to give my full attention. Every time the peace process seems to stumble, my heart aches. Every time it goes ahead full steam I feel like dancing.

Some twenty women spent six months at the Demobilisation Centre, some 30 km north-east of the capital city of Bujumbura, and only came to “town” and the “Palace Base” once every month for four or five days at a time. They certainly earned the respect of their male counterparts. I do believe their input to safeguarding some 200 ex-combatants did make a difference to the Mission.

Within the VIP Protectors and the Static Guards there were almost thirty women. Being a VIP Protector has its own kind of challenges, but the women proved that they could perform this specialised job without having to stand back for any man. I do believe that each one of them made a difference in serving the Mission.

At the Airport Base some eight women served the Mission inter alia as logisticians and some even in the Artillery Battery. The Medical and Air Force personnel rotated more frequently than the Army personnel, but without their medical care Burundi would not have been the same. As any soldier knows, good support contributes enormously to morale.

At AMIB HQ some twenty women held posts varying from photographer, “manning SAFI”, a civilian lady (ABSA ‘Blief Tannie’) in the pay office, to CMI services, etc - I believe each and everyone of them made a difference in the support tasks they performed.

What motivates a woman to volunteer to deploy for a period of six months? The same question can be asked of all the men who voluntarily deploy. One would be dishonest if one said that the money involved did not count. There are, however, other reasons as well. Reasons such as “wanderlust” and the gaining of experience in one’s specific area of specialisation within the peacekeeping environment - experience that nobody can take away from you.

If I now look at photos and try to share the wonderful experience with friends and family, I realise to my dismay that they cannot be as excited as I am. Unfortunately, only those who have shared in the hardships, but also the highlights, can really share in the excitement.
A final compliment to a General for life

Gen Siphiwe Nyanda bowed out as one of the country's finest officers.

By CPO Dennis Ndaba (published in SA Soldier: July 2005, page 10)
Photo: F Sgt Ameda Strydom

On the morning of 30 May 2005 the Thaba Tshwane Military Sports Ground was under siege as a parade characterised by military professionalism at its best and in the form of the brigade in review took place, in addition to a fly-past, and a 17-gun salute, serenaded by a sweet duet by the National Ceremonial Guards singers with the Italian version of “Time to say goodbye”, followed by a standing ovation for Gen Nyanda on an illustrious career and devotion to duty that spanned over 30 years.

When Gen Nyanda took over command of the SANDF in May 1998, he had a dream: “That the National Defence Force of the future will reflect the demographics of the country. All South Africans should be welcomed in it. All should be able to rise to the highest position of responsibility, irrespective of race, religion, gender or creed”. His appointment was made at a time of great challenges and adversity for the SANDF. The unprecedented integration of seven different forces was a painful affair; the defence budget was plummeting downwards as though out of control and with no end in sight. There were serious concerns about block obsolescence in the SANDF, particularly in the SA Navy, which had largely been overlooked in the acquisition of main equipment in the former SADF.

Gen Nyanda said: “Today the human resource component is gradually transforming. There can be no laxity or compromise with regard to it. Deviations from discipline must be dealt with firmly, promptly, fairly and impartially. Crime and the health of our soldiers, particularly regarding the scourge of HIV and AIDS, continue to receive the attention of the SANDF and the DOD in general in order to limit their impact on the deployability of our soldiers. The crime and well-being strategies need continuous monitoring and re-evaluation for them to remain effective.”

Paying tribute to his predecessor, Gen Ngwenya said that the seven years that Gen Nyanda was in command as the Chief of the SANDF were most challenging, but he undertook to serve his country with loyalty, courage, dignity and honour. He performed his duties and carried out his responsibilities with zeal and diligence. Gen Ngwenya added that the SANDF was faced with bigger national issues to tackle, such as to raise readiness to the required level, to be ready to meet the demands of the situation and to tackle the headache imposed on us by the thorny health problem.

Gen Ngwenya concluded: “I am certain we shall emerge victorious, because you are leaving behind a capable administration consisting of committed and dedicated men and women.”
The SA Navy will continue to grow and develop under his leadership.

By PO Dennis Ndaba
(published in SA Soldier: April 2005, page 11)
Photo: F Sgt David Nomthshongwana

The SA Naval Mess was abuzz with dignitaries on 28 February 2005. They bore witness to the former Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johan Retief, swallowing the anchor and stepping ashore for his well-deserved retirement. This was a milestone in the history of the SA Navy, as V Adm Johannes Mudimu became the first black person to be appointed as the Chief of the SA Navy.

In paying tribute to the former Chief of the SA Navy, Gen Nyanda said that what had impressed him most about V Adm Retief at the outset was his soft-spoken approach and his disarming sense of humour. Gen Nyanda said: "He is a clear communicator with great clarity of mind. He is a very articulate leader. The Navy Review was his immediate, tangible contribution. In spite of severe budgetary constraints he was not a person to complain about the situation, but one who sought answers to the problems."

Gen Nyanda added that V Adm Retief had the gift of being able to make complex issues seem straightforward, which allowed him to confront and address these issues with ease. He was also known for his strong views on training and the importance of producing a balanced Service in terms of gender and race. In terms of the Strategic Defence Packages, V Adm Retief had taken the running of two navies in his stride; his legacy is that it can be done.

