SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIER

First military Ombud
SA SOLDIER
The official monthly magazine of the SA Department of Defence

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Although all possible care is taken with articles, the editorial staff cannot take any responsibility for lost articles and photographs.

REPRODUCTION, PRINTING & DISTRIBUTION:
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10 Atlas Road
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email: nirans@shereno.co.za

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2005 - Winner of the Government Communicator of the Year Award (GCIS).
2005 - Winner of the National Ubungcweti 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 their own and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of Defence (DOD). Acceptance and publication of advertorial and advertising matter in SA SOLDIER do 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: South Africa’s first Military Ombud, Lt Gen (Ret) Temba Matanzima, at the swearing-in ceremony. (Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Thaole)
As we are celebrating Youth Day on 16 June this edition in Youth Month is packed with features of remarkable young go-getters. May their stories motivate and encourage other young readers to follow in their footsteps (pages 26 to 34).

Let us unite and take hands in nurturing and educating our future leaders. United we can achieve so much more. Let us be good mentors to those young inquisitive minds.

The Department made a giant leap in the right direction to safeguard the rights of all SANDF members and military veterans when South Africa’s first Military Ombud was recently sworn in. Read all about this milestone on pages 16 and 17.

Public Service Act Personnel should not be neglected as they form an integral part of the Department of Defence and the SA National Defence Force and their invaluable support, assistance and strength have a positive impact on the effective functioning of the Department. As a result, 23 June (Public Service Day) is reserved to celebrate their contributions. This day honours all Public Service Act Personnel and encourages young people to pursue careers in the Department of Defence and the public sector at large. A big thank-you to all Public Service Act Personnel – keep up the good work!

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

* Translation to Afrikaans by Mr Eugene Muller.
Financial misconduct, fruitless and wasteful expenditure can bring the National Defence Force to a halt!

“Prevention of Irregular and Fruitless Expenditure: Starts with me”
I am privileged to share my thoughts on how the SA Navy has impacted my life and what I have given back. Today, as a young 23-year-old man, I am proud to serve my time in an organisation that is serving the people of our nation, an organisation that has reached out to our fellow African countries torn by armed conflict and political instability. Our Navy has given them hope for a better tomorrow.

I joined the SA Navy as a young 18-year-old and completed my basic military training in June 2008. It became evident to me that in serving my community, my people were a calling and when that calling came to me, I was proud to answer.

We have the most dedicated people and I witnessed the immense change in the lives of my friends and colleagues who are from tough backgrounds. This has kept me feet grounded and left me deeply humbled because they have been given a second chance in life. That is simply remarkable.

One great man once said to me: “Be the best Able Seaman you can, be the best Leading Seaman you can be and ultimately you will benefit society and our organisation”. I have been challenged to further my knowledge and accommodate different opinions and aspects about the military and the SA Navy and have been studying for a degree in Political Science.

The SA Navy and our country are being challenged in institutions where young people are looking for guidance, seeking inspiration and yearning for leadership. Hence, as young people we need to be responsible and advise each other in the way to do the right things in life and have a strong foundation of respect and obedience to our elders. We will be a better SA Navy and a stronger nation at large as a result.

Lastly, in my researches and conversations with people, it has been proved to me that leadership is a sacred duty entrusted to an individual chosen by the people on the basis of trust. It is an obligation to honour that trust even if it’s one’s life. 

Leading Seaman A.B. Vena, Simon’s Town
SUPPLIERS’ EVENING

“We have got real people in our unit, not ‘dummy’ soldiers. These people are someone’s sisters or brothers, someone’s wives or husbands, someone’s parents or children. Therefore we need nutritious food to serve to our members. Not rotten food. Our core business is to fight.” These were the opening words uttered by Sg t Ricky Pietersen, 4 SA Infantry Battalion (4 SAI Bn) Procurement Officer, on the Suppliers’ Evening recently held at 4 SAI Bn.

A very careful reader can detect some venom in the above statement: “Before you shoot her, let me remind you of the Latin American saying: “In the military business we must get our products to our members on a regular basis. We rely on a dependable service from suppliers like you to help us keep our schedule and satisfy our members. We want you to know that we appreciate your efforts and look forward to continuing our business relationship.” These were the words of the Officer Commanding 4 SAI Bn, Lt Col W.L. Madikoto, that allayed the fears of the suppliers that even though the unit was not actually happy with their services, the unit was not fighting with the suppliers.

In driving the point home 4 SAI Bn called in the expertise of Capt G. Borcherds, our unit dietician, who in her wisdom explained the Dietary Reference Intake – a guideline made up of tables and charts for all nutrients categorised by age and gender, used worldwide to calculate daily nutritional recommendations for dietary planning - approved by our Department of Health and adopted by the Surgeon General. It informs dieticians about the balanced diet that our soldiers should follow. She also explained the South African Food Based Dietary Guideline – the guideline that aims to encourage people to change their diet by increasing the variety of foods eaten and thus consume a variety of nutrients and vitamins contained in different foods - that should be used to guide our people to change to a balanced diet. Lt M.E. Semono, email

THE BRAND SANDF

It was interesting to see the SANDF marking the official opening of the Rand Show at Nasrec. The SANDF members, including the Minister, were in attendance. What I keep asking myself is whether the SANDF is a brand or has it become one? With the wisdom of hindsight one could not have guessed how the SANDF had become a brand. Brands have personality distinct from employees; a brand to stand the test of time is for a brand or brand name to grow its personality.

Brands are renamed to adapt to current demands, witness how brands have evolved over the years. The brand SANDF repositioned and asserted itself in 1994. The members of the SANDF must cushion this brand by maintaining discipline and doing their job as well as they can. Soldiers know how to look good while doing bad things, but in so doing they dent the corporate image of the SANDF.

We should find out what works and stay true to it. Committed servants grow the reputation of a brand. There is an old saying in America: Old buildings, politicians and whores all get respect if they stick around long enough”. It takes years to grow a brand but it takes one poor judgement to erode the good image gained. At the Rand Show the public got to know that the SANDF has four Services and many career opportunities.

It is important for a soldier to embrace the vision and mission of the organisation. When that is achieved this brand has succeeded in inspiring confidence in the South African public.

In the organisation we accommodate all inclinations. Our undertaking of support to this brand is unwavering because it has been home to us for years. Support includes influencing good behaviour, but it is not limited to behaviour in the organisation, it also extends to behaviour outside the organisation, which is most important. Capt G.C. Kganyago, LEGSATO Thaba Tshwane

FIVE FACTS ABOUT LIFE

F: FOCUS is what you need so that you will always conquer difficult situations.

A: ACTION must be your priority because the moment you stop acting in tough situations is the moment you will begin to drown in your problems, which will automatically hinder your focus.

C: HAVE CONTROL over what is trying to frustrate you because if you lose control, ultimately your action will be a burden and you will not enjoy living, which will lead you to commit suicide or cause havoc to everyone who is around you.

T: TALK to relevant people who have control over their lives because they will teach how to conquer life in tough situations and will show you the direction rather than judge you because of your condition.

S: SOLUTION is the ever available word for every problem in life. Stop crying as if you are the only one who has a problem in life. Search for the way out and if you cannot get one, do the following.

Seek God and tell him the reality of your frustration for He knows everything about you, even the way out for your situation. I pray for you that you get restored in your marriage, physical health, emotions, finances and your peace as well in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Remember you can win if you don’t quit! Lt S. Nzama, Tempe

JUNE 2012
PSAP - “SLAVERY” IN THE SANDF

I was so thrilled when I received a call that I had landed a job in the SA Army that I could not wait to assume my new duties, but only three years later my soul is dead, my daily job a misery. Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) in the SANDF are seen more as slaves than employees. PSAP are expected to do all the heavy and dirty jobs, but are the least paid members of the SANDF. As a PSAP you must get used to being called a civilian who knows nothing and someone who does not add value to the SANDF. This is said by both senior and junior uniformed members. According to the South African Labour Law a workplace should provide members with the opportunity to socialise and participate in sports to keep their minds alert and their bodies healthy, but in the SANDF it only applies to uniformed members, not PSAP. PSAP are expected to be in their offices until knock-off time, which to me is emotionally damaging and lowers the morale of non-uniformed members. PSAP as the less paid members of the Department are still expected to travel more that 200 km a day to get to their workplaces and pay more that R2 000 for accommodation to be near their workplace whereas soldiers have the privilege of accommodation in military bases, but they abuse this privilege by sub-letting these houses to outsiders or letting in their friends, relatives, girlfriends and boyfriends who do not work for the Department and neither benefit nor add value to the Department.

As a PSAP member I no longer feel like part and parcel of this Department that I so loved and could not wait to work for.

BSJ, Army Support Base Limpopo

RATHER ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR COUNTRY

It is true that the reason for the existence of the SANDF is to protect and defend the sovereignty of RSA. It is also very true that the SANDF is not the law enforcement agency of the RSA, just as it is very true that the SANDF is the RSA’s last line of defence. Hence you hear communities yelling to their government leaders the world over that they should call in the defence force when everything else fails.

So when 4 SA Infantry Battalion (4 SAI Bn) came up with the idea of contributing positively to the community of Middelburg in Mpumalanga, it was something unexpected for the military personnel, in particular those in uniform. Well believe it, because it is true.

It all started with one learner fainting at school in Mhluzi Township near Middelburg due to hunger. After more information was obtained as to the circumstances that led to 4 SAI Bn members under the leadership of Sgt Mandla Khambule took it upon themselves to collect money so as to ease the pain of the girl’s family. Some sponsors came on board and thus the Siyabasiza Welfare Initiative was born.

4 SAI Bn members replaced the R4’s and the bombs with humanity to ensure that South Africa’s most vulnerable and needy citizens did not need to fend for themselves. To cut a long story short, today as we speak, the girl’s mother, who sadly passed away on the day the girl fainted, was buried by the Sibasiyaza Welfare Initiative. A house was built and donated to the girl and her sibling after the passing away of their beloved mother.

So I assume that you, the reader of SA Soldier, will agree with me when I say that it was fitting for the Siyabasiza Welfare Initiative to issue 4 SAI Bn with a certificate for a ceremony held in Mhluzi township on 22 February 2012. The Mayor of Steve Tshwete Municipality, Mr M. Masina, said: “Actualisation is the most important part. Let us all learn from Siyabasiza.” He was the guest speaker for the day, and referred to the materialising of Siyabasiza projects. He added: “After the President (Mr Jacob Zuma) has spoken, people will say: ‘Ukhulumile umungameli’, which means: the President has spoken, but actualisation of what the President says is the most important part.”

Shelving his prepared speech, the Mayor quoted from the Holy Bible (James 5:3): “The gold and silver deposited upon you is corroded because you are using them selfishly”.

Lt M.E. Semono, email
A DEDICATED MEMBER WHO LOVED HER WORK

Saying goodbye is part of the human experience that one encounters every day, sometimes with great emotion. The Professional Medical Scheme Administration held a farewell party for one of its members, Ms Paula von Wielligh, in Centurion on 30 March 2012. Ms Von Wielligh worked with the South African National Defence Force for more than 20 years. One of her duties was to ensure that members of the SANDF receive spectacles. It was a privilege for SANDF members to work with a committed person like her. Her love and support will always be fondly remembered in good times and as encouragement in bad. Mr Johan Crouse, the Managing Executive of the Regular Force Medical Continuation Fund (the division of the Professional Medical Scheme Administration), presented Ms Von Wielligh with a copy of the book “The Fourth Dimension” from the South African Military Health Service. He described her as one of the hardest workers he had ever come across, and a dedicated member who loved her work. Ms Febrine Nokeng, who spoke on behalf of all her colleagues, described her as someone who had a good sense of humour and was friendly, and even if she was sick she would not show it because she was forever smiling. She said all her colleagues would miss her and always remember her for the good work she had done. It was a sad moment for Ms Von Wielligh because she was leaving the people she knew most of her life. She thanked her colleagues for all the great opportunities they had given her as an employee at the Professional Medical Scheme Administration, and said she had enjoyed working with and learning from them over two decades, but she was ready to move on to the next phase of her life. She thanked them for opportunities of professionalism and personal development that they had provided over the years. She appreciated the support during her tenure with the company and offered her assistance whenever needed.

LT Palesa Majavu, Pretoria

NATION CHANGERS

Those who spend their lives in the service of God are always nation changers in God’s eyes. Regardless of how hard or easy the task at hand is they consistently seek to finish what needs to be done by adapting their talents accordingly. To be a nation changer you need to be diligent in executing your assignments, and speak and act to display moral character. In a changing world the greater the sacrifice one makes the greater the difference one makes. Nation changers live a life worth imitating. They never think they know it all or that they must do anything heroic all by themselves. They are persistent in their pursuit of all things to please God. They do not take to heart the personally downgrading opinions of others. They admire and preserve God’s creation. Nation changers pursue their vision of excellence and don’t let personal inadequacies stand in the way of obeying God’s call. Nation changers endure and overcome life’s tragedies so that their experience serves as a guide to the nation. A nation changer does whatever is necessary to get God’s truth to as many people as possible and is willing to give up his or her personal desires and private life for the common good. To be a nation changer you seek God’s help and guidance in living your life. Refuse to be associated or work in jobs that could be construed as ungodly. A nation changer encourages rather than discourages. Nation changers are faithful in taking steps to develop a godly character. They give a new face and meaning to things. If you want to be a nation changer, you should continuously focus on what is important and positive in life. Give a nation a new way to communicate. Be willing to give up your life. Give beauty to the nation. Be a person who knows the value of prayer. Your dream should inspire the entire nation. Educate the nation. Fight for union. Help bring an end to poverty. Have a compassionate heart. Live a peaceful, productive life and give 100% of your energy in everything you do. Live a happy and fulfilling life. Be influential to the nation. Bring light to those in darkness. Do good even in bad times. Be a voice of truth. Love the unloved. Save those who are hungry. Rise to lead in every situation presented to you. Be passionate about the well-being of your society, whether socially or psychologically. That is the mark of a nation changer. Contribute to the transformation and renewal of society.

Thandiwe Ndinisa, Managing Director and Chief Editor: Thandiwe Christian Magazine (TCM)

PASSIONATE COLLECTOR

As an ex-parachutist I am collecting parachute wings, badges and patches from all over the world. If possible, please publish my name, email address and hobby in your magazine. I should like to enter into correspondence with South African collectors that have the same interest as myself. I am crazy about it.

Col C.H. Wójciik, chester-commando@email.cz

Letters to the editor
The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has the constitutional mandate to perform duties related to national security, maintaining internal order and engaging in peace support operations through deployments outside South Africa as reflected in policy documents such as the Defence Act 42 of 2002, the White Paper on Defence of 1996 and the Defence Review of 1998.

The Defence Review of 1998 outlined that with the advent of democracy South Africa had moved from an isolationist position to one of engagement in the international sphere and to participation in regional, continental and international peace initiatives. This has led, eventually, to South Africa’s involvement in multinational peace support operations. South Africa also pursues peaceful relations with other states and will seek a high level of political, economic and military co-operation with Southern African states in particular.

After decades of isolation, South Africa has been welcomed back into the international community and has returned to a host of regional and international organisations. The most important of these are the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The Defence Review of 1998 further stated that as a fully-fledged member of the international community, South Africa would fulfil its responsibility to participate in international peace support operations. However, such an engagement is only possible if certain conditions are met, one being that operations have to be authorised by the United Nations Security Council.

The peace support operations indicated in the White Paper on Defence of 1996 involve peacekeeping, including military operations undertaken without resort to force and with the consent of the major parties to a dispute in order to monitor and facilitate the implementation of a peace agreement; and Peace Enforcement,
Insight

Our soldiers patrolling the Great Lakes region.

which entails the application or threat of force, pursuant to international authorisation, in order to compel compliance with resolutions or sanctions designed to maintain or restore peace and order.

A number of war-torn countries have been visited by the SANDF as part of its effort to fulfil its organisational mandate, yet the South African public does not know why these peacekeeping operations are necessary. The Green Paper on South African Foreign Policy states that security issues fall within the field of foreign policy and international relations where they affect relations between states and influence the promotion of the national interests of countries in the international sphere.

Moreover, they extend much farther than defence matters. In recent years new dimensions have become increasingly important in international security, including regional conflict resolution, peacekeeping, drug trafficking, illegal arms trading, non-proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, migration and refugees.

Interaction with the international community in the area of agricultural research, for example, should automatically inspire South African role-players to consider such actions to the benefit of the continent. Conflict prevention and peacemaking are of substantial concern to South Africa and preventive diplomacy has become an essential and fundamental consideration in the international context for political leaders and diplomats.

The Defence Review 2012 currently seeks to address the challenges of underdevelopment, poverty, promoting global equity, social justice, working with countries of the North to develop an effective partnership for a better world, and strengthening the multilateral system. The struggle for a better life in South Africa is intertwined with the pursuit of a better Africa in a better world.

It further states that regional and continental integration is the foundation for Africa's socio-economic development. South Africa must continue to support regional and continental processes by responding to and resolving crises, strengthening regional integration, significantly increasing intra-African trade, and championing sustainable development and opportunities in Africa.

SANDF participation at the Freedom Day celebrations

By Mr Kgabo Mashamaite
Photos: Mr Frans Setlau

Millions of South Africans witnessed the military professionalism and precision displayed by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) during the parade on Freedom Day, 27 April 2012, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The SANDF provided the guard of honour to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Jacob Zuma, performed the National Anthem and fired a 21 gun salute. Two Oryx helicopters of the SA Air Force performed a fly-past dragging the National Flag and the SANDF Flag.

Next followed a performance by a massed band consisting of the National Ceremonial Guard Band, the SA Air Force Band and the SA Military Health Service Band under the Baton of Maj General Seekola.

The proceedings were capped by a breathtaking air display led by a Turbo Dakota from 35 Squadron (AFB Ysterplaat) in formation with the Silver Falcon Team from AFB Langebaan. Then followed a display at supersonic speed by five Hawk lead-in fighter jets in formation, travelling at a speed greater than sound from north to south, followed by the solo run of a Gripen fighter jet from AFB Makhado.

The breathtaking parade by the SANDF was followed by an array of cultural acts to demonstrate the diversity of the citizens of this country. The spectators were also treated to musical items rendered by various artists. During his address, President Zuma said that the event was significant for all South Africans as it was the occasion to help the nation.
A breathtaking air display led by the SA Air Force Turbo Dakota from 35 Squadron in formation with the Silver Falcon Team on Freedom Day.

President Zuma said: "On the 27th of April we celebrate how we buried colonial oppression, racism, apartheid and hatred when we cast our votes together for the first time in 1994. It has been a short but meaningful road from a pariah state to a peaceful, stable, vibrant, non-racial, non-sexist democratic country that is working to achieve prosperity for all."

The event was aimed at celebrating 18 years of democracy.
May 2012 was indeed a great day for the Department of Defence and Military Veterans as the welfare of the SANDF continued to take priority in the Budget Vote of the Minister. This was stated in the 4th budget speech by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, which she delivered in Parliament’s Old Assembly in Cape Town.

The day was not only dedicated to the defence budget speech, but was an opportunity for Minister Sisulu to inform the parliamentarians and South African citizens about the progress she had made thus far as the Minister and to introduce some new developments and future plans. Minister Sisulu said: “The first commitment I made to the SA National Defence Force on assumption of duty as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans was the creation of a new dispensation that would ensure a better life for our soldiers. Today I will report that the dispensation is in place.”

She hastened to introduce five young “stars” who had distinguished themselves as firsts in their own areas, namely Capt Nandi Zama, the first female aircraft Commander on the CASA 212 to be a display pilot. She is also the first female Commander to be deployed operationally beyond our borders; Lt Tessa du Toit, the first female Navigator on Hawks, who is also the first female navigator on the SA Air Force fighter aircraft; Lt Tiro Tsotetsi, the first person in the history of the SA Air Force to be awarded all four floating trophies at a Wings Parade graduation for the SA Air Force’s Basic Flying Training Course; Maj Catherine Labuschagne, the first female Gripen fighter jet pilot in the world; and Cdr Handsome Matsane, the first black Submarine Commander.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, delivering her 2012 budget speech in Parliament’s Old Assembly, with the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, next to her. Behind them are Ms Hlengiwe Mgabadeli (left) and Ms Mapule Veronica Mafolo, both members of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence.

The Budget

The Minister mentioned that the SANDF needed more money and that budget cuts were making it hard for the Department to execute its constitutional mandate. Taking over the responsibility of border patrol from the South African Police Service (SAPS) places a further financial burden on an already “stretched” defence budget. The Minister explained: “This requires that we continue to seek to achieve higher levels of efficiency in all our operations and more precise targeting towards the achievement of our key priorities. While this is the case, it is also important to emphasise that...”
the defence budget cannot afford to take further cuts, thereby shrinking the proportion of the gross domestic product (GDP) to levels lower than the current low levels of 1.2% of GDP, as this will impact negatively on our readiness. The current budget allocation for the 2012/13 financial year is R37.5 billion, up from last year’s adjusted allocation. It is expected to grow to R39.9 billion in 2013/14 by 6.5% and reach R42.332.1 billion in 2014/15, up by 6%. Changes to the baseline over the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) period include R749.2 million for borderline control, R23 million for the establishment of the Office of the Military Ombud and R600 million for the completion of the strategic defence procurement programme.”

National Youth Service

Following her 2010 budget statement in which she told Parliament about the long-standing policy directive to develop a National Youth Service (NYS) which would provide support for the youth whose normal social development, skills and competence development as well as the development of national pride, loyalty and patriotism were disrupted by successive apartheid regimes. In her 2012 budget speech she announced that she had decided to provide leadership for the development of an NYS as a legally constituted and regulated non-militaristic youth development service, which would collaborate and co-operate with all public and private institutions committed to youth skills and competences development. The NYS is intended to play a key role in dealing with the consequences of youth unemployment and contribute to the national goal of poverty eradication. Twenty thousand unemployed youth would be turned into disciplined and empowered young people through the NYS. The service will not offer training in military engagement, but will draw on the potential of military training to promote discipline, self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging to the national community.

Improving the working and living conditions of soldiers

Decisions that would come into effect in the next financial year will change the lives of soldiers for the better.

Salaries of soldiers will be adjusted to recognise years of service, which will de-link salaries from rank. All children of SANDF members between the ages of three months to five years will be taken care of by the DOD within the existing framework of free primary school care for deployed soldiers. Every base and every facility will have to provide creches or pre-schools.