He added: "I welcome V Adm Mudimu as the new Chief of the SA Navy; he brings his own experience and expertise to this vital office. I am sure the SA Navy will continue to grow and develop under the leadership of Admiral Mudimu.” Gen Nyanda added that the new Navy included four magnificent new Valour Class corvettes, three brand new Class 209 submarines, and many new facilities that will ensure a better quality of life for our sailors. He said: "I know that the SA Navy will do well under the guidance and leadership of Admiral Mudimu.”
Saluting our Chiefs of the SA Air Force

By PO Dennis Ndaba (published in SA Soldier: April 2005, page 10)
Photo: F Sgt David Nomtshongwana

The SA Air Force was united in its resolve to salute their former Chief, Lt Gen Roelf Beukes, an officer par excellence, on a distinguished career that spanned forty years of commitment and dedication to duty. By the same token it welcomed their new Chief, Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, to the helm.

In his address at the change of command parade at Bay’s Hill in Pretoria on 25 February 2005, Lt Gen Beukes said that the fly-past and air display brought back fond memories and he was really grateful for and proud of having been a former member of the Silver Falcons, as well as Officer Commanding of the Cheetahs.

Lt Gen Beukes said: “Over the last ten years I have seen the SA Air Force evolving from a force which almost exclusively operated inside the country in support of the SA Police Services, and humanitarian and disaster relief operations during the early nineties, to one which today is required to deploy to all parts of the continent and beyond.

“Against the background of Government initiatives to improve the lives of the people of South Africa and its neighbours, the peaceful application of air power has become a priority.

Examples of such initiatives are the present deployments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi, and the repeated diplomatic initiatives, supported by the SA Air Force, to promote peace and stability across the continent.”

New Chief of the SA Air Force

Lt Gen Gagiano joined the SA Air Force in 1969 and qualified as a pilot on the Air Macchi 326M in December 1969. During his career he flew the Harvard, Pilatus PC 7, Vampire, F86 Sabre, Mirage 111, FICZ, as well as the Cheetah D and E aircraft. He was appointed as the Officer Commanding 3 Squadron, which operated FICZ aircraft. In 1989 he was appointed as the Officer Commanding 89 Combat Flying School, which was equipped with Cheetah D aircraft. He occupied the post of military attaché in Israel from 1991 until his return to South Africa in January 1994. He completed the SANDF’s Joint Staff Course in November 1994 and was then transferred to Central Flying School Langebaanweg, he was transferred to the Air Force Office in December 1998, promoted to Brigadier General and appointed as the Inspector General of the SA Air Force. On 1 November 2000 he was promoted to Major General and appointed as the Chief Director Operations Development at the Joint Operations Division responsible for defence capabilities, joint force employment strategy, joint command and control and joint doctrine. Lt Gen Gagiano was transferred back to the SA Air Force as Chief Director Operations Policy and Plans responsible for Air Force policy, capabilities, strategy and resource allocation. He was appointed as the Chief of the SA Air Force on 1 March 2005.

South African Gripen makes its debut


South Africa’s first completed Gripen fighter was unveiled on 28 October 2005 in Linköping, Sweden, during a roll-out ceremony as it left the production line. The aircraft, which will be the first of 26 Gripons to be delivered to the SA Air Force from 2008, will now be prepared for a rigorous and thorough flight test programme to integrate South Africa’s customised avionics and missions systems.

Speaking on behalf of the SA Government at the roll-out ceremony in Linköping, Sweden, South Africa’s Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Alec Erwin, highlighted the strategic significance of South Africa’s Gripen acquisition and its role as a catalyst for broad industrial, trade and economic development in South Africa.

Sweden’s Minister of Defence, Ms Leni Björklund, said Sweden would continue to develop further its already strong strategic, political, defence, industrial and economic links with South Africa:

“The relations between our two countries can only be described as excellent. I would like to take this opportunity to underline and manifest the Swedish Government’s desire to further develop and expand these much appreciated relations,” said Ms Leni Björklund.

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He came, he saw and he conquered. After a span of 35 years in the military Lt Gen Rinus Jansen van Rensburg handed over the reins of Surgeon General to Lt Gen Vejaynand Ramlakan during a change of command parade held at the Thaba Tshwane Military Sports Grounds on 1 August 2005. The SA Military Health Service community came in numbers to witness this special occasion at which they experienced mixed feelings of pride, excitement and sadness.

Lt Gen Jansen van Rensburg said: “I do, however, have to admit that it is with sadness that I take leave of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS). It has been a privilege to be at the helm of the SAMHS for the past four plus years. It has been an enriching experience, which I would not change for anything.”

There have been many developments and changes in the SAMHS over the past few years under the former Surgeon General, for example:

- The establishment and development of five formations, and their units, as well as that of the GSB Thaba Tshwane.
- Existing directorates were expanded and staffed, but additional directorates were also established, namely the Directorate Physical Training, Sport and Recreation, the Directorate Occupational Health and Safety and the Directorate Reserve Force.
- The introduction of the BATLS and BARTS Courses at the Military Health Training Formation. Another area of training, which has been expanded, is Disaster Management. During the recent earthquake in Algiers, a Disaster Management Team, including instructors from the Military Health Training Formation, were able to test their skills in a real-life situation.
- The establishment of the University Reserve Training Unit. This training unit will enable medical students from the various tertiary institutions to join the Reserve Force and undergo military training with a view to their becoming medical officers within the Reserves.

The outgoing Surgeon General concluded: “However, the successes achieved would not have been possible, if I had not had the support of capable, dedicated and focused chief directors, commanders, directors and staff officers. I was always able to rely on their assistance and advice.”
The Force Commander in Burundi speaks out

We are making sure that our mission is a success as far as media coverage in Burundi is concerned.

The first Commander of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was Maj Gen Sipho Binda. His successor, Maj Gen Derick Mgwebi, took over from him under the African Union (AU) flag in April 2004. On 1 June 2005 AMIB changed to the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB).

SA Soldier and Defence TV, under the supervision of Col Daan Boshoff and Maj Ellouis Janse van Rensburg from Chief Joint Operations, are making sure that our mission is a success as far as media coverage in Burundi is concerned. Together we visited the United Nations HQ in Bujumbura in April 2004 to interview the ONUB Force Commander, Maj Gen Mgwebi, father of the mission.

Maj Gen Mgwebi is a tall, silent and well-built senior officer. He is a real soldier and a role model of what a senior officer should be. This is what he had to say about how it all started, the current situation, the challenges, and of course his experiences.

Maj Gen Mgwebi said: "South Africa played a most important role in the peace process of Burundi through facilitation, as requested by the region. The former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, took over from the late Dr Julius Nyerere, the former President of Tanzania. He gave the role to former Deputy President Jacob Zuma to continue with the process until it was given to the Minister of Safety and Security, Mr Charles Nqakula."

He added: "The SANDF created a secure environment for this process to go ahead, an environment in which mutual confidence had been built between the role-players in this process. Our presence has allowed political leaders in exile to return and start implementing the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. Our soldiers acted as VIP protectors to provide a secure environment for those who were in exile."

"South Africa has played a vital role in terms of confidence building as far as combatants are concerned so that they could go to the assembly areas where they agreed to be disarmed because they were given protection by the SANDF. The combatants were willing to be disarmed because of the trust and confidence that they had in the South African soldiers."
SA Soldier sweeps Government Awards

By Sgt Lebohang Letaoana (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: January 2006, page 16)

Photo: courtesy GCIS

A Soldier, the official monthly magazine of the Department of Defence, had the opportunity to participate in the annual prestigious Government Communicators' Awards, which were held at Gallagher Estates in Midrand on 2 December 2005.

On that beautiful evening, SA Soldier swept two awards - the National Ubungcweti Award and the biggest of them all - the Government Communicator of the Year Award. "Ubungcweti" is the IsiZulu word for excellence, and this award recognises excellence in writing, editorial content, layout and design. It also caters for photography, broadcasting and for contestants from the new media, such as the Intranet and Internet. The main award - the Government Communicator of the Year Award - recognises excellence in all areas of Government communication.

The winner was chosen from among all the finalists in the other categories. Dr Essop Pahad, Minister in the Presidency, initiated these awards in 2002. He wanted to recognise and reward top Government communicators who went beyond the call of duty in delivering their mandate to communicate the work of the Government. The awards were for improved delivery, innovation and excellence in the Government communications profession - and to encourage communicators to work hard. Mr Maneli Le Kilele, Deputy Commissioner of Communications of the Department of Correctional Services, won the National Bua Award. Bua means "to speak" in Setswana. This award category caters for ministerial liaison officers, departmental spokespersons and individual communicators who display courage, commitment, dedication and discipline in their work.

Another member of the SANDF who made the organisation proud was Col Marthie Visser, SSO Defence Corporate Communication Strategy, Policy and Planning, who won the Top Student Award for Professional Certificate in Government Communications and Marketing (PCGCM). The PCGCM aims to provide an overview of the theory and practice of public sector management, with specific focus on communications and marketing in a developing country context.
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Securing the elections in the Comoros

The elections are held every four years, with the office rotating between the three islands.

By Lebohang Letaoana (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: July 2006, page 14)
Photo: Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

Located a little more than 10 degrees below the equator in the western Indian Ocean, the different islands of the Comoros, namely Nzwani (Anjouan), Mwali (Moheli) and the Ngazidja (Grande Comoros) have a maritime tropical climate.

SA Soldier got the opportunity to go there and provide media coverage for the presidential elections in the Union of the Comoros from 11 to 19 May 2006 as part of Operation TRITON 4. The elections are held every four years, with the office rotating between the three islands.

On 11 October 2005 the Government of the Union of the Comoros requested the African Union (AU) to monitor the elections in the Comoros. In response to this request the AU established an AU Mission to Support the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC). This mission was composed of military and civilian officers.

The duties of AMISEC were exclusively international and its personnel carried out their duties and conducted themselves in such a way as to promote the interests of AMISEC.