Every soldier will be able to convert his training into academic qualifications. The SANDF’s training programme would be aligned with the requirements of the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) so that the total of courses undertaken by soldiers would qualify as commensurate tertiary qualifications. Provision of high quality, reliable and right-sized accommodation for soldiers would be introduced and all SANDF living quarters will be upgraded to improve the living conditions of soldiers at all bases.

A housing allowance scheme will be tailor-made to suit the organisational uniqueness of the SANDF and a housing subsidy scheme will be investigated and implemented. A housing guarantee will be provided for all members applying to purchase property to the value of 20% of the home loan. No soldier should ever again retire without a house and the asset it provides. Essentially every soldier must be enabled to have a house while in service and by their retirement they should own a decent house.

Concluding her speech, the Minister announced that a non-pensionable and non-recurrent once-off appreciation allowance would be paid to deserving members of the Department of Defence in May 2012.
Lt Gen (Ret) Temba Matanzima was sworn in as South Africa’s first Military Ombud at the Thaba Tshwane Sports Hall in Pretoria on 14 May 2012.

The purpose of the military ombud is to safeguard the rights of all members of the SANDF and military veterans by allowing individuals to raise their complaints or concerns when they have been treated improperly or unfairly.

As the military ombud, Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima will independently investigate complaints lodged in writing regarding, ie conditions of service. However, the military ombud may refuse to investigate a complaint if the investigation is likely to undermine the channels of command.

The Public Protector, Adv Thuli Madonsela, said her office had made a significant contribution to the drafting of the Ombud Bill before it was approved. She urged Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima not to hesitate to make objective decisions against the SANDF. Adv Madonsela said: “Being a member of the family, do not treat the military community as a mafia. In the mafia, if you are a member of the family, you do not make decisions against family. Family is always right in the mafia.”

She added that she had recommended to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, that she appoint a person associated with military
culture and practice to handle complaints from the military.

The Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, said that the Military Ombud could address or take actions on his own initiative in any matter that comes to his attention. He said that he would not be investigating matters raised in the media or on other platforms. He emphasised that the military ombud’s brief was to investigate all complaints raised internally by members of the SANDF, but could not investigate a complaint relating to the manner in which a military judge performed his or her functions as a judge.

Minister Sisulu highlighted that South Africa’s democracy and citizens’ awareness of their right to seek recourse concerning grievances had continued to gain strength since 1994. She said that the launch of the Military Ombud’s Office was a remarkable event for the National Defence Force and mentioned that the SANDF had changed substantially and today soldiers have a greater sense of their right to recourse through grievance procedures.

She added: “The Military Ombud is a soldier’s appeal office in terms of internal military grievance procedures. It is an essential ingredient in the pursuit of a systematic approach to a democratic rights-based military culture.”

In his acceptance speech, Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima pledged that complaints raised within the SANDF would be investigated impartially without fear, favour or prejudice. Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima said: “This office is not to be feared or perceived as a threat to the National Defence Force, but should exist as an example of good governance and accountability. It is an office that will empower members of the SANDF to direct their grievances, using proper channels.”
French Defence delegation visits SA Army Headquarters

Article and photos by Capt Hamilton Ngubane, SA Army Corporate Communication

Maj Gen Lungile Yam, the General Officer Commanding SA Army Infantry Formation, who was acting on behalf of the Chief of the SA Army, received a French delegation led by Maj Gen Jean Jacquez Bart, which was paying a courtesy call on the office of the Chief of SA Army in Pretoria on 3 April 2012.

Maj Gen Bart’s visit was aimed at facilitating RSA-French military relations and forming an understanding of all the issues and developments on African missions. With him was a representative of the French Head of African Military Affairs, Col Youet Metayer, whose task was to facilitate French military relations with the African region. One of their tasks is to act as a watchdog unit for French Defence on African military affairs and to ensure French participation in all exercises. The latter is an initiative of the RSA-France Defence Committee (DEFCOM) with the aim of expanding military relations with South Africa and other countries in the region.

Both Maj Gen Yam and Maj Gen Bart engaged in discussions with their representatives on aspects such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET), African Contingent Training and Assistance (ACOTA) and issues pertaining to exercises, general training and programmes in which France has been and continues to be involved. Maj Gen Yam expressed his gratitude for Maj Gen Bart’s visit to the SA Army Headquarters and thanked the French Defence Attaché for arranging such a delightful visit.

The inter-forces relations between South Africa and France benefited both parties in that military personnel from both armies were afforded the opportunity to make use of various exchange programmes and others have participated in numerous exercises that were planned to exchange knowledge and equip one another for landward operations.

In his address, Maj Gen Bart emphasised the importance of maintaining military relations with South Africa and stressed that his forces have learned and continue to learn from SA Army operations and courses. Maj Gen Bart’s visit follows numerous interactive dialogues that were set in motion by the previous RSA-France DEFCOM in 2008, following a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the RSA-France DEFCOM to remove obstacles that prevent the two armies from attending to their core functions.
SANDF intensifies war against rhino poaching

By Lt Col Frans Pale, SO1 Operational Communication
Photos: Sgt Morris Nkobo

Members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) continue to have more successes in the fight against rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park as they operate in support of the South African National (SAN) Parks.

The extent of the success in the fight against rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park is marked by a drastic rise in the arrest of the number of poachers from three to 37 between January 2012 and mid-May 2012, while the number of rhinos poached during the same period has declined from 17 to seven.

Among the weapons recovered during these arrests were a .375 hunting rifle, a .303 hunting rifle, ten .375 rounds, five .303 rounds, two axes and a butcher’s knife.

According to Col Patrick Patekile Sigetye, the Commander of Operation HORIZON of the SANDF based in Sand River in the Kruger National Park, the successes are due to daily joint planning by the SANDF, the SAPS and the SAN Parks. Col Sigetye added that the SANDF force levels commissioned by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, are doing a good job on the ground as they ensure that there is no illegal border crossing or rhino poaching.

Although the primary task of the SANDF members is to conduct border safeguarding, rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park required the SANDF to work in support of the SAN Parks to deal with the poaching of our natural resource. Col Sigetye called on his men and women in uniform to maintain a high standard of discipline during the operation. He said: “You must remain committed and focus to achieve good results in the fight against rhino poaching.”

Turning to the South African public regarding their contribution to the anti-poaching war, Col Sigetye said all efforts to stop rhino poaching should include public awareness campaigns and access to toll free numbers for the public to report rhino poaching activities.

According to Col Sigetye, rhino poaching impacts negatively on the economy of the country in a variety of ways, for example it adversely affects the tourism industry and deprives South Africans of their heritage.
nother great has ever been achieved except by those who dare believe that something inside them is superior to their circumstances.

On a hot Friday morning (11 May 2012) I set off to meet CO Nompumelelo Magagula (24). As she walks into the office her face lightens up with the same beauty and persona she was known for when she was a Pharmacy Assistant at 1 Military Hospital.

She politely shakes my hand, smiles and greets with a firm handshake as she sits down. “It’s a sunny day,” she says as if almost shy.

She smiles again as I complement her on her beauty. “Thank you, I guess smiling and having a positive outlook on life keeps me beautiful.”

Nompumelelo was born in Phalaborwa in Limpopo on 7 November 1987. She is the oldest of six children of S Sgt Cynthia Magagula who is based at 1 Construction Regiment in Dunnottar. Her father passed away in 1999 when she was 12 years old.

After completing her primary school education at Bordeaux Primary in Randburg, she proceeded to Mondeor High, south of Johannesburg, and matriculated in 2006. She joined the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) in 2007 under the Military Skills Development System (MSDS). After completing her basic military training, she worked as a Pharmacy Assistant at 1 Military Hospital.

As a strong-willed person she applied for a study bursary (for studying at State expense) in 2009 and enrolled at the University of Pretoria in 2010 for a Bachelor in Clinical Medical Practice.

I look at this phenomenal young lady and think: she is so comfortable talking about herself. Nothing unsettles her, and with the same smile she said: “There is a giant asleep within everyone; when the giant awakens, miracles happen. With a vision in mind, what seemed far in the distance is only a thought away”.

She quotes Dr Nelson Mandela: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world”.

CO Magagula entered the Miss Earth South Africa Pageant in association with Consol and was chosen as a regional finalist for Gauteng. She says that Miss Earth South Africa is more than just beauty on the surface. It is a leadership development project.

CO Magagula says that climate change is no longer a speculation, but a reality. It does not only affect our living environment, but also directly impacts on the general health of the population by bringing with it diseases such as malaria, cholera, etc. She adds that increasing water stress, waste collection, sanitation, blocked and overflowing sewers and densely populated settlements lead to many health, environmental and human dignity challenges and result in unacceptable pollution of the environment.

Asked what she thought would be a sustainable solution to solving the climate change problem, she said: “Education, knowledge and capacity development. Providing people with the required knowledge and skills within which to better manage natural resources and preserve ecosystems. We need to become ever more environmentally responsible and friendly. Planting trees and recycling initiatives have become more important.”

She added that it was necessary to develop and distribute educational and awareness raising campaigns on waste minimisation and recycle items for communities, schools, industries and businesses.

In conclusion she gave the following “green” tips: To save energy choose a laptop over a desktop; it consumes five times less electricity. Turn off your lights and appliances in unused rooms. Buy fresh foods instead of frozen ones; frozen foods use ten times more energy to produce.

Save water by capturing rain water and use it to irrigate your garden. Repair leaks and dripping taps. Choose a shower instead of a bath; an average bath uses about 160 litres of water, whereas if you have a five minute shower it only uses about 60 litres.

Always try to make a conscious effort to separate and recycle glass, plastic, paper and biodegradable products in your home and workplace.
The Force That Cares.
It is common practice for new members who intend joining the SA National Defence Force to undergo psychometric tests. Have you ever given a thought to the person(s) running the process? Members of the Military Psychological Institute (MPI) facilitate the process.

One of those members is a young and capable Capt Danille Arendse. This 25-year-old psychologist strives to improve the standards of the organisation by giving her best in whatever she does. Having been introduced to the military as a research student, Capt Arendse identified her opportunity to fine-tune her skills within the organisation after she had previously been an intern at the MPI.

Born and raised in Durban, she later moved to Worcester in the Western Cape where she completed her matric. As a dynamic and hard-working person, she enrolled for her Bachelor’s degree, followed by Honours and Masters in Psychology at the University of the Western Cape from 2005 to 2009. In 2010 she was an intern student at the MPI where she expanded her skills and gained vast practical experience.

Capable of working under pressure both as a genuine team member and on her own initiative, Capt Arendse finally took the decision to wear the uniform and become a full member of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS). This move took place in July 2011. The discipline and pride that goes with wearing the uniform really motivated and inspired her to learn new things. The military offered her many challenges compared with the civilian sector.

Her future ambitions include obtaining a Doctorate in Psychology.

The military offered this young psychologist many challenges compared with the civilian sector.
Record breaking achievement of the SA Air Force

By Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo: WO2 David Nomthongwana

It was the first time in the history of the SA Air Force that the same student was awarded all four floating trophies during a Wings Parade. As the first student pilot to achieve such a remarkable feat, 2Lt Tiro Tsotetsi was also nominated to attend the Royal Air Force (RAF) Initial Officer Training at the RAF in Cranwell over the period 25 June 2012 to 22 March 2013.