The mandate of AMISEC included the following:

- To create a secure environment for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in the Comoros.
- To monitor, observe and report on the situation in the islands to the Chairperson of the Commission.
- To ensure that during the electoral process the Comorian security forces, ie the Union of the Comoros’ security forces and those of the autonomous islands and their equipment were confined to barracks. However, unarmed local police were responsible for routine law enforcement not related to the electoral process. Control mechanisms were established to monitor such police activities.

South Africa as the leading nation under the authority and control of the African Union sent a considerable number of soldiers on this mission. Lt Col Oscar Viljoen, the Chief of Staff, said the SANDF had 460 soldiers deployed on the three islands and an additional 675 were deployed for five days to secure the elections. The idea was to deploy soldiers at every polling station, of which there were about 550.
loodwater from heavy rainfall in Mozambique flowed into Cahora Bassa Dam and caused it to overflow. To ease the pressure on the dam, the sluice gates had to be opened. The decision to open the sluices resulted in floods in southern Mozambique. People in areas such as Caia village were stranded. Most of the people affected by the floods were those who had built their houses on the banks of the Zambezi River. The Mozambican Government requested the South African Department of Foreign Affairs, and Provincial and Local Government to assist in humanitarian aid provision to the affected people of Mozambique. The South African aid was needed after tropical cyclone Favio flooded some parts of southern Mozambique in late February 2007.

It was the second rescue operation since the big floods in 2000 followed by those of 2004 and 2007, which was monitored by the Institute of National Government for Disaster Management (INGC). The SANDF Joint Task Force, under the command of Col Ronnie Jonsson, was deployed to assist the affected people. Its mission was to speed up the process of delivering food, as well as to assess the situation and provide clean water to people in the flooded areas.

The resettlement camp of the people on higher ground. Behind it is the subsiding Zambezi River.

The mission was to speed up the process of delivering food, as well as to assess the situation and provide clean water to people in the flooded areas.

INGC agencies were already busy providing food, shelter and water to the affected people, the arrival of the Joint Task Force came at the right time when food and water were most needed for the people affected by the floods. The SA Air Force distributed 322.5 metric tons of food to the various identified resettlement centres by air transport and the engineers provided 2 411 000 litres of purified water during the period 6 March to 10 April 2007. The World Food Programme had distributed more than 1 000 metric tons of food to 120 000 displaced people as of 13 February 2007.

Col Jonsson told SA Soldier that the time frame for the mission was too short for proper logistical preparation. Although the World Food Programme and the SANDF Joint Task Force was able to assist, it was not as effective as the previous missions.

Col Jonsson concluded by saying that with supporting personnel and equipment Operation LITCHI II was successful. Talking to members of the media the Regional Director of INGC, Mr Jose Dambira, said that the situation would be monitored and the data kept for future reference. The information gathered would be useful when and if disaster struck again, which would improve the handling of such situations.
Providing media coverage on SANDF members deployed at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, affectionately known as “Bara” to most South Africans, has got to be one of my most intense experiences yet. “Bara” Hospital is the largest hospital in Africa with about 88 patient wards, but the unforeseen and unpredictable public service national strike brought the enormous institute to a virtual standstill.

The wage dispute between the “Government” and “workers” who put down tools and went on protest marches meant that all things stopped moving. Heeding the call to provide damage control the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) deployed most of its members to public hospitals where the sick were left in dire straits.

The visit of SA Soldier on 19 June 2007 to 8 Medical Battalion Unit erected inside the “Bara” Hospital grounds in response to the state of emergency is probably the closest I will ever come to a scenario overflowing with casualties, like the battlefield makeshift hospitals I have seen so often in movies.

The visit of SA Soldier on 19 June 2007 to 8 Medical Battalion Unit erected inside the “Bara” Hospital grounds in response to the state of emergency is probably the closest I will ever come to a scenario overflowing with casualties, like the battlefield makeshift hospitals I have seen so often in movies.

The Officer Commanding 8 Medical Battalion, Col Gustave Erlank, told the SA Soldier team that on an average day the hospital has around 2,000 bed patients. On the day that we visited, the number had dropped to 1,100. “The maternity ward was the busiest section all along,” according to the Officer in Charge, who added that the maternity and gynaecology wards were the biggest in terms of space, volume and demand, with almost 50 “normal” births a day, excluding the caesarean section patients.

8 Medical Battalion had already seen two weeks of deployment by 19 June 2007, with a total of 117 staff members working two twelve-hour shifts, around the clock. He added: “We are handling this as a military operation even though we are giving health support to the hospital. We have an Operations Room where we receive requirements from the hospital on what personnel and medical assistance is needed in the wards.” The unit members also transported the dead from the ward to the morgue. Col Erlank continued: “Most of the work is concerned with casualties. There was also a big need for the laundry to get done and a lot of effort was also put into the kitchens. The medical health core function is to look after people and to see to it that people’s well-being is taken care of, but we have also got psychologists and social workers to work with my members on a daily basis.”
The launch of the SADC BRIGADE in Lusaka

By Tebogo Dube, Defence TV (published in SA Soldier: September 2007, page 20)

Photo: Mampi Musweu, ZNBC TV

The recent SADC Summit was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 15 to 17 August 2007. The highlight during the Summit was the launch of the SADC BRIGADE. The SADC BRIGADE was officially launched by the President of Zambia, Mr Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, in Lusaka on 17 August.

This brigade forms part of the African Standby Force. The deterioration of security in Africa led to the formation of the African Standby Force. African heads of state realised that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constituted a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and that they needed to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for Africa’s development and integration.

The Policy Framework Document for the establishment of the African Standby Force was approved by the African heads of state in Addis Ababa in July 2004. The launch of the SADC BRIGADE signified that the troops were to be deployed on the continent when needed. The brigade is made up of resources pledged by SADC member states according to a standby arrangement and comprises the military, the police and a civilian component.

The only permanent structure the SADC has is the Planning Element (PLANELM), which is located at the SADC Headquarters in Gaborone and consists of the military, the police and a civilian component. The PLANELM is guided by the SADC Chiefs of Defence Staff Committee and the Committee of SADC Police Chiefs.

The Brigade will perform observation and monitoring missions, peace support missions, interventions for peace and security restoration in grave circumstances at the request of a member state, and prevent the spreading to neighbouring areas or states of conflicts or the resurgence of violence after agreements have been reached, as envisaged in the African Union’s Mandate with regard to peace and security.

In his speech at the ceremony President Mwanawasa, who is also the SADC Chairperson, said: “I wish to commend the hard and laborious work done by the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation for the realisation of this historic occasion today.” He awarded medals to officers who had served in the PLANELM for more than three months.

A plaque with the flags of all the SADC member states was also unveiled at the parade.

The deterioration of security in Africa led to the formation of the African Standby Force.
As our country took its first steps in advancing the noble cause of democracy in 1994, the emphasis was placed on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and socio-economic priorities.

As we celebrate unity in building a better South Africa, Freedom Day celebrations in our country mark the culmination of a long and hard-won struggle that has seen countless heroes and heroines make the ultimate sacrifice, and living the life of selflessness for freedom and democracy.

The Llandeplin Stadion in Cape Town was the place to be on 27 April 2008 as the SANDF, other Government departments and the people of the Western Cape assembled to celebrate the 14th anniversary of freedom. The theme of the celebrations was "Business Unusual: All Hands on Deck to Speed up Change".

So what does Freedom Day mean to the youth?

SA Soldier talked to some young people to find out what Freedom Day really meant to them.

Oupa Japhta (23) voiced his opinion as follows: "As we celebrate the 14th anniversary of our democracy, South Africa has built a sense of national unity and Freedom Day highlights the achievement of our Government’s in-service delivery, social goals and the creation of solidarity in the rainbow nation and a better life for all."

Members of the National Ceremonial Guard lined up to form the Guard of Honour and the SA Army Band Western Cape captured the hearts of those present with their soulful repertoire.

The SANDF Spouses Forum and Massmart Holdings Limited hosted a breakfast briefing in Pretoria on 22 August 2008. The aim of the occasion was to reaffirm and express appreciation for the SANDF’s vital role in helping to bring peace to the continent. Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, Chief of the SANDF, welcomed the guests and mentioned that the SANDF was the shield of the nation and belonged to the people of South Africa.

Mr Paul Myeza, Managing Director of Sanlam, receives a certificate from the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Godfrey Ngwenya.

Bringing festive cheer to our deployed soldiers

By L Cpl Ally Rakoma and Pte Itumeleng Makhubela (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: November 2008, page 18)

Photo: F Sgt David Nomtshongwana

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SA Soldier conversed with Mr Graham Rebello, Massmart Channel Executive. Massmart Holdings Limited, who mentioned that Massmart had adopted the leading role in facilitating the building of relationships between sponsors, valued suppliers and the SANDF.

Mr Rebello said: "As sponsors we really appreciate our soldiers’ selfless service, self-giving and support of their fellow brothers and sisters on our continent and in advancing peace. We appreciate the SANDF’s workforce that continues to carry the baton and flag of peace within our borders and beyond on our continent. We hope in some small way that the gesture of receiving the goodwill parcels over the festive period will go some way to putting a smile on the faces of our members and their loved ones at home to show that we care for them."

At the Gala evening held at the St George’s Hotel in Pretoria, the Goodwill Parcel Project again provided proof of the selflessness of people supporting peace and prosperity. On 12 September 2008 high-profile members of the SANDF and the private sector were invited to pledge their support to the deployed soldiers as a way of uplifting their morale.
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Multimillion rand facelift and upgrade of AFB Waterkloof

By L Cpl Ally Rakoma (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: December 2008, page 14)

"The Air Force will not settle for second best, but persevere despite our challenges," Lt Gen Gagiano.

On 13 November 2008 the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, hosted a media briefing at AFB Waterkloof Officers Mess for members of the media on the state of the SA Air Force (SAAF) and to give an update of the multimillion rand facelift and upgrade of AFB Waterkloof runways, taxiways and strategic airlift facilities. These will result from the construction of maintenance hangars for aircraft and specialised facilities able to accommodate the SAAF’s soon to be acquired A400M heavy lift aircraft.