2Lt Tsotetsi explains: “When I was introduced to the world of aviation, I knew I was going to be a pilot when I grew up. There was no plan B, and that bothered my parents a bit because I refused to come up with another plan during my teenage years. But of course they now see the hard work I’ve put in to be an exceptional pilot.”

Born in Vosloorus, a township on the East Rand, 2Lt Tsotetsi was from an early age interested in aircraft as the place lies on the final approach to the OR Tambo International Airport. He said: “A close friend of mine and I would lie down on the ground and start naming the airlines as the planes came in. He knew the airlines well because his dad worked at the OR Tambo International Airport and would sometimes take him to work and teach him all about the various airlines.

During the SA Air Force Wings Parade held on 19 April 2012, 2Lt Tiro Tsotetsi was awarded four trophies, namely the SA Air Force Association Floating Trophy (awarded to the student who showed the most overall improvement on the pilots’ wings course at Central Flying School), the Air Force Board Floating Trophy (awarded to the student who obtained the highest overall percentage during the flying phase of the pilots’ wings course at Central Flying School) and the Inkwazi Floating Trophy (awarded to the student who obtained the highest overall percentage during the pilots’ wings course at Central Flying School).

A jubilant 2Lt Tiro Tsotetsi said: “Joining the SA Air Force was easily the best decision of my life. I was introduced to military aviation by an SA Air Force lieutenant who stayed one house from my home in Freeway Park. I met him in 2008 at the shops where we stayed; he was already in the SA Air Force. The stories he shared with me about military aviation greatly increased my passion for flying. I told him at once I wanted to join the SA Air Force.”

On completion of his matric in 2005 he went on to study IT at Boston College in Germiston so that he could raise funds to start paying for his flying course. After that he enrolled at a flying school at the Rand Airport and started flying the Cherokee, in which he flew about nine hours before joining the SA Air Force in September 2008.

2Lt Tsotetsi said: “I successfully completed a tough selection process and in September 2008 I was told to go to Pretoria to start Basic Military Training, and four years later with four flying awards, I’m living my dream.”
Dog handlers play a key role in keeping South Africa safe

Security at the SA Military Health Service Training Formation has been beefed up with the introduction of patrol dogs in the evening. This was a welcome move as it not only increased the security at the Formation but also allowed Pte Nathen Hendricks and Pte Mpho Mashigo an opportunity to be detached to another unit. These youngsters are the envy of many because while many people are scared of dogs, they instead are passionate about them.

Even as a youngster (he is from Knysna) Pte Hendricks had an underlying passion for dogs, but hardly got an opportunity to express it. Unbeknown to him, he would eventually work with dogs.

The two Privates joined the military through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) last year and did their Basic Military Training in Lephalale. Upon completion of their training the members reported to the Military Veterinary Institute in Potchefstroom, having been inspired to do so after the recruitment drive when they learned about the various professions within the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS).

They described their training as very exciting as they never thought there was a lot to learn about dogs. They were offered seven weeks of training in different modules after which they wrote examinations. The modules offered included safety precautions, the handling of dogs, habits and various indications, the most exciting being night training.

Although very young, the two are happy to be part of the group that makes a difference where ever they are deployed and have often been commended when on duty.

They enjoy being in the company of their animals as they are acquainted to all of them. Although having been bitten several times during training they are happy to finally master the skill of dog handling. The skill acquired is invaluable as the Military Veterinary Institute is the sole training institute that offers this training. With the SANDF having taken back the responsibility of border patrols, members such as these play a pivotal role in ensuring that the country is safe. The SAMHS is proud to produce such members!

**Profile**

Pte Mpho Mashigo, a 23-year-old dog handler in the SA Military Health Service.
A former Military Skills Development System member climbs the corporate ladder

By Lt Col Annelize Rademeyer, SO1 Com SA Army
Photo: S Sgt Nico Jacobs

Capt Happiness Nobela joined the SA Army in January 2005 after hearing about the Military Skills Development System (MSDS).

Capt Nobela matriculated at the Madithame High School in Polokwane in 1999, and to improve her maths and science marks in 2001 and in 2002 she enrolled at the Tshwane University of Technology to obtain a National Diploma in Water Care. In the middle of 2004 she still needed a few subjects to obtain the qualification, but decided to end her studies. She said: “My family was not happy at all.”

She heard about the MSDS through word of mouth and applied. She said: “I tried my luck and was accepted. I was thrilled. I had a fear of history repeating itself, so I had to make use of this opportunity.”

Capt Nobela said: “Basic Military Training was not easy. One learns to adapt and if it was not for teamwork I do not think that we could have been successful.” She was selected to do Junior Leader Training at the SA Army Gymnasium. Thereafter she did the Officers Formative course and was then selected to become a member of the South African Engineer Corps.

She was afforded the opportunity to complete the National Diploma in Water Care in 2006, after which she furthered her studies to obtain the B Tech Degree in Water Care in June 2010. While completing her studies she still managed to undergo functional Corps training and was promoted in rank as well.

Currently she is the PA of the General Officer Commanding SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen Zukile Msi. Capt Nobela has also held posts at both the Operational Construction and Combat Engineer sections at Formation Headquarters.

She is passionate about the topic of water. Capt Nobela said: “Water is an extremely important commodity and no force can operate effectively without a reliable supply of potable water. Water must meet certain basic requirements to make it fit for human consumption or for whatever intended use.

Many water sources contain harmful micro-organisms or other substances in concentrations that make it unfit or unsafe to drink. These organisms and other substances must therefore be removed from the water by means of treatment processes to make it fit for human consumption or other uses.”

Capt Nobela indicated that she appreciated the opportunity the SA Army (SANDF) gave her as a young woman. In her opinion the MSDS has contributed immensely to the development of our country and its youth.
In the past it was generally believed that the bodyguard profession, such as VIP protection or close protection in the military was only for men. However, many people, mainly politicians, actors, singers and businessmen or women are starting to think that female bodyguards may offer a just as good an alternative.

Speaking to Ad Astra magazine recently Cpl Nadia Forbes (23) from Cape Town confirmed that she was one of only two female qualified VIP Protectors in the entire protection service of the SA Air Force. 500 VIP Squadron’s Maggie Rasesemola is the second qualified female bodyguard, and currently serves at Air Force Mobile Deployment Wing.

VIP Protection can be described as measures taken by a trained individual or team to ensure the safety of the VIP/principal on a continuous basis. According to Cpl Forbes, members of the VIP Protection work with heads of state, various political figures and their families, kings, celebrities and high-ranking dignitaries, including individuals who could potentially be in dangerous situations and would like to stay out of harm’s way.

Female bodyguards are not just trained in how to defend clients in their role as protectors, but more importantly how to prevent intentional and unintentional acts of harm and incidents of an embarrassing nature that may occur. Cpl Forbes explained that VIP bodyguards were specialists in pre-operational planning and strategy who utilised protective intelligence and foreknowledge to deal with an impending threat. She said: “We conduct a thorough analysis and investigate such threats.”

Cpl Forbes attributes her relaxed approach to life to her family. She says that she has grown to be what and who she is today because she has been blessed. She said: “My parents and siblings have cultivated so much joy and love in me which I will make use of one day when the time comes for me to start a family.

“Growing up in Mitchell’s Plain was and still is not easy. I attended Duneside Primary, and then went on to complete matric at Spineroad in 2005. I knew that staying at home was not an option, so the following year I started to work part-time as a receptionist for our family doctor, Dr Solly Raja.”

In 2005 she applied to join the SA Air Force. She said that she wanted to be in uniform, and that she knew that she was going to pass the training because “I was always a fit and sporty person from a very young age. After I completed Basic Military Training, I proceeded to do Aviation Ground Protection and then went for the VIP Course. There were no two ways about it, I believed in myself, I refused and ignored all the discouraging words.”

Cpl Forbes is an unabashed football player who has played for the Ysterplaat Women’s Team, and is a fan of hip-hop. She has scooped many awards and accolades for being fit since she joined the SA Air Force. She said she had made it so far because she had an incredible sense of discipline. She added: “Furthermore, I never take life too seriously because no one comes out of it alive anyway. I love playing rugby, and have almost completing my National Diploma in Sport Management. After that I want to become a sport officer.”

Asked about a possible transfer to Air Force VIP Squadron at Mobile Deployment Wing and a possible promotion, she said that she would gladly join the team there next year after the completion of her tertiary studies. She said: “I am paying for my studies and I am proud of what my life has turned out to be in the SA Air Force. I also cannot wait for this year’s Africa Aerospace and Defence Expo; we will be very busy and that is how I like it.”

Maj Gen Tsoku Khumalo, Chief Director Force Preparation, congratulating Cpl Nadia Forbes on her achievements.
Members of the Siyandiza Team (SA Air Force) exposed young people in Warrenton, Magareng district, in the Northern Cape Province recently to aviation awareness and a series of job opportunities in the SA Air Force.

Speaking to Ad Astra, Senior Staff Officer Aviation Awareness, Col Naomi Major, explained that there was a great shortage of scarce skills in the country, particularly in the areas of engineering and piloting. She added that the Department of Defence had established partnerships with various institutions of higher learning and aviation organisations in a bid to introduce young people to the world of aviation. She said the purpose of the exhibition was to expose and stimulate young people’s interest in the SANDF, particularly those in the rural parts of the Northern Cape Province.

Also present at the event was Lt Col Chris Oosthuizen, SO1 Aviation Awareness, who said: “As part of the strategy to deal with the skilled personnel shortage predicament, over 2 000 learners have been asked to participate in an information sharing session. We focused specifically on matriculants from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and students who had been uninformed about the opportunities in the SANDF, especially in the field of aviation.”

Lt Col Oosthuizen said that Siyandiza had a medium to long-term strategy to grow professionals within the aviation field and that this could be achieved through exposure. He added: “Siyandiza is at present hosting its annual Young Falcons Camp, where learners stay at an air force base for a week to be trained and exposed to the military way of life, with extra emphasis on aviation.”

Pilots and other members of the mustering personnel are also invited to the camp to make presentations on their different fields of expertise.

Candidate Officer (CO) Queen Letlhage put many of the learners’ doubts to rest when she said: “Previously, to become a pilot meant that one was likely to encounter dangers just about everyday, but one had the prospect of discovering new worlds and being admired by society and so forth. At present fewer learners are considering taking to the air, which results in a shortage of pilots all over South Africa”.

CO Letlhage lamented the fact that a number of high school learners stop taking maths and science subjects, which are essential for starting a career in aviation. She encouraged young people coming from rural areas to be educated in these subjects since their lack of knowledge and exposure to them contributed to a lack of scarce skills in the country as careers such as aviation required maths and science. CO Letlhage said Siyandiza’s presence at the event was meant to explain in clear terms to interested young people the requirements for joining the SA Air Force.

Speaking to Ad Astra about how she viewed the exhibition, 17-year-old Rapelang Keositse from Warrenton High School, said: “I was not too sure what to expect, but from the minute we arrived, I loved it. The highlight was the aircraft on display. I am just sad that I did not see it land. The educational workshops that we attended were fruitful and I am going to work very hard at my maths and science so that I can also wear the uniform”.

She added that trying on the pilot’s uniform was an exciting experience and she enjoyed the opportunity to test the engine of an aircraft.
Learners pay 5 SA Infantry Battalion a visit

By Lt Vusi Masilela,
Communication Officer 5 SAI Bn

5 SA Infantry Battalion was privileged to be visited by a local school, the Ingula High School. One hundred Grade 11 learners visited the base on 18 April 2012 and another 100 Grade 11 learners the following day. The main purpose of the visit was to introduce the learners to the various career options in the SANDF. The learners were first taken to the pavilion where S Sgt N.E. Mkhulise, the Communication Non-commissioned Officer, explained the importance of education in today’s world. He said that the days were gone when you could quit school after Grade 10 and join the SA Army. These days even a Grade 12 certificate is not enough because there are merits and points involved. He emphasised the importance of working hard at school from day one.

Most of the learners were amazed at the entry requirements and started asking questions that showed how interested they were. They also asked questions about why soldiers were wearing headdresses with different colours, which we clarified for them. They also asked the obvious question about how much soldiers were earning. We explained that it depended on the rank level and the number of years served (experience).

S Sgt Mkhulise also spoke about discipline, which plays such a vital role in the military. He explained that a lack of discipline could even result in members being discharged from the system.

The learners then went to a 16 x 32 m tent where they were shown some of the weapons used by the SA Army. Cpl N.J. Kgatle, Team Leader for the Support Company of the Mortar Platoon, gave each weapon’s statistical data, ranges and capabilities. Stripping and assembling was also done to show how quickly the weapon could be fixed in case of a stoppage. The children asked only one question in this case; where could they buy these weapons? The learners when then taken to the memorial wall where S Sgt Mkhulise explained that it was where the names of the members who had lost their lives while on duty were inscribed. The last item of the day was a soccer game for the learners, using the unit’s sports facilities.

The educator in charge of the learners, Ms D.B. Gasa, thanked the unit members for explaining to the learners about the work of the SANDF. She added that the learners were now more interested in being part of the military family, as previously they had never shown any form of interest.

On behalf of the unit, we deem it necessary to showcase our strength to the community. This in turn generates trust and confidence about the National Defence Force as a whole. Furthermore, recruitment needs to be constant and learners must know what to expect if they decide to join the military family.

Infanteers light up the lives of toddlers

Article and photo by Lt Vusi Masilela, Communication Officer 5 SAI Bn

5 SA Infantry Battalion is constantly building good relations with the community in any way possible by being involved in community activities and school visits. On 13 April 2012 the Officer Commanding 5 SA Infantry Battalion, Lt Col S.T. Hloka, and members of his unit visited Morrestarr Orphanage Home in Ladysmith to spend a couple of hours with the children.

Although the older children were at school, spending time with the younger ones was delightful and interesting. The main purpose was to hand out gifts such as clothes, shoes, and toys. The Officer Commanding expressed his appreciation and admiration for the work that the staff at the home do and offered a hand of friendship to the home. The work to enhance the lives of the children has also encouraged the unit members to play a more significant role in reaching out to the community in any way possible.

The contribution on this day was just the beginning to a more meaningful partnership with a view to raising future leaders, who may one day fill the boots that we are currently wearing. The Officer Commanding emphasised the fact that children are our future, and therefore the inputs by the staff at the home are an indication that they want to raise a nation that is responsible and that appreciates the values that they are taught. Lt Col Hloka said: “Thus, our mandate in co-operation with the Chaplain Services of the SANDF, will continue to support their initiatives and together we can be part of creating new avenues and platforms for our children.”

The Officer Commanding, on behalf of the SA Army Infantry Formation, gave his blessing as the staff at Morrestarr Orphanage Home continued in their quest to give the children a better chance in life. The Chaplain prayed for both the children and the staff to be strengthened in their resolve. After Lt Col Hloka gave his words of thanks and appreciation, the gifts were handed to the children who were so happy to have new toys.
Educating young minds to empower lives

By Bibi Sibanyoni
Photo courtesy of Col Tyson Sillah and Lt Col Moeletsi Nkosi

“South Africa is in the forefront of many things on the African continent, however it is still behind in education. Some other countries’ performance on education is higher than ours and with the matric results fluctuating each year, it is necessary to make a difference in our community by laying a strong foundation of maths and science in the schools.” These were the words of two SANDF officers from Defence Intelligence Division who are passionate about ploughing back into their community.

Col Tyson Sillah, who is a professional teacher, and Lt Col Moeletsi Nkosi, who holds a B Com Degree and has specialised in Accounting, felt the need to make a difference by conducting maths and science classes on Wednesdays and Saturdays at Mandlethu and Zithembeni primary schools in Springs in the Ekurhuleni municipality.

Lt Col Nkosi said: “We have been doing this volunteer work since 2008 as we saw that there was a defeatist attitude towards maths and science in schools and we teamed up with other dedicated people who wanted to alleviate poverty through education. We are teaching Grade 6 to 10 learners and often help out with higher grades if there is a need among Grade 11 and 12 learners.”

Col Sillah affirmed: “It is such an honour to be teaching these children and adding value to their lives. Education is important and we as parents can hold hands with the teachers to empower these learners and make them realise that without education they are lost in this fast world of technology.”

These men have cemented a bond with these children and this has led to their being even more learners. When they started this project they taught only on one day (Saturday) but they saw that there was a great need and with the support of their Generals, they now teach the learners on Wednesdays as well. Lt Col Moeletsi said: “Lt Gen Abel Shilubane, the Chief of Intelligence, allows us time off on sports days (Wednesdays) to go and teach and Brig Gen Piet Thirion, Director Geospatial Information, assists us by donating money to buy learning material for the learners. Brig Gen Thirion believes that with a good foundation of resources our work will be easier.”

These two men wear their uniforms with honour everyday knowing that their contribution in the community is supported by the top management of the Defence Intelligence Division.

The response from the parents is positive, as ten of their learners are in the top 10 in the schools where they conduct classes. This is used as a recruitment drive for the SANDF as they are also going around motivating and educating the community about career opportunities within the SANDF.

With such a dedicated team and the passion that these two soldiers have for their learners, it is evident that they do indeed fly the South African Flag high. Their commitment to ensure that South Africa becomes a better and educated country is clearly seen.

Col Sillah smiles and says: “Even my children at home have come to love the work I do. They have also started attending these Saturday classes to improve their own academic standard. We have missed a lot of chances to become Defence Attachés at work because we think a lot about these children; that’s how fond we have grown of our learners. However, we do hope that when the chance presents itself again we will have played our role in ploughing back to our community.”

Any donations of study material would be warmly appreciated. Please contact Lt Col Moeletsi Nkosi on (012) 312 0513.
The first black group leader of the SA Air Force Band, F Sgt Musa Radebe, believes that just like light chases away darkness, music also has the power to bring individuals closer to life.

He started his music career at the dawn of South Africa’s freedom in late 1993, told Ad Astra recently that his love of music was inspired by various factors abundant in African culture. He pointed out that many of his peers failed to see opportunities that urban cultural music had always offered.

Born in 1978 at Vanderbijlpark in the Sedibeng district, he started his primary school education at Sasolburg Community School.

He said that for him to stay out of trouble he would just spend time with his brothers and looked forward to going to church, the True Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, on Sundays. He said the church was the place where he first became a euphonium player.

F Sgt Radebe later went to Cedar High School. What he remembered was that one afternoon, when he was in Grade 11 he heard the sound of drums coming from one of the classrooms. Something in him came alive and he immediately went around looking for the place where the sound was coming from. He went into a classroom where he discovered Mr Frans Conradie, the music teacher, busy practising.

He asked Mr Conradie whether he could join and the teacher asked him what musical instrument he could play. He told Mr Conradie that he could play three instruments and that he was good at the tonic solfa. He then discovered that Mr Conradie used to be a member of the SA Air Force Band.

This was the start of his lifelong relationship with Mr Conradie. He perfected his craft with the euphonium, the tuba and snare drums, having already begun reading staff notation. He was under Mr Conradie’s tutelage until the latter one day asked him what he wanted to do after completing matric. He pointed out that Mr Conradie believed in him and asked him to think about joining the SA Air Force as the organisation needed a trombone player.

F Sgt Radebe said: “I did not hesitate. I made sure that I went to the auditions where I was given music to practise and then called when I was ready to perform. I passed the audition in January 1999 and the following year, 2000, I got my letter of appointment and went for Basic Military Training.”

His accomplishments are as follows: Musician, Senior Musician, Principal Musician and Chief Musician. He completed his Group Leader exams at the Army Band School of Music at Youngsfield in Cape Town.

In November 2009 he was officially appointed as the first black person to join the band in the history of the SA Air Force and, for him, this was an experience that forced him to confront his shyness, learn to deal with people and be comfortable with constant outings.

In listing his chronology of experiences, F Sgt Radebe said: “My very first flight was to Air Force Base Langebaanweg.” His band was going to perform at a Wings Parade. He remarked that he would never forget his overseas trips that included countries such as South Korea, France and Russia. He said those trips were wonderful and afforded him a lot of life experience.

F Sgt Radebe said: “I cannot imagine doing anything else because music for me is an exciting and inspiring industry. Besides, working with a fantastic team such as the SA Air Force Band, the feeling of having complete control over my destiny and also having the space to dream all make me completely happy and make my working days so enjoyable. I want to become a band master by attending music arranging classes.”
Princess Anne visits Simon’s Town

By Lt Cdr L. Steyn, Acting Officer in Charge Naval Museum
Photo: AB Charity Matjila

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen’s Reign during 2012, members of the Royal family embarked on various goodwill visits worldwide. As one of the most active members of the Royal Family, Queen Elizabeth II’s only daughter, Princess Anne, came to South Africa on a three-day visit that included visits to Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Princess Anne, accompanied by her husband, V Adm Sir Tim Laurence (Ret), and members of the Royal Household, arrived in Simon’s Town on 18 April 2012. The first stopover was the historic Admiralty House, the very same location that saw King George VI (Princess Anne’s Grandfather) and family attend a morning garden party during their tour of South Africa in 1947.

On the arrival of the cavalcade Princess Anne was greeted by Rear Admirals (JG) Koos Louw and Guy Jamieson. Capt (SAN) Donald Phillips and Capt (SAN) Joseph Dlamini, the two aides-de-camp, then escorted Princess Anne to the Admiralty House garden where a Ceremonial Guard of Honour awaited her arrival.

The SA Navy Band played the English National Anthem “God Save the Queen” whereupon a 21-gun salute reverberated over the area. Princess Anne then inspected the Guard of Honour and took some time to converse with some of the members on parade.

The staff of the Admiralty House then served tea and refreshments, after which the Acting Flag Officer Fleet, R Adm (JG) Jamieson, briefed Princess Anne and V Adm Laurence on the current operational activities of the Fleet. Both showed considerable knowledge and interest in the activities of the South African Navy.

The couple then went their separate ways, with V Adm Laurence accompanied by R Adm (JG) Jamieson for a tour of the historical Naval Dockyard, while Princess Anne, escorted by R Adm (JG) Louw, stopped over at the Izivunguvungu Sailing Centre. Princess Anne’s keen involvement in charity work and her love of sailing immediately drew her to the activities of the Izivunguvungu (the Zulu word for “Sudden Strong Wind”). It lived up to its true meaning when a 30-knot south-westerly posed a serious challenge to the young sailors in the water. The sounds of the Izivunguvungu Brass Band under the guidance of Cdr Mike Oldham entertained all present, while R Adm (JG) Louw briefed Princess Anne on the history and successes of the project.