Admitting that the SAAF was facing serious challenges, particularly the retention of skilled personnel, the Chief of the SAAF said that international sources were scouting the SAAF’s expertise. Lt Gen Gagiano said: “The SAAF cannot compete against the large remuneration packages luring our personnel off to new challenges. The areas most affected are flying crew, command and control, air traffic controllers and technicians, specifically in the avionic environment.”

He added that the SAAF and DOD needed to increase contact with Government and its stakeholders to explain to them what the SAAF needed to operate and deliver its mandate in a more cost-effective manner.

Regarding the SAAF’s plan to consolidate its maintenance facilities with the maintenance staff from Denel Aviation, Lt Gen Gagiano said that a new support vision had been created with Denel Aviation to achieve specific service delivery outcomes.

Lt Gen Gagiano concluded: “We will not settle for second best, but persevere despite our challenges. Striving for air power is after all our goal: that is what airmanship is all about.”

It is expected that the upgrades will be completed by the year 2011. The briefing was concluded with an aerial tour of AFB Waterkloof, which was an eye-opening experience for members of the media.
South Africa is a pioneer in peace missions for the sake of securing a better life for all.

By Lufuno Netshirembe (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: November 2009, page 13) Photo: Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

South Africa does not live in isolation. If it has to enjoy its hard earned democracy then it has the responsibility to keep the African continent stable, politically and economically.

Considering that South Africa emphasises the principles of UBUNTU, which is about putting people first, it is not surprising that South Africa is a pioneer in peace missions for the sake of securing a better life for all in line with these UBUNTU principles.

The involvement of South Africans in peace missions has brought hope to disillusioned people in the various conflict stricken countries. Peace missions include preventative diplomacy, peace-making, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, peace building, humanitarian assistance and intervention. The SANDF has spent a decade participating in peace missions. To celebrate this worthy activity by our soldiers on 16 October, the SANDF brigade parade under the command of Brig Gen Ashton Sibango and CWO Joachim Pretorius was held in Bloemfontein in honour of our peace “angels”. This parade was held in AFB Bloemspruit and the Bloemfontein City Hall. On 15 and 16 October the streets surrounding the city hall were closed from approximately 11:00 to 13:30.

The SANFDF Commander-in-Chief and President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, was invited to attend and to honour our tireless and fearless peace warriors. The Commander-in-Chief laid a wreath in memory of those who lost their lives during peace missions.

In his speech the Commander-in-Chief commended the soldiers: “Members on parade, you have been excellent ambassadors of our country in the quest for peace. In difficult circumstances you have earned yourselves a place in the hearts of many”.

President Zuma urged the nation to invest in our National Defence Force. “Investing in the SANDF means we are investing in the creation of conditions for democracy, the strengthening of democracy and defending democracy,” said the President. He indicated that the perception that intensifying democracy reduced the security threat was incorrect; what reduced the threat was investing in the defence of our democratic state.

The members on parade represented all the Services and Divisions of the SANDF that participated in peace missions, and the colour company consisted of Service and Regimental colours of Services and Units that participated in peace missions. The mass band comprised four service bands under the direction of Lt Col Matthys Prenaar, Director of Music of the SAAF Band. Two Augusta 109 helicopters from 87 Helicopter Flying School based in AFB Bloemspruit performed the flight salute. The SA Army Artillery Mobilisation Regiment performed the 21-gun salute under the command of Maj Frans van Niekerk, while the SA Navy performed precision drill.

In view of the fact that our country does not live in isolation, its economic development and security are linked to Africa’s stability. In pursuit of a better life for all the SANDF will continue to be deployed on various peace missions and thus render political, economic and humanitarian aid to various African states.
Exercise GOLFINHO

It is a multinational peacekeeping operation with participants from different security forces and support elements.

Exercise GOLFINHO is a multinational peacekeeping operation with over 6,000 participants from different security forces and support elements. This unique approach to peace support missions has taken the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region by storm through its complexity and execution. The SADC Standby Force was established as agreed upon by the African Union timeline of 2010 with the aim of participating in peace support missions. Its main objective was to prepare elements of the SADC Standby Force for a multidimensional peace support operation in line with the African Union (AU) standby force road map.

Briefing the media about Exercise GOLFINHO, Brig Gen Lawrence Smith, the Force Commander, said they had selected scenario six of the prescribed AU training structure, an intervention that posed difficulties in terms of interoperability. He described it as a way of testing impossibilities by putting together people of different groupings and backgrounds. The composition of the SADC Standby Force consisted of the Mission Headquarters, a civilian component, a police component and the military component that made an immense contribution by providing personnel.

Exercise GOLFINHO was structured in three phases. The first was the MAPEX, which was the initial part of the exercise and entailed mapping and operational planning. This was followed by the CPX command post exercise, and lastly the training exercise FTX, a month-long field training exercise at the SA Army Training Combat Centre in Lohatla that took place from 1 to 28 September 2009. This involved the execution part of the exercise and mobilised forces in member states. It also comprised intervention by airborne forces and marrying up drills by integrating SADC states and their different forces.