The Royal party then reunited at the Dido Valley Cemetery for a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the nearby Commonwealth War Graves Memorial. The cemetery contains 77 World War I graves and 106 graves from World War II. Of the World War I casualties, 70 were from the United Kingdom and seven were from South Africa. Of the World War II casualties, 92 were from the United Kingdom and 8 from South Africa. At the conclusion of the wreath-laying ceremony Capt (SAN) Charles Ross (Ret), the South African Secretary of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, escorted Princess Anne to meet several war veterans that attended the ceremony.

Before her departure Princess Anne visited the grave of Ms Emily Roose, who was the nanny of her father, and she laid a posy in remembrance.

Princess Anne, Queen Elizabeth II’s only daughter, inspecting the Guard of Honour in Simon’s Town during her goodwill visit in South Africa.
The Defence Act, the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review need to be reviewed and updated to capture the changing defence role in a developing state and continent. The Defence Review will also identify and establish a framework on the standing of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in the country, region, continent and the world in this new changing defence environment.

On 5 May 2012 the Defence Review consultation events were held, which started with a briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Defence. Thereafter the Defence Review Committee proceeded with the consultation process through provincial Imbizos and stakeholder engagements throughout the rest of South Africa. (Thirteen such events are scheduled to take place countrywide before the end of June 2012.)

These engagements will enable the
Defence Review Committee to take into account the views of experts and engage with opinions from a cross-section of South African society to assist it in formulating the short and long-term Defence Policy of South Africa and learning what South Africans expect from their National Defence Force.

It is important to emphasise that the Defence Review Committee was appointed as an independent body to pronounce independently on future defence policy and strategy. The draft 2012 Defence Review is now open for comment and proposals, and the Committee is engaging with the broader South African society to draw on the best possible consensus concerning future defence objectives. Key stakeholders, including the SANDF, partners and communities around the country will be consulted.

The Defence Review Committee met for the first time at the Castle of Good Hope on 13 July 2011, where Minister Sisulu provided it with its mandate and terms of reference with a view to developing an independent perspective on short and long-term defence policy.

The Defence Review Committee has adopted a seven-phase process to meet the mandate given by the Minister. These phases are in brief as follows: Diagnostic and Orientation Process, Definition of Thematic Areas and determination of the Document Architecture, Drafting of the Consultative Document, Document Review and Refinement, Public Engagement on the Consultative Document, Preparation of the Final Document, and Engagement in the Formal Approval Process.

This Defence Review moves significantly beyond the narrow internal focus of the 1998 Defence Review. It unpacks the constitutional mandate, other statutes, South Africa’s international obligations and the work that the Government expects the SANDF to do.

Its departure point is that the SANDF exists to fulfil a very important role in society and it unpacks what this role is, namely five strategic defence goals and fifteen high-level defence tasks.

These broad strategic goals include the Defence and Protection of South Africa, its people and important national interests, the safeguarding of South Africa and its people through aspects such as border safeguarding, supporting the SA Police Service and fulfilling South Africa’s treaty obligations, the Defence contribution to South Africa’s international agenda and the promotion of regional and continental peace and stability, supporting civil authority in times of crisis, need or turmoil, and the Defence contribution to South Africa’s developmental priorities, the civil control over Defence and the accountable utilisation of defence resources.

The Defence Review posits the level of effort required for South Africa to meet these strategic goals and high-level tasks, the core defence capabilities required and provides comprehensive guidelines for the Defence Force design. It is important to note that the Defence Review does not express itself on the Defence Force Design or the Defence Force Structure. The Chief of the SA National Defence Force will develop a blueprint force design and force structure in a subsequent process.

The draft 2012 Defence Review can be viewed at www.sadefencereview2012.org and on Facebook.
Freedom of Entry of Ladysmith Parade

By Mr Kgabo Mashamaite
Photos: WO2 Mathebula Moraile and LS Nkululeko Zulu

In recognition of the role of the South African National Defence Force’s (SANDF) contribution to the rich history and the heritage of Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality unveiled the monument of remembrance with the names of all the SANDF regiments on which the right of entry have been conferred in the past.

On 12 May 2012 the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sindiswa Mfusi, officiated the unveiling of the monument held at the municipal precinct in the town’s central business district.

Councillor Mfusi said: “After witnessing the breathtaking parade which will also add a page to our rich history books, the council has decided to erect a memorial bearing testimony to the many recipients of the freedom of entry to our town. As I stand here, I am humbled by this opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women of our country who perished in many arenas of conflict for the sake of their country. For members of the SANDF, wearing a uniform is a calling and they therefore continue to serve and protect our country with pride, and we will forever be grateful for your endeavours.” She next unveiled the bust, with the Pipe Band from 1 Medical Battalion Group KwaZulu-Natal playing Amazing Grace in the background.

Accepting the token of appreciation from the people of Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality Maj Gen Lindile Yam, General Officer Commanding Infantry Formation, speaking on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, said that the SANDF was touched by the gesture.

Maj Gen Yam said: “We are moved by the honour bestowed on us by the town of Ladysmith and its residents as they recognise the role and the contribution of the SANDF in their rich history. We proudly march along their streets to exercise our entry to the town to which we bring peace and stability. We will not forget the sacrifices made by the fallen citizens of the town over a century ago. The SANDF will also continue to promote the UBUNTU principle in respecting the history of those who perished during the siege of Ladysmith and their ideals, because this is a true reflection of our National Defence Force. The granting of the freedom of entry to all our regiments by this town is humbling and we will be forever grateful to the people of Ladysmith.”

The monuments bear the names of the regiments accorded the freedom of the city. The following regimental forces of the SANDF have marched...
events

SA SOLDIER

through town displaying their arms and colours: the Natal Field Artillery, the Transvaalse Staatsartillerie, the Vrystaatse Artillerie Regiment, Natal Mounted Rifles, Durban Light Infantry, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, 15 Maintenance Unit, 1 Medical Battalion Group, 121 Battalion Group, Natal Carbineers and 5 SA Infantry Battalion.

The Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality has meanwhile added another page to its history by also granting the freedom of entry to the

Duke of Lancaster Regiment, formed through the merger of the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment, the King’s Regiment and the King’s own Royal Border Regiment.

It goes back to the period 2 November 1899 to 27 February 1900 during the Anglo-Boer War and the battlefields around Ladysmith in northern Natal, and the Jameson Raid.

According to the information published on the websites regarding the history of Ladysmith and the siege of Ladysmith, the British infantry were armed with Lee Metford rifles. These were able to fire 10 rounds. But there was no training regime to take advantage of the accuracy and speed of fire of the weapon. Personal skills such as scouting and fieldcraft were little taught. The idea of fire and movement was unknown, with many regiments still going into action in close order, for example General Hart notoriously insisted that his Irish Brigade fight shoulder to shoulder, as if on parade in Aldershot. Short of regular troops, Britain engaged volunteer forces from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand who brought new ideas and more imaginative formations to the battlefield.

The British regular troops lacked imagination and resources. Routine procedures such as effective scouting and camp protection were often neglected. The war was littered with incidents in which British contingents became lost or were ambushed, often unnecessarily, and forced to surrender. The war was followed by a complete reorganisation of the British Army.

The British artillery was a powerful force in the field, underutilised by commanders with little training in the use of modern guns in battle. Pakenham cites Pieters as being the battle in which a British commander, surprisingly Buller, developed a modern form of battlefield tactics: heavy artillery bombardments co-ordinated to permit the infantry to advance under their protection. It was the only occasion that Buller showed any real generalship, and the short spell of inspiration quickly died thereafter.

Accepting the accolade on behalf of the Duke of Lancaster Regiment, Brig Mike Griffiths said: “This is another honour to our perished soldiers whose mortal remains were afforded an eternal rest in your ground. About 106 years ago, the predecessors of the Duke of Lancaster Regiment took part in the Anglo-Boer War on the battlefields of Ladysmith and we are immensely proud of their involvement. We are also humbled by the generosity of the SANDF for allowing our young soldiers to march along in their regiments. This is a unique experience they will always cherish for the rest of their careers. May the souls of our soldiers buried here rest in peace.”

* Information on the siege of Ladysmith was extracted from http://www.british-battles.com2010 and http://www.ladysmithhistory.com/a-to-z/ultimatum/
Airsoft assault at the SA Air Force Museum Warbirds centenary air show

By Maj André Smit, SO1 Policy and General Legal Support: Defence Legal Services Division
Photos: Dr Annël Smit

The Pretoria Military Airsoft Club teamed up with the SA Air Force Museum for the SA Air Force Museum Warbirds Centenary Air Show held at Swartkop on 12 May 2012 by executing a mock battle in front of thousands of spectators.

One of the many noteworthy items at the SA Air Force Museum is an operational Russian SA-9 Strela mobile short-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system. The SA-9 was used as the object of a mock battle in which “special forces” (represented by the Golden Eagles Parachute Team) parachuted onto the SA-9 to secure it. A 14-member strong opposing force made up of civilian friends of the Pretoria Military Airsoft Club (PMAC) was inserted through the museum’s Aerospatiale Puma medium transport helicopter (piloted by Brig Gen (Ret) Piet van Zyl). The opposing forces captured the SA-9 and the “special forces” through an assault, but was then forced to “dig in” as own forces air support (represented by a Vampire donated to the museum by Col R.R. Iyer and the famous P51D “Mustang Sally” privately owned and flown by Mr Menno Parsons) launched sustained air strikes.

The SA Army engineers did an excellent job of creating expertly timed, simulated gun and rocket explosions in the vicinity of the SA-9 as the air strikes were launched by the two aircraft. The crowd was treated to fireballs, smoke and the loud booms of explosions. As the smoke lifted, own forces inserted with an SA Air Force Oryx from 17 Squadron (flown by Maj Stefan King) and the two PMAC “sticks” led by Maj André Smit and F Sgt Frikkie Geyser formed up for an assault to rescue the “special forces” and secure the SA-9.

A final assault was executed (again under cover of smoke grenades and explosions with the compliments of the engineers). The “special forces” were liberated and the opposing forces defeated.

Airsoft is a tactical combat simulation sport that originated in the East Asia. Airsoft weapons look, feel and operate exactly like actual weapons would and almost any existing
firearm (whether vintage, operational or future concept) can be found in an Airsoft version as well. PMAC members use mainly assault rifles, side arms, light machine-guns and sniper rifles. Most Airsoft weapons are electrically energised and mechanically operated to propel a plastic projectile through compressed air in order to simulate bullets being fired. They are referred to as Airsoft Electric Guns (AEGs). However, gas operated versions are also popular on account of the realistic “blowback” action. Whatever the weapons used, eye protection in the form of ballistic goggles is a non-negotiable requirement.

Airsoft is a rapidly growing sport that is played all over the world and in every major centre in South Africa. Games are published on the internet, eg www.airsoftgames.co.za and the last two years have seen a form of “nationals” for Airsoft where regional teams have competed against one another. Airsoft allows the players to engage in a very realistic form of combat simulation and is used by militaries and law enforcement agencies the world over for training purposes.

PMAC was started by F Sgt Geyser and has steadily made its mark in Airsoft in South Africa, having hosted the largest Airsoft game ever in the country on 22 April 2012 with 166 participants. However, PMAC is looking for more members to strengthen the military component of the club and join the sport at Snake Valley (next to the Mobile Deployment Wing) for games on Wednesdays and over weekends. It is hoped that regional SANDF teams can compete against one another in the near future and that an SANDF team may even be entered at the Airsoft nationals that are to be held later in the year.

If you are interested in joining PMAC you can contact Maj André Smit on 072 827 5751, Maj Stefan King on 082 856 6839 or F Sgt Frikkie Geyser on 083 957 3888.

Above: Opposing forces after insertion by the S A Air Force Museum Puma.

Above: Pretoria Military Airsoft Club members being inserted by an Oryx of 17 Squadron.

Above: The famous P51D “Mustang Sally” privately owned and flown by Mr Menno Parsons.

Air strikes on the operational Russian SA-9 Strela mobile short-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, one of the many noteworthy items at the SA Air Force Museum.
Gauteng Signal Unit, a sub-unit of 2 Signal Regiment, which falls under command of SA Army Signal Formation, held a Change of Command Parade at the Thaba Tshwane City Hall on 20 April 2012.

During this prestigious event the outgoing commander of Gauteng Signal Unit, Lt Col Ishmael Jabulani Monthla, handed over command to the new Officer Commanding, Lt Col Shawn Grobler. In his farewell speech Lt Col Monthla mentioned that it was an honour for him to have worked with members of Gauteng Signal Unit and that they must “Gee gas!” (meaning: Give it all they have got).

In closing, he quoted Henry Ford: “Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is a promise and working together is success”. Hereafter a sword, as a symbol of command, was officially handed over to Lt Col Grobler.

Lt Col Grobler was born on 17 November 1973 in Carletonville. He attended school there halfway into Grade 3, whereafter they moved to Randfontein. He matriculated at Randfontein High School in 1991. He joined the Army in 1992 as a national serviceman in Heidelberg. He qualified as a drill and musketry instructor (Corporal) and completed his one-year compulsory service.

He joined the short-term service in 1993. He was a drill and musketry instructor in the School of Signals in Heidelberg from 1993 to 1996. He underwent the Officers Formative course at the SA Army College in 1996. In 1998 he was appointed as SO3 Signals at Group 10 HQ, Montclair, Durban, where he served until 1999. Between 2000 and 2001 he was the network manager of the Regional Service Centre Durban, whereafter he was appointed as the second in command of the service centre.

Lt Col Grobler was the Officer Commanding of the Thaba Tshwane Service Centre from 2002 to 2003, after which he was appointed as the SO2 Operations of the Regional Service Centre Gauteng. In 2005 he became the Acting Officer Commanding Regional Service Centre Gauteng. He then moved to the SO2 Sustainment post at 2 Signal Regiment, where he served until the end of 2007. In 2008 he was appointed as the SO2 and SO1 Operations at 2 Signal Regiment, where he served until his appointment as Officer Commanding Gauteng Signal Unit.

He enjoys all sports, has played Craven Week schools rugby and has provincial and national colours in junior wrestling. He participates in ring contact fighting, in which he has a black belt, and he has qualified as an instructor in the sport. Lt Col Grobler also successfully completed the Comrades Marathon in 2010. He is married to Ms Gayle Grobler and they have a 12-year-old son.

* For more information or enquiries about other events at SA Army Signal Formation please contact Maj Lizette Lombard, SO2 Corporate Communication, at (012) 529 0009 or fax to: (012) 529 0028.
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A new dawn of leadership for JSB Garrison

By Amn Bibi Sibanyoni
Photo: S Sgt Nicolas Jacobs

Brig Gen John Peter Matthews Kobbie took over the reins as the Officer Commanding of JSB Garrison from Brig Gen Amanda Ruziecki during a change of command parade held in Thaba Tshwane on 18 April 2012. As members of the National Ceremonial Guard took their place on the parade ground, the SA Military Health Service Band serenaded the guests, and other generals, senior officials in the Department of Defence, friends and family members came to witness the oath that Brig Gen Kobbie took in accepting a new responsibility in his new post. Brig Gen Ruziecki thanked her former subordinates for the support and hard work they had achieved over the years since she was the Officer Commanding. Brig Gen Ruziecki said: “Over the years this unit has seen very little negative auditor general reports, although this is the unit that holds the largest assets in the Department. All credit goes to the men and women in uniform and non-uniformed members for their dedication towards making JSB Garrison what it is today.” She continued by urging the people working at JSB Garrison to continue supporting Brig Gen Kobbie and respecting him as they have in her case. Brig Gen Ruziecki said: “As Brig Gen Kobbie officially takes over today do not try and compare him with me as people have different means of leading.” Brig Gen Kobbie took his oath with zeal, diligence, pride and honour. He thanked everyone, especially the higher ranks of the Department who trusted him enough to give him this new post. He promises to keep up the high standards of all generals who have worked at JSB Garrison for example Maj Gen Mshengu Mandita and Maj Gen Steven Marumo. “It is an honour to follow in the footsteps of such men,” affirmed Brig Gen Kobbie. He continued by explaining his vision of making this unit and all surroundings within Thaba Tshwane a fully functional unit. Brig Gen Kobbie concluded: “I have taken it upon my shoulders to go and check the responsibilities of a manager within a metropolitan area and compare those with mine, as this is a similar position. I am committed to making this unit one of the best in the country.”

New Officer Commanding for ASB Kimberley

By Lt A.E. Isaks, Army Support Base Kimberley
Photo: Maj J.W. Viljoen

Col M.R. Mongo handed over the command of Army Support Base Kimberley to Col G.M. Richards during a Change of Command Parade held recently at Army Support Base Kimberley. Col Richards started his military career at the South African Cape Corps (SACC) on 10 July 1979 and had successive appointments as Section Leader, Platoon Sergeant and Company Sergeant Major. He did his Officers Formative at the Army Gymnasium from September to December 1991. He was then appointed as Company Formative at the Army Gymnasium from September to December 1991. He was then appointed as Company Commander, a post he held from January 1992 to December 1993 at 3 SA Infantry Battalion (3 SAI Bn). From January 1994 to November 1994 he was the Company Second in Command at 2 SAI Bn. From November 1994 to December 1996 he was the Brigade Adjutant during integration at Wallmannsthal. He was the Division Adjutant from January 1997 to December 1998 and Headquarters Company Commander at the newly established Headquarters for the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG). In January 1998 he was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed as the Ceremonial Company Commander at NCG. In January 2000 he was appointed as the Acting Second in Command of the NCG. From August 2000 to March 2001 he successfully completed the Junior Command Staff Duties Course and thereafter resumed as NCG Second in Command (until December 2001). In January 2002 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was Acting Officer Commanding of the NCG until March 2002. From April to December 2002 he was SO1 Strategic Planning at Directorate Army Strategic Direction. In January 2003 he was transferred to Army Support Base Kroonstad as the Officer Commanding, a post he held until September 2008. In September 2008 he was transferred to SA Army Support Formation HQ as the SO1 Force Structure where he served until November 2011. In January 2012 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and appointed as Officer Commanding of Army Support Base Kimberley.
AFB Hoedspruit hosts fun day festival for flood victims

By Maj Zola Nombida, AFB Hoedspruit Corporate Communication Officer

Air Force Base Hoedspruit hosted a fun day festival on 14 April 2012 in conjunction with various stakeholders, such as business people and community members.

The aim was to celebrate the immense contributions made to assist victims of the floods on 18 January 2012 in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces. These floods caused great damage to the infrastructure of both provinces as many roads were badly damaged, bridges collapsed and many community members were displaced.

Air Force Base Hoedspruit and the surrounding areas were greatly affected and officially declared a disaster area by the Provincial Disaster Management in Limpopo.

The fun day festival commenced with a marathon as part of a campaign to combat rhino poaching. It started at 07:00 and ended at Air Force Base Hoedspruit Rugby Field at 08:00.

Opening the fun day festival the Officer Commanding of Air Force Base Hoedspruit, Col Andre Barends, introduced the Mayor of Maruleng, Mr Pule Mafologela, and thanked him for his attendance, the assistance of the Maruleng Municipality in general and his commendable co-operation with the Base in helping the flood affected communities.

In thanking key role-players such as Pick n Pay, Spar and the South African Police Service Branch in Hoedspruit, Col Barends said he was delighted by their contributions in assisting the flood victims and the trust they had displayed in the Base during the entire flood rescue operation.

He thanked the Base members for keeping up the name of the SA Air Force and the Department of Defence despite their having also been affected by the floods.

Col Barends added: “Whenever you were told to go out to assist flood victims, you never complained about your own situation. You worked long and irregular hours even over weekends, and you still showed your loyalty to the organisation. The fruits and reputation of what you have achieved are not mine, but are yours and that of the organisation in particular.”

He concluded: “Therefore you should celebrate this fun day festival with your families, friends and relatives because the organisation is proud of the sacrifices you made and for having hosted this special day on behalf of Limpopo Province.”

Addressing the crowds, the Mayor of Maruleng expressed his sincere gratitude to the people of Hoedspruit and Maruleng in general for being proactive in coming to the rescue of each other during floods. He said: “You will all recall, and I believe none of you who were there, will ever forget the 18th of January 2012, when we all woke up to the sound of torrential rain. It was as if someone had unlocked the heavens and thrown the keys away.”

The Mayor informed the crowds that owing to the heavy rains the Hoedspruit area was declared a disaster area by both the local and district municipalities, which was subsequently repeated by the Provincial and National governments.

Mr Mafologela added: “It is for this reason that I want to express my appreciation for the assistance of all the good Samaritans who heeded the call and dug deep into their pockets to help the destitute. It is in times like these that we really identify ourselves as a rainbow nation. Disaster does not know colour, it does not know boundaries, culture or language.”

The Mayor concluded by acknowledging the role played by the Red Cross Society, Air Force Base Hoedspruit, Jacaranda FM, Farm Watch, Pick n Pay and Spar in Hoedspruit, the business community and the contributions of individuals in assisting flood victims.

After his speech the crowd was entertained by local artists, the Acornhoek Dancers, and a dog show by 514 Squadron. They were also able to admire the artefacts displayed by the Air Force Base Hoedspruit Exhibition Team.

In closing the fun day festival a function was held for all the key role-players where all the inputs to a disaster management strategy were shared and proposed for the approval by local and provincial governments in Limpopo.
Use skills to develop yourself

Article and photos by Rfn Herbert Damente, Regional Works Unit Eastern Cape

The Department of Defence has come up with the idea of equipping its uniformed members with skills so that they can become artisans in various trades such as bricklaying, plastering, plumbing, carpentry, painting, decoration, welding, tiling and plastering. This includes supervisors.

It is a great opportunity for soldiers as those who pass the selection will enter various trades and after the course they will become qualified artisans. The Department of Defence (DOD) will then utilise them to renovate or undertake construction work if the need arise.

One thing I have realised is that South Africa is a fortunate country as we have many things that even rich countries do not have, for example minerals. Not all of us can work in offices, some have to work on farms, mines or do manual work such as building, bricklaying, carpentry or welding.

The Eastern Cape is one of the luckiest provinces as it has students who come from various units to join the Regional Works Unit Eastern Cape, some of those members have already qualified, some are waiting to be trade tested, having been found competent when they passed their pre-trade test, while the rest of the students undergo the practical phase at different places. They will also be trade tested after completing their practical phase.

Members employed at Regional Works Unit Eastern Cape have taken this up as a challenge, i.e. is the new “calling” in the DOD. They know that the whole of the Department in the Eastern Cape Province will be in capable hands once they have qualified themselves in their different trade codes.

We also have supervisors undergoing training at the National Education and Training Academy where they have finished their basic training in various trade codes and are now busy in construction and developing a work plan. They apply contract documentation and implement an environmental management system, etc.

We wish to thank those who came up with this idea of empowering our uniformed members with skills as this will not only help the DOD but the members themselves because after they have left the system they will have something useful to do and be able to help the community at large. To the DOD we say: “Maz’anethole” and we salute you on a job well done. We must remember that “What you harvest in your mind you will manifest in your life”.

ABOVE: Members of Regional Works Unit Eastern Cape busy with bricklaying and plastering.

ABOVE: Supervisors of Regional Works Unit Eastern Cape busy with carpentry.
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Defence athletes run in the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon

By Col Zirk Lourens, with acknowledgement to the Two Oceans Marathon Association for lots of interesting information
Photos courtesy of Jetline Action Photo

Heavy rains may have given the organisers of the 43rd Two Oceans Marathon a hard time on 7 April 2012, but it did little to dampen the spirits of more than 25 000 runners who took part in the 21km and 56km races, what is known as “the world’s most beautiful race”. (The cut-off time for the 21km is 3 hours and for the 56km 7 hours.) Owing to the large international participation an “International Friendship Fun Run” was also presented at the V & A Waterfront.

Temperatures hovered in the low teens of most of the day, with wind speeds of up to 35km/h. Heavy rains and winds lashed the runners along the route from Newlands to the University of Cape Town (UCT). The finish line structure was also blown over by a strong gust of wind, and as the rain continued to fall, the finish line became a muddy mess. Athletes were seen slipping and sliding, having to tread very carefully to avoid falling in the final stretch of 400 metres.

A great performance from start to finish

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) had a special stand at the UCT Campus in Newlands, where all the families and friends of the runners got together to watch as the runners entered the stadium. The stand could be identified by the banners of the Department of Defence (DOD) and the SANDF. Each SANDF runner received a

ABOVE: The first SANDF runner in the scenic 56km ultra-marathon, Sgt Samson Mkhize from the SANDF Free State Marathon Club.

ABOVE: The first SANDF female runner in the 56km ultra-marathon, S Sgt Sucille Pieters from the SANDF Free State Marathon Club, with a time of 05:00:09, in 1 400th overall position.
miniature hand flag with the SANDF emblem on entering the stadium to identify the SANDF runners.

Approximately 25 000 athletes entered for the 21km and 56km race. Owing to bad weather conditions only 17 783 completed both distances. This race was also an international event for the SANDF. Capt (SAN) Chris Dooner, the previous Chairperson of Western Province Athletics, who had recently retired, was appointed as the Chief Referee for the 21km race. Maj Michey Trauernicht from the SA Military Health Service, who took over the reins as Chairperson from Capt (SAN) Dooner, was also part of the team assisting the top 10 male and female runners for both the 21km and 56km distances to the doping area, for final tests.

Altogether 190 runners from the Department of Defence, of whom 35 were women, completed the race. Twenty-four athletes of the Defence Reserve Forces finished the race.

In the 56km race, the first SANDF athlete to cross the finishing line was Sgt Samson Mkhize from the SANDF Free State Marathon Club. His overall position out of 6 000 competitors was 113th in a time of 03:46:59 - an excellent achievement.

In the second position was Sgt MJ Phamola from the SANDF North West Club. His overall position was 224th in a time of 04:00:40. Mr Jonas Mokoena from SANDF Free State Marathon Club was the third SANDF athlete to finish in a time of 04:06:01 and an overall 270th position.

The first woman running for the SANDF was S Sgt Sucille Pieters from SANDF Free State Marathon Club with a time of 05:00:09 (119th position among female runners and 1400th overall position). In the second position, from SANDF KwaZulu-Natal Athletic Club with a time of 05:07:23 was WO2 Sandy de Beer.

WO2 Andre Kleinsmith from SANDF Western Province Athletic Club completed his 20th Two Oceans Ultra Race in a time of 05:33:47.

In the 21km race, the first SANDF athlete to cross the finishing line was Leading Seaman Kagiso Maliwa from the SANDF Western Province Marathon Club. His overall position out of 11 783 athletes was 177th in a time of 01:29:57. The first woman for the SANDF was S Sgt Ina Wheatley (a Grand Master athlete 60 - 69) from SANDF Gauteng North (Pretoria Military Marathon Club) with a time of 02:09:34 in 6th position among the female Grand Masters.

Col Zirk Lourens, PRO Athletics SANDF, liaised with the media and SABC2 on the DOD/SANDF involvement and participation in this prestige road race and other race fixtures in South Africa.

History

The first race was held in 1970 and saw 26 runners line up to face the challenge, and only 15 finished. Since then the race has become a national institution and a firm favourite with local, up-country, and international athletes.

The breathtaking views of both oceans, including the spectacular stretch along Chapman’s Peak, is why the Two Oceans Marathon is known as the world’s most beautiful marathon.

ABOVE: The first SANDF runner in the 21km half-marathon, Leading Seaman Kagiso Maliwa from the SANDF Western Province Marathon Club.
Devotion

By Chaplain (Padré) Addie Burt, Chaplaincy Air Force Office

It’s June. It’s Youth Month, and with youth comes vibrancy, enthusiasm, passion, excitement and happiness. HAPPINESS is ...

... holding hands with your partner on a walk
... skating without falling down (too often)
... knowing the end of the school year is very close
... finishing a project due just before it’s time is due
... getting an A on the project you slaved over
... discovering a R50.00 note you’d forgotten about
... wrestling with dad on the floor
... knowing that God loves you
... sharing that love with somebody else

CONSIDER HAPPINESS

Are you happy? Think about some of the things that make you happy. Do you think that God would approve of them? You may ask: Why is it so hard for some people to be happy?

Answer: Happiness cannot be found where many people are looking for it. The search for happiness may be one of the main causes of unhappiness. The world seeks happiness through money, power and sex ... The attitude that many people have, is expressed in Luke 12:19 (The Message) “And I’ll say to myself, Self, you’ve done well! You’ve got it made and can now retire. Take it easy and have the time of your life!”

This is what will happen to people with this kind of attitude: v20-21 “Just then God showed up and said, ‘Fool! Tonight you die. And your barnful of goods--who gets it?’ ‘That’s what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God’

Isn’t it obvious? The place where your treasure is, that is the place you will most want to be at, and end up being! List the things you treasure most -- your car, a CD collection, your salvation, etc. If your “treasures” could be destroyed or stolen, draw a line through them. If they’re eternally yours, circle them. How many of each did you have?

Happiness is a good feeling, but true happiness is more than a feeling. It’s a joyful, satisfied approach to life, because of having an authentic relationship with God. Think of it this way: Happiness is not a destination; it is a journey and a by-product of working and playing, loving and living God’s way.

You may ask: How can I find true happiness?

Answer: True happiness is a fulfilled joy and a satisfaction that comes from an eternal relationship that you have with God. The Bible confirms that those who are familiar with this kind of happiness are “blessed”. We all can experience happiness by spending time in God’s Word, obeying it and following the example that Christ set.

God’s Word encourages us to be happy. Ecclesiastes 11:9 (The Message) “You who are young, make the most of your youth. Relish your youthful vigor. Follow the impulses of your heart. If something looks good to you, pursue it. But know also that not just anything goes; You have to answer to God for every last bit of it”.

Proverbs 16:20 (NIV) “Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. The blessings of being God’s child will never end.”

Psalm 128:1-2 (The Message) “All you who fear GOD, how blessed you are! How happily you walk on his smooth straight road! You worked hard and deserve all you’ve got coming. Enjoy the blessing! Revel in the goodness!”

God brings many blessings to our lives that we should not ignore or take for granted. He wants us to enjoy them. Eternal happiness awaits every one of His children, young and old.
AAD 2012 back at AFB Waterkloof after six years

By Ms Vhongani Shumba, AAD 2012 Marketing and PR Manager

In just a few months the 7th Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) Expo will open its doors at the much larger Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof in Pretoria, having been held at AFB Ysterplaat in Cape Town in 2006, 2008 and 2010. Please diarise the dates 19 to 23 September 2012 for the largest military and civilian showcase ever to be held on the African continent.

Exhibitor numbers at AAD 2010 were the highest in the event’s history, with 350 exhibitors from 31 countries providing an impressive display of products and services from all parts of the aerospace, general aviation and defence industries. Indications are that AAD 2012 will surpass all previous events due to the fact that 85% of the indoor space had already been reserved a full year ahead of the exhibition.

This impressive exhibition will be presented as a partnership between South Africa’s Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industry Association (AMD), the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor) and the Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa (CAASA) in collaboration with the Department of Defence and incorporating the SA Air Force. Visitor attendance at AAD 2010 amounted to about 96 000 over the five days of the event of which approximately 13 000 were trade visitors representing 59 countries. As part of AAD’s corporate social responsibility the AAD 2010 Youth Development Programme hosted 2 410 learners between the ages of 15 and 20 years, mostly from the Western Cape, as well as from KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

AAD 2012 has a number of features designed to maximise exhibitors’ ability to showcase products and services to the growing defence, general aviation and security industries, such as the on-site mobility track and participation in demonstration flights.

“Even a year before the event, AAD 2012 had confirmed nine national pavilions and 81 direct exhibitors from 28 countries. Already 85% of indoor exhibition space has been booked,” said AAD 2012 Exhibition Director Leona Redelinghuys. Eighteen confirmed civil aircraft will be on static display and will showcase flying capabilities during the two public days.

Mr Leon Dillman, CEO of CAASA and AAD 2012 show director, said: “For the first time, and in co-operation with the Aero Club of South Africa and Recreational Aviation Association of SA, a dedicated area (Fun Fly Park) for light sports aircraft (LSA) types has been allocated. “With home-built and kit aircraft, microlights and gliders, which are regarded as LSA types and having become very popular in South Africa, it was decided by the AAD Management that there was an opportunity to showcase this capability at AAD 2012.”

Ms Vhongani Shumba, AAD 2012 Marketing and Public Relations Manager, says: “For the second time the highly acclaimed IHS Jane’s Group from London will produce an AAD 2012 Show Daily that will be advantageous for exhibitors to showcase their products and services. The Show Daily will be published on the three trade days and will be circulated widely throughout the show as well as on the IHS Jane’s and AAD 2012 websites, which will ensure greater world-wide exposure.”

The media will have a preview of AAD 2012 on the day before the show opens. Ample provision has been made for visiting journalists who will have access to a fully equipped media centre.

In collaboration with General Aviation and various defence industries the Department of Defence has identified at least 80 high-level official delegations that will be invited to attend AAD 2012. A series of conferences are scheduled to run concurrently with AAD 2012. These include the International Aerospace Symposium of South Africa under the auspices of the Aeronautical Society of SA and the Flight Test Society of SA, which incorporate the Stellenbosch University Technical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles conference.

The Youth Development Programme celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2012 and the organisers are planning to make this a commemorative event. The visiting youth will be able to get a touch and feel of aviation and experience different career opportunities in the Department of Defence. They will form part of a structured programme and take part in activities such as plastic model building, virtual aviation, simulator, target shooting, first aid and will investigate crime scenes. These are just some of the exciting events that learners will be able to experience. The invited learners will be achievers in Science and Mathematics from the Dinaledi schools.
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