Brig Gen Smith said each component had a sector commander to oversee its engagement and successfully interacted with other components despite minor obstacles. Of the 15 countries that form the SADC, only three: Mauritius, Seychelles and Madagascar were non-participants in the exercise. Each SADC state had to provide for their own forces. The Naval Joint Maritime Task Force at Walvis Bay in Namibia also ran an exercise concurrently with the one in Lohatla.

A simulated hostile take-over of rebel militants on armaments vehicles was staged during a demonstration. The scene depicted how a well-integrated SADC force would handle such incidents. The objective of the exercise was to test the interoperability and compatibility of the mission components. Unlike the military and police components, the civilian component had to provide assistance in humanitarian relief operation.
Like most other defence forces across the globe, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has its own television unit. This section, Defence TV, is responsible for all audio-visual communication within the Department of Defence (DOD). And like its counterparts from all over the world this section sometimes enters some of its work for the International Military Film Festival, namely “Eserciti e Popoli”, which is hosted annually in November in Italy.

Defence TV has been participating in this festival since 2001 and had previously won two awards in this competition. This year Defence TV entered two documentaries in two different categories in the competition.

It once again stood its ground on foreign soil by winning first prize in the category “Military Operations, Safeguard of Peace and Human Rights”, a much-coveted award, since the competition is especially tough in this category, which focuses on the peacetime role of defence forces all over the world. This year, the 20th International Military Film Festival once again took place in Bracciano, Italy. This picturesque little town is located on the shores of Lake Bracciano. As always, the festival offered a platform for the various armed forces to showcase their role and function in present-day society.

The main categories of the competition were well represented in the following areas: institutional information, history, training, environmental protection, promotion, teaching and operational activities. Special emphasis was placed on recent and relevant themes, such as humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, first aid support in case of natural disasters and the fight against terrorism.

Freelance producer, Mr Karel van der Merwe, an ex-SANDF member himself with 17 years’ experience in military film production, directed Advocates of African Peace, the award-winning documentary, for the SANDF. This documentary takes an in-depth look at the various peacekeeping missions that the SANDF has been involved in during the past ten years.

The documentary is dedicated to the SANDF’s ten-year involvement in international peace missions. The 1 200 guests who attended the luncheon in the Bloemfontein City Hall that formed part of the official ten-year celebrations on 16 October, viewed the premiere during this event. The Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Jacob Zuma, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, and various other high-profile stakeholders were among the guests who viewed this documentary.
DOD closes gaps on service delivery

By L Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: May 2010, page 16)
Photos: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Department of Defence, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, has completed the construction of three bridges in the Eastern Cape villages of Lefukufuku near Tsomo, Ntafufu at Port St Johns and Daluhlanga near Mount Ayliff. 16 March 2010 saw the opening of the newly constructed bridges by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, accompanied by the Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, and the MEC of Roads and Transport in the Eastern Cape, Ms Pemmy Majodina. Mr Makwetla indicated that this project was a pilot project for the SANDF aimed at testing the capacity and capability to lend assistance to other government departments in support of the people.

He further stated that this intervention by the DOD came after a request by the Department of Public Works to assist following concerns expressed by the communities in these areas that during floods they would be cut off from services and children would be unable to go to school.

Many municipalities in these rural areas do not have sufficient funds and expertise to provide services to these communities, which has led to a huge backlog in the delivery of services. The DOD intervention was the provision of the expertise, manpower and equipment for the construction of the bridges.

The MEC of Roads and Transport in the Eastern Cape expressed her gratitude to all the stakeholders that had worked together to realise the goal. Along with the ministers, she affirmed that this would not end here, but would be extended to other areas in need.

Jubilant learners crossing the bridge over the Daluhlanga River.

Soldiers from 1 Construction Regiment busy at work constructing a bridge.
Operation LITCHI 10 years down the line

By Kgabo Mashamaite (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: June 2010, page 16)

Rosita Mabuiango (10) and her mother, Ms Sofia Chiure, were the guests of honour at the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans’ budget vote on 4 May 2010 in Parliament, Cape Town, where Minister Lindiwe Sisulu announced that the SANDF had formally adopted Rosita, and would be contributing towards her educational costs and other costs related to her upbringing.

On 1 March 2000 the villagers in Gaza Province in Mozambique woke up to a flood that endangered not only their village, but also other nearby villages as well. Torrential rain had resulted in the river overflowing its banks and inundating the surrounding area.

Owing to a lack of capacity and resources to rescue stranded villagers, Mozambique requested humanitarian assistance from the South African Government. The rescue mission, called Operation LITCHI, was undertaken in response to this request.

The decision to send SANDF members to the distressed villages in Gaza Province had a positive impact on the people being evacuated from the deadly floods. When this mission was broadcast and published on international media the world witnessed the bravery, humanity and empathy that the SANDF had for the less fortunate in times of difficulty. An Oryx helicopter of the SA Air Force, one of the four deployed on the Operation LITCHI rescue mission, was seen hovering over a tree to rescue a newborn baby and her mother.

That tiny little bundle is today a bright 10-year-old, Rosita Mabuiango, whose 33-year-old mother, Ms Sofia Chiure, made headlines after giving birth in a tree during the raging floods.

During the announcement in her budget vote, Minister Sisulu said that Rosita represented something uniquely good about the SANDF, including its humanity, bravery, skilful techniques and the values inculcated in the members of the SANDF.

The family met with the 2000 rescue team members: Lt Col (Ret) Jaco Klopper (Task Force Mission Commander), Capt (Ret) Chris Berlyn (Pilot) and WO2 Tshifiwa Nengovhela (a SAMHS Medic) for the first time on 4 May 2010. The occasion was televised during the annual Defence budget vote.

The other members who participated in the rescue mission were Lt (Ret) Dave Talbot (Co-pilot), Sgt (Ret) Neville Jeanes (Flight Engineer) and Sgt (Ret) Stuart Buck (Rescue Personnel) who were not present.

SA Air Force boasts first female Gripen pilot

By Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela (an extract of what was published in SA Soldier: November 2010, page 17)

The SA Air Force can boast of having produced the first female Gripen fighter jet pilot in the world.

Maj Catherine Labuschagne.

With over 12 years of service in the SA Air Force Maj Labuschagne has approximately 1 900 flying hours to her credit of which 1 000 are in military jets. “This is fantastic for me, and I am excited,” remarked Maj Labuschagne. “It’s amazing what you can do with the aircraft, but you need to be persistent and work hard.”

In 2004, after joining 85 Combat Flying School in Hoedspruit, Maj Labuschagne had an opportunity to become the first female fighter pilot in the world to fly in the back seat of the Swedish built Gripen fighter jet at the opening of the African Aerospace and Defence Exhibition. In 2010 she flew solo in Gripen.

Three male Gripen fighter pilots qualified with Maj Labuschagne at Air Force Base Mabhado. The four of them completed their Operational Conversion Course in which they flew solo in Gripen on 7 October 2010. Maj Labuschagne, Maj Lance Mathabula, Lt Kevin Chetty and Lt Col Gys van der Walt will form a pool of fighter pilots who have paved the way for up-and-coming aviators.
The SANDF recently returned to safeguard the country’s borders, and the general public has received the return of the SANDF to borderline control, known as Operation CORONA, positively, particularly the communities closest to these borders. This was evident during the Portfolio Committee on Defence’s visit during which they wanted to examine the conditions under which the SANDF was redeploying on South Africa’s borders.

Led by the Chairperson, Mr Mnyamezeli Shedrack Booi, the Portfolio Committee took road trips along the borders at Zimbabwe-Musina (Limpopo), Mozambique-Macadamia (Mpumalanga), and Mozambique-Muzi (KwaZulu-Natal). During the road trips it became clear that the decision to return responsibility for borderline control to the SANDF was of crucial importance and necessary for national security.

The Portfolio Committee members were confronted by the challenges that lay ahead in the SANDF’s return to borderline control. The facilities around the borders are in a dire state. The fence is currently riddled with holes as a result of forced entry by illegal immigrants. Deployment quarters in some areas need to be renovated, and the limited amount of patrol equipment is another area of concern for the SANDF as it resumes this duty.

The Portfolio Committee on Defence was joined by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, on the second day. Ms Sisulu reiterated: “This is a major programme. The infrastructure is not the best it can be, the fence is not in a good state; we have over 2 000 km of borders to look after and that requires both financial technology and human resources, but we are up to the task and I am confident that many South Africans are happy that their troops are back on the border.”

The SANDF is currently finalising an operational plan to ensure that it effectively secures the borders.
Fourteen African heads of state and other foreign dignitaries, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon, arrived at Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria between 10 and 13 June 2010.

The key aim of their visit was to attend the opening ceremony of the 2010 FIFA World Cup held at Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg. The Chief Administrator of the United Nations was welcomed at the air force base by the Deputy Director General of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Ambassador Sonto Kudjoe.

Ambassador Kudjoe said: ‘Feel it, it is here! As a host country, we had to be prepared to accommodate our visitors and safeguard our stadiums. The SANDF has done well and I am impressed with the Waterkloof military base. South Africa has indeed set a good example for the rest of the continent.’

The base is home to transport aircraft, and is at present hosting two types of fighter aircraft of Air Force Base Makhado, namely the Gripen and the Hawk. The two squadrons flew in to be centrally positioned during the FIFA World Cup. The base will be used for both air transport and air defence over this period.

The SA Air Force will safeguard stadiums and airspace in support of the Police, the Department of Agriculture and the South African Revenue Services during this history-making event. The Government has given it the mandate to ensure the safest and most memorable FIFA World Cup ever.

The Officer Commanding Air Force Base Waterkloof, Brig Gen Tebogo Madumane, said he was proud to be entrusted with the task and directly involved in making the World Cup a success. He proudly told Ad Astra that he was glad to be alive at a time like this, because it might never happen again.

Feel it, it is here! As a host country, we had to be prepared to accommodate our visitors and safeguard our stadiums.

The President of Congo Brazzaville, Mr Dennis Sassou-Nguesso, at Air Force Base Waterkloof on 10 June 2010. He is accompanied by Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans.