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FRONT COVER: A collage of various front covers of previous SA Soldier magazines that featured articles on the successes of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, since she assumed office.

For the latest news on defence matters in South Africa, visit our website at: www.dod.mil.za
n view of the fact that the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, will be delivering her Budget Vote in Parliament on 17 May 2012 SA Soldier dedicates this edition to the many achievements of the Department of Defence and the SA National Defence Force since the appointment of Ms Sisulu as the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in 2009.

We also celebrate Mother’s Day on 13 May, which makes it even more appropriate to dedicate this special edition of SA Soldier to the Mother of our military family who is the first woman to be appointed Minister of Defence in South Africa.

This edition is packed with success stories published in SA Soldier over the past three years; and after reading them all I am certain you will be as proud as I am to be a member of this military family.

Read all about Exercise GOLFINHO (page 11), a multinational peacekeeping operation with over 6 000 participants from different security forces and support elements, which took the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region by storm through the complexity of its execution.

The SANDF has spent a decade participating in peace missions. To celebrate this worthy milestone the SANDF Commander-in-Chief and President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, honoured our peace ambassadors with medals during a parade held in their honour on 16 October 2009 (read page 15).

Read on page 21 how the Department of Defence closed the gap on service delivery as it completed the construction of three bridges in Eastern Cape villages on 16 March 2010.

Who can still remember the mother who gave birth to a baby girl, Rosita Mabuiango, in a tree during the raging floods in Mozambique in March 2000?! Minister Sisulu to contribute towards her educational and other costs related to her upbringing (read page 23).

Read about the official launch of the Department of Military Veterans on 30 April 2010. After years of struggle to be recognised the Military Veterans now have a department to deal specifically with their challenges (page 25).

Who can forget that the SANDF deployed more than 3 500 soldiers to different hospitals during the Public Service labour action in 2010 to assist the Department of Health in rendering medical service and providing security support in co-ordination with the South African Police Service (read page 28).

The SA Air Force boasts the first female Gripen pilot in the world – Maj Catherine Labuschagne. Wow! Read about this historic milestone on page 29.

Read on page 32 about the day when Minister Sisulu welcomed and wished good luck to 4 000 young men and women who had been accepted for the first intake of the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) for 2011. The system seeks to provide scarce skills for the youth of the country to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the country and in so doing heed the President’s call for job creation.

Read about more progress in the Department of Defence since Minister Sisulu assumed her post (pages 36 and 27): In 2009 she stated boldly in her first budget vote speech the need for a separate dispensation for the Department of Defence that would allow it to deal creatively with its own needs and the specificities of its own unique security requirements. Thus the Interim National Defence Force Service Commission was establishment to look into the conditions of service of SANDF members. To further advance this effort in 2010, the Department of Defence submitted to Parliament an Amendment Bill to the Defence Act of 2002. The bill proposed, among others, a separate dispensation for the Department of Defence from the public service sector, which would give it legal standing and a permanent service commission. Furthermore, salary increases for all SANDF members on salary levels 2 to 12 were effected as from 1 December 2009. On another level the SANDF did a sterling job in providing ironclad security for the duration of the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

The SANDF continues to inspire South Africans: read on page 40 about the Joint Operations Division that deployed SANDF cadres for participation in a wide range of prominent and internationally recognised external peace support operations.

It is a known fact that since taking office in 2009, Minister Sisulu has demonstrated her passion for turning things around in the SANDF. Among the issues close to her heart was the improvement of service conditions for National Defence Force members when she appointed a permanent National Defence Service Commission to look into the conditions of service of SANDF members. To further advance this effort in 2010, the Department of Defence submitted to Parliament an Amendment Bill to the Defence Act of 2002. The bill proposed, among others, a separate dispensation for the Department of Defence from the public service sector, which would give it legal standing and a permanent service commission. Furthermore, salary increases for all SANDF members on salary levels 2 to 12 were effected as from 1 December 2009. On another level the SANDF did a sterling job in providing ironclad security for the duration of the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Another achievement was the amendments to the Non-statutory Forces Pension Fund in accordance with the Government Employees Pension Act. Huge progress has been made with the support of the Government Pension Administration Agency since the middle of 2011 (read page 47).

Not only did Minister Sisulu bring about positive change to the Department in the three years of her tenure but she restored hope in the hearts of many in the SA National Defence Force.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
Financial misconduct, fruitless and wasteful expenditure can bring the National Defence Force to a halt!

“Prevention of Irregular and Fruitless Expenditure: Starts with me”
JOB WELL DONE

I visited the Rand Show today, and I must compliment the SANDF. Truly this was most likely the only part of the show that was well organised. All of the military personnel were very friendly. They were always quick and willing to respond to any questions that my mother or I had. The vehicles, kit, weapons and other displayed items were all clearly marked. The stands were also very clean and presentable as expected of the military.

The opening was also conducted in a very professional manner. It’s a real shame that the public showed little respect for military tradition. It was also very rude and unprofessional of the SA Police Service Band to parade while the General Salute was being played. My mother also stated that this was disrespectful.

The readiness display was also conducted in a very professional manner. And I must say it must have taken a good couple of practice sessions to get it right. Everything was perfectly synchronised, from the mortar round being “fired”, including more or less the flight time, to the impact. When the 20mm cannon on the Rooivalk on the second pass was fired I saw that the gun by eye was pointing exactly where the “rounds” hit. The big bang from the Hawk was very well timed and synchronised. My photo of the Hawk was just a photo with flames! To all the members involved in the display, WELL DONE!

To be honest I wish that members of the old South African Defence Force would visit this event more to prove to them that the military is still of the same high standard as it was then.

Once again I must congratulate all members of the SANDF for a job well done. And I salute you. H. Ryno, email

MORE EXPOSURE TO THE WORLD

I was the Defence Attaché in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Philippines (South East Asia) from July 2008 to July 2011. Many military practitioners at senior and junior level have visited and received training in South Africa, and the country was more exposed to the world than before. During Minister Lindiwe Sisulu’s tenure of office relations between South Africa and the countries in the region improved a lot, and her direct involvement and that of her office in supporting the SA Defence Industry has led to South Africa securing multi-million dollar defence contracts in the region. Col Ben Mbanjwa, Senior Staff Officer: Africa and the Middle East, email

WELL DONE TO THE SANDF SERVICE COMMISSION

I ran out of words when I heard the news on SABC Radio from our Commander-in-Chief (President Jacob Zuma). I was so excited because we have suffered for a very long time with little pay in the SANDF. But we still go and deploy to protect our country and the SADC countries. We never gave up hope that one-day someone would look at our problems.

When soldiers were doing the toyi-toyi it was bad for us, but that was our last hope that maybe someone would come to our rescue. We had to show the whole country that we were suffering, because if you do not cry, people think that you are OK. But mostly I would like to thank the Commission, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and our Commander-in-Chief for not hesitating to take action after the Commission’s report.

To Judge Lebotsang Bosiello, I say well done. To my fellow soldiers, I say get your R4s and protect this country with pride and high morale. Soldiers can now have a better life after a long battle. I salute you all. Cpl L.B Mudau, AFB Makhado (The letter was previously published in SA Soldier, April 2010 edition, page 8.)

APPRECIATION

I want to express my deepest appreciation for the Season’s Greetings from the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu. The fact that the Minister has appreciated me as a person, a soldier and a family man goes a long way towards boosting morale and engendering loyalty to the organisation. I am sure that my appreciation is not mine only, but that I share the sentiments of so many soldiers and comrades out there in the various Services. One lesson I hope many of us who are in leadership will learn is that irrespective of all the challenges that we have, one has to appreciate the work done by subordinates and we should not always criticise destructively. So, despite the sea of challenges we face as an organisation we have the will-power shown by the Minister in tackling them head-on. We appreciate the fact that she appreciates our humble contributions to the safety of our country, and thank her for her warm Christmas greetings on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, Cabinet and Government, and I want to say the feeling is mutual. Chaplain Nkosinathi Ngesi, Military Academy (The letter was previously published in SA Soldier, March 2010 edition, page 8.)

R200-00 prize for the best letter

SA SOLDIER welcomes letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited for reasons of style, accuracy or space limitations. Letters should preferably be typewritten. All letters must include the writer’s full name, address and home telephone number. The volume of letters we receive makes individual acknowledgement impossible. Please send your letters to: The Editor, SA SOLDIER Letters, Private Bag X158, Pretoria, 0001. Letters may also be faxed to (012) 355-6399 or sent via email to sasoldier@mil.za. We would like to hear your comments or ideas, particularly about matters affecting members of the Department of Defence. Regrettably, anonymous letters cannot be answered officially or published - Editor.
A WORD OF THANKS

Please allow us to register a word of thanks to you and congratulate the Ministerial Commission on Defence on a job well done back home. We as South African peacekeepers outside the country would like to welcome them warmly into the SANDF! We hope our SANDF and the country will give them the total support they deserve. The commission has up to date performed an amazing service for our poor soldiers and their poor families at large!

We strongly believe that if it were not for them as mediators, our new SANDF should have gone to war with its troops. The commission is acting as our military emergency rescue team and is doing a great military job! We are watching from a distance out here on external deployment, and are impressed to witness how quickly they tackle our far too long overdue salary issues. In all corners of our country and the world the media have been informed about how the SANDF should stop integration, salary abuse and harassment against its own troops.

Cheap labour has to be foreign (or be history) in our SANDF! It is about time that the SANDF realises who we really are, then we will be heading for military success in our new SANDF!

We soldiers are constantly competing for a better social and military position with our police and other security forces, but for us it was very difficult to obtain military and social compliments, and sometimes it appears that we are so absorbed in this competition that we are blind to the realities around us.

With the current soaring prices of commodities, including having to support our loved ones, we are the ones taking military financial strain! We send special greetings and thanks to the commission because it now satisfies the troops and there will be nothing standing in the way of these soldiers getting their proper integration, promotions, career maintenance and salary hikes with immediate effect, and they will be the winners.

No more will they wage war against their organisation, their payslips, loan sharks, ATMs and bank staff members on pay day! We shall now nail criminals and local crime, and also begin to win the war against criminals, and we shall stop at nothing to end crime and corruption completely, and recognise the gains we have made after integration into our new SANDF! But now, because of the Commission, troops will be very happy and excited and have a chance to smile on pay day because they will be able to put something on the table for themselves and their beneficiaries!

The recommendations of the Ministerial Commission on Defence to improve soldiers’ working conditions on local and external deployment and their salaries and allowances are proper and it is here to stay permanently. We have great confidence in the commission’s excellent job, and we are proud of its updates and the progress made since its appointment date!

Soldiers have the right to a better, effective, affordable and acceptable military and social lifestyle, and now the commission will apparently be there when we need them! In conclusion, we urge our soldiers to plan ahead and devote more of their monies and resources to their own and their families’ education and a healthy lifestyle, which will be of benefit to their families, the SANDF and our country.

Our economy will flourish and our future will be more than bright! May God our Almighty Lord bless our Ministerial Commission on Defence, our SANDF and our Government now and forever more. Amen! S Sgt T.D. Makiti, 121 SAI Bn (The letter was previously published in SA Soldier, March 2010 edition, page 10.)

BUILDING OF THE TSOMO BRIDGE

I write this letter in appreciation of the above. I cannot help but express my appreciation for the intervention to revive access roads in rural areas. I also appreciate the work of young women and men in combat uniform in meeting their social responsibilities. Let them keep up the good work.

Thandi Tobias, Poloko MF, Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry

(former Chairperson of the Portfolio Committees on Defence and Public Works) (The letter was previously published in SA Soldier, May 2010 edition, page 6.)

A WORD OF APPRECIATION AND THANKS

Allow me an opportunity to register a word of appreciation to God Almighty and the SANDF, who has blessed me with another external deployment. I am a diehard SANDF/SAMHS member (OECP Area Military health Unit Gauteng) and I welcome each and every deployment as a gift and a golden opportunity from God and my DOD. My family and I know for a fact that God cannot do things the wrong way, and again, my wife and children back home, a big happy family, do not believe that there’s anything malicious about my soldiering assignments!

We have also realised that there are some “prophets of doom” with some questions and some remarks criticizing me, but at the same time they are also caught up in poverty, and this reflects reality. My family life has been blessed with challenges from which we learned to be strong, and we have taken them to God in prayer. My family is currently leading a balanced lifestyle! Right now my family and relatives are complimenting me on a job well done and making their life a little bit easier in terms of a better lifestyle.

Our marriage is approaching its 20th anniversary, which will be celebrated mid 2010 according to our wish and God’s plan and approval. We are an ordinary family leading a balanced lifestyle! Right now my family and children are further and to grab each opportunity that comes my way. The children are fond of saying “Daddy” to me. I always remember to make the SANDF part of our family, as we have been part and parcel of the Army since 1987.

Pray about all, live within your means and nobody but nobody will ever make you happy except God, yourself and the SANDF! Currently I am enjoying a very good deployment here in the Sudan and I feel honoured to be associated with such professional and distinguished SANDF peacekeeping heroes and heroines.

S Sgt T.D. Makiti, Sudan (The letter was previously published in SA Soldier, April 2010 edition, page 13.)
Work of the Defence Review opened to the public

By Ms Bibi Sibanyoni
Photo: Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

The Chairperson of the Defence Review Committee, Mr Roelf Meyer, handed over the fifth phase of the progress report, also called the consultative draft 2012, to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, at the CSIR Convention Centre in Pretoria on 12 April 2012.

Members of the National Press Club engaged with Minister Sisulu and the Defence Review Committee on the progress made thus far. Ms Sisulu introduced the Chairperson of the Defence Review Committee, Mr Roelf Meyer, who was a former Minister of Defence. Mr Meyer said: “We are excited to present this 420 page document to Minister Sisulu and are proud of the work done, which will clarify the final product. This is a long report, which took 14 years to review, and it will be a guideline for the next 30 years.”

Mr Meyer added that it was important that the Defence Review be reviewed to meet the demands of today’s developmental state. The Defence Review Committee also plans to present the review in three categories by means of Izimbizos in all nine provinces to allow input by members of the public. The starting point will be in KwaZulu-Natal on 21 April 2012 and will be communicated in the social media, eg facebook and twitter to create a platform across generational barriers to engage key stakeholders, as well as consultations with defence partners and communities.

Minister Sisulu echoed the message that this Defence Review was for everyone and people should be at liberty to engage in it. She called for partnership with the media and asked that they join hands and educate the broader public about the role of the National Defence Force. She said: “People should familiarise themselves with the review, which is on the website, so that we educate and engage in meaningful debates on defence issues. However, it is still to be approved in Parliament, to which we will be presenting our first phase on 18 April 2012 on progress thus far.”

One of the main responsibilities of the Defence Review Committee is to investigate the possibility of Armscor and the Defence acquisition reporting to the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, who is the accounting officer of the Department of Defence.

* For more information visit the website: www.sadefencereview2012.org

Front, fltr: Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the then Acting Chief of the SANDF, Mr Roelf Meyer, the Chairperson of the Defence Review Committee, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, and Dr Sam Gulube, the Secretary for Defence, with members of the Defence Review Committee.
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Analysis of our 2009 Budget Speech

By Mr Robert Wapenaar, Asst Dir Revenue Management

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, presented her first Department of Defence Budget Vote in the National Assembly in Cape Town on 3 July 2009.

With regard to the budget Ms Sisulu said: “The first challenge that confronts us is a declining budget where our domestic obligations remain defined in the Constitution, against a backdrop of our growing international responsibilities and a deteriorating infrastructure and, very importantly, against a clear and pressing reality that conditions of service for the National Defence Force need our immediate attention. We have a responsibility to enhance and maintain comprehensive defence capabilities to ensure that the territorial integrity of our country and its sovereignty are protected. This is a constitutional requirement and we need to keep ourselves in a state of competence, one of constant renewed advancement, in a state of readiness, as it is commonly called here. With a declining budget our competence is severely hampered, with dire consequences”.

She continued by highlighting the following issues:

- **Compile budget for Military Veterans.** To execute the department’s responsibility, a task team has been established consisting of members of the Military Veterans Associations and representatives of various stakeholders. The task team falls under the Deputy Minister. Preliminary indications are that a separate vote and a separate department for Military Veterans can be created.

- **Training for essential skills by employing MSDS members in other departments.** In rethinking our role in the economy, the Department of Defence (DOD) would like to provide training for essential skills in the economy.

The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) aims to provide the SANDF with the military human resources required by the Defence mandate to empower the youth through training and development opportunities while they serve in the MSDS and to instil sound ethics and values of civic responsibility. We wish to sell this concept of opening up our skills development for government departments and the private sector.

A very good example of the skills that we have been able to provide over the years is pilot training. The SAA has one of the highest standards of aviation safety in the world. We would like to claim that this is in no small measure due to the bulk of the pilots having been trained by the SANDF. This type of training allows us to provide continuous service. For government the list of possibilities is endless. What this does is to allow the SANDF to reskill our youth, energise our economy and provide us with some revenue from the various departments we are servicing as a Service Provider, which means that our renewal can be taken care of by our own efforts.

- **Support for SAPS by means of borderline control.** The DOD takes an active role in assisting the SA Police Service (SAPS) to deal with crime. This is a matter that is under discussion at the moment, against a backdrop of very clear legislative mandates. The DOD has agreed in principle that the defence of our borders needs to remain in the hands of the National Defence Force. This will ensure that we can release the SAPS to deal with crime in the country. The President signed the first protocol in 2008 and we will be working on this on an incremental basis.

- **Retention of scarce skills.** The creation of a dependable, agile and flexible human capital base remains the minister’s focus for the financial year. The high rate of skills migration and dearth of scarce skills require the introduction of modern approaches to mobilisation and the deployment of human capital to accelerate the accumulation of specialised skills and the retention of institutional memory to ensure the enhancing of the culture and doctrine that define our disciplined military force.

The demand for a well trained, multi-skilled, disciplined and well equipped National Defence Force as a critical lever of the developmental agenda of Government is a reality that cannot be left to chance. The outflow of skilled technical personnel, engineers and combat personnel from the DOD continues to cause a reduction in the experience levels at units. Incentive schemes to mitigate this challenge have been introduced and are adjusted regularly in line with changing requirements.

In addition the Department is exploring a strategy to address the retention of scarce skills within the Department.

- **Separate dispensation for the DOD.** The DOD is considering making a request for a separate dispensation for the Department that would allow the DOD to deal creatively with its own needs and the specifics of its own unique security requirements.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, August 2009 edition, pages 12 and 13.)
SADC Standby Force shines at Exercise GOLFINHO

By L Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

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

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

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

Of the 15 countries that form the SADC, only three, Mauritius, the Seychelles and Madagascar did not participate in the exercise. Each SADC member state had to provide its own means for its forces. The Naval Joint Maritime Task Force at Walvis Bay in Namibia also ran a concurrent exercise with the one in Lohatlha.

A simulated hostile takeover by rebel militants of armaments vehicles was staged during a demonstration. The scene depicted how a well-integrated SADC force would handle such an incident. The objective of the exercise was to test the interoperability and compatibility of the mission components. Unlike the military and police components, the civilian component had to be trained for the provision of assistance for humanitarian relief operations.

Mr Haretsebe Mahosi from Lesotho, Head of the Civilian component, told SA Soldier that part of their role in the exercise was to handle political affairs and negotiations among and on behalf of, victims of civil strife. They also teamed up with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in assessing the situation and providing assistance. The ICRC also provided training in International Humanitarian Law for different SADC contingents.

The Exercise GOLFINHO VIP Day marked the biggest parade ever to be held in the SADC region. The decommissioning of the SADC brigade and a medal parade for the participants in the exercise took place on 22 September 2009. The highest functionaries at the parade included Mr Filipe Nyussi, the Mozambique Minister of Defence, who presented the medals to the senior cadre of the SADCMIL, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, and her Deputy, Mr Thabang Makwetla.

Dr Mathendele Dlamini from Swaziland, the Head of Mission of the SADC Standby Force, said that the SADC should celebrate the vision of the heads of state in launching the SADC Standby Force and providing necessary means to achieve their objectives. He further urged the members on parade to take account of the skills they had acquired and to be loyal to their states and people. He concluded: “It is without a shadow of doubt that the skills you have acquired through this training will enable you to perform prominently and effectively even after your integration into the African Standby Force.”

Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, congratulating Dr Mathendele Dlamini, the Head of Mission SADC Standby Force, after the parade, while Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the then Chief SA Army Force Preparation (now Chief of the SA Army), Brig Gen Nontobeko Mpaxa, the Commandant of the SA Army Combat Training Centre, and Mr Siphiwe Dlamini, DOD Head of Communication, look on.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, October 2009 edition, pages 11 – 13.)
The responsibility for the implementation and ultimate success of Operation Clean Audit (OCA) rests with everybody within the Department and I, the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, have pledged my full commitment and co-operation to ensuring that the Department achieves a clean audit in the foreseeable future. I urge you to do the same; remember it starts with you,” said the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, commenting on Operation CLEAN AUDIT.

Operation CLEAN AUDIT (OCA) is an initiative of the Department of Defence (DOD) to clear the audit qualifications for the Department. The Auditor General of South Africa has for the past four financial years issued a qualified audit opinion on the financial statements of the Department of Defence. The Auditor General has a constitutional mandate as the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI) of South Africa. SAI exists to strengthen our country’s democracy by enabling oversight, accountability and governance in the public sector, thereby building public confidence.

The biggest challenge for the Department, as is the case in most of the government, is that the current systems, in particular the financial management system, does not necessarily support all the requirements for the DOD to comply with the relevant accounting standards and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). Other factors that are inhibiting the DOD from complying with the PFMA include the inherent challenges in developing and implementing key internal controls within the Department and non-compliance with the relevant policies and procedures. This has led to the DOD not being able to account for and report on its resources for the past number of years.

These problems are compounded further by capacity constraints facing the Government in general, and the lack of skills and competencies required in accounting and auditing.

All these known factors have directly and/or indirectly contributed to the DOD receiving the qualified audit reports from the Auditor General.

HOW OPERATION CLEAN AUDIT AIMS TO ASSIST THE DOD IN ACHIEVING A CLEAN AUDIT REPORT

The approach adopted by the OCA team is to assist the DOD, firstly in identifying and confirming all of the root causes of the audit qualifications, secondly to put measures in place to address these root causes, including developing and implementing improved policies and procedures and internal controls, and thirdly to train and provide DOD employees with the skills to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively.

The ultimate objective is to achieve quality financial reporting and to adopt an adequate system of internal controls as well as improved policies, procedures and ensure adherence thereto, all of which are critical to achieving a clean audit report.

The OCA team is made up of members of the DOD and a team of external consultants who have been brought in to provide the DOD with the additional capacity and the accounting and auditing skills and expertise required to carry out a project of this nature.

However, the ultimate responsibility for implementing the solutions being introduced by the OCA team rests with every member of the DOD.

PROGRESS

The project is currently in its ninth month of implementation and there has already been progress during the 2008/09 financial year in which three audit qualifications from the previous financial year have now been cleared. Roadshows are currently being planned in which the team will share more details on the project with everyone affected and provide some basic training in what is required of them to participate in and contribute to achieving a clean audit report. So look out for the roadshow near you and remember: It starts with YOU!

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, October 2009 edition, page 46.)
The SANDF has spent a decade participating in peace missions. To celebrate this worthy activity of our soldiers the SANDF brigade parade under the command of Brig Gen Ashton Sibango and CWO Joachim Pretorius was held in Bloemfontein on 16 October 2009 in honour of our peace “angels”. The parade was held in AFB Bloemspruit and the Bloemfontein City Hall. On 15 and 16 October the streets surrounding the city hall were closed from approximately 11:00 to 13:30.

The SANDF Commander-in-Chief and President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, was invited to attend and to honour our tireless and fearless peace warriors. The Commander-in-Chief laid a wreath in memory of those who had lost their lives during peace missions. After the parade inspection he presented medals the soldiers.

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

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

The members on parade represented all the Services and Divisions of the SANDF that participated in peace missions, and the colour company consisted of Service and Regimental colours of Services and Units that participated in peace missions. The mass band comprised four service bands under the direction of Lt Col Matthys Pienaar, Director of Music of the SAAF Band. Two Agusta Westland AW109 helicopters from 87 Helicopter Flying School based at AFB Bloemspruit performed the flight salute. The SA Army Artillery Mobilisation Regiment performed the 21-gun salute under the command of Maj Frans van Niekerk. The SA Navy performed precision drill.

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

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, November edition, pages 13 - 15.)
A unified approach to military veterans

By Cpl Ally Rakoma

On 6 November 2009 the Ministerial Task Team on Military Veterans chaired by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, held a consultative workshop which was one of the public engagements with various stakeholders at the St George’s Hotel in Pretoria.

Providing input were veterans’ associations, representatives from the Institute of Security Studies, the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, the Sector Education and Training Authorities in the Security and Services Industries and government departments that are currently providing services to veterans, eg the Department of Social Development and the Department of Human Settlements.

The aim of the workshop was to solicit public input for the Draft Policy Report on the future of the State’s obligation, which was aimed at benefiting the country’s rough estimate 20 000 military veterans. The workshop proved a vital platform for enhancing co-ordinated communication to assist in devising ways to address the veterans’ plight, including priorities and time frames to improve the services they need, and thus improve their welfare and future prospects.

In his address the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans at the workshop pointed out that military veterans were ex-combatants with military skills and experience. He added that neglecting them could drive them to resort to the only skill they had, and as a result they could descend into criminality.

Mr Makwetla said: “Neglecting them may compromise the stability, safety and security of the country. The Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans has announced plans for creating a separate entity with its own budget and accounting officer to be responsible for veterans’ affairs.”

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, December 2009 edition, page 13.)

Air Force Base Waterkloof opens its gates again

By Ms Bibi Morgets
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Department of Defence was pleased to bring back the Air Squadron to its home at Waterkloof Air Force Base in Pretoria on 29 October 2009. Phase one of the long anticipated project has therefore finally been completed.

The project has cost nearly R700 million for the upgrades at the base since September 2007. The Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, handed the base back to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, after a successful operation. The runway was officially opened for the presidential flight when President Jacob Zuma, the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, landed there for the first time. The four squadrons were stationed at Swartkop, Lanseria and OR Tambo International Airport, but nothing beats being back at the original aerodrome.

Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, Chief of the SA Air Force, said: “It is a huge relief that the construction is nearing completion, as the Department has spent so many thousands of rands on landing rights for our aircraft at other bases and airports over the past two years. This means the SA Air Force will save huge costs and that money will be utilised for other projects.”

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, December 2009 edition, pages 16 and 17.)
The SANDF continues to be a messenger of peace

As we usher in the New Year we can look back on the year 2009 with great pride and joy in the knowledge that we have once again successfully carried out our constitutional mandate.

The year 2009 saw a continued commitment by all South Africans as they went to the polls to make their mark during the 4th national democratic elections. This affirms the maturity of our democracy and, as a result, we have a new Commander-in-Chief, President Jacob Zuma, himself as the new Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, and Mr Thabang Makwetla as Deputy Minister. The deputy Minister and I accepted the appointments fully conscious of the enormous responsibility and expectations that come with the appointments. We are comforted and encouraged by the full knowledge that success can only be achieved through a collective effort. To this end, we have committed ourselves to sparing no effort in discharging our collective responsibility of serving the people of South Africa.

One of the innovations introduced by the President as the Commander-in-Chief, in his State of Nation address, is the reconfiguring of the DOD into the Department of Defence and Military Veterans to ensure that military veterans are for the very first time catered for (at Cabinet level). In implementing this decision, as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, I appointed a Task Team to develop policy recommendations for the future administration and management of military veterans in the country. The Task Team was chaired by the Deputy Minister and will be tabling its findings soon. We embrace this move as it is all-inclusive and will significantly improve the lives of our military veterans who have been neglected in the past.

Following this announcement, and observing the state of service conditions for our serving members, I commissioned an Interim National Defence Force Service Commission. This Commission was appointed on 2 October 2009 with the mandate to review the current general conditions of service of members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and work towards the creation of a separate and new dispensation for the National Defence Force. On 10 December 2009 the Commission handed over its report to the Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans. As the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans I handed over the report to the Commander-in-Chief who, after consideration, will table the report to the Cabinet for approval. Thereafter an announcement will be made by the Commander-in-Chief with regard to the recommendations contained in the report.

I was delighted that the Commission was able to take on this onerous task and I congratulate them on the comprehensive and excellent report that they have produced.

It must be emphasised that the SANDF is, and should always be, ready to defend the country and its people and contribute towards the entrenchment of our democracy. However, it is the DOD's obligation to ensure that our dedicated soldiers perform their duties under favourable service conditions. On behalf of the leadership of the SANDF we would like to thank all our members for exercising patience with the department and staying on course in the service of the people of South Africa. I want to assure every member of the SANDF that we will continue to strive to ensure that all members get what they deserve, and that they will continue to be proud of being part of this family.

Last year, in support of other government departments, the SANDF lent a hand to the Health Department during the medical practitioners’ strike. The strike almost brought our country's health system to a complete halt. Our appreciation goes to all serving members who responded to this urgent call and delivered us from an untenable situation; indeed you did us proud.

During the past year the country joined the SANDF in celebrating the 10th anniversary of its involvement in support of Government’s diplomatic endeavours aimed at eradicating conflicts in the region and on the continent as a whole. We continue to do this work because South Africa's security, stability and economic development are linked to the stability of the entire African continent.

Over the past ten years South Africa, through the SANDF, has participated in peacekeeping missions in the following countries: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, the Ivory Coast, the Union of Comoros Islands, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau and the Sudan. The SANDF does this work conscious of its responsibility as a member state of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN).

The SANDF will continue to be a messenger of peace in promoting democracy on the African continent and will assist millions of tormented Africans to rebuild their lives. As South Africans we are indeed grateful to our men and women in uniform for flying the flag of South Africa high and, with this celebration, we salute them for their noble deeds in the quest for peace and security on our continent and beyond.

The people of our country have a lot to look forward to this year as the FIFA 2010 World Cup is finally on our doorstep as the host country. We are ready to render support to Government to help our country deliver a safe, secure and unforgettable world-class football spectacle.

Ms Lindiwe Sisulu
Minister of Defence and Military Veterans

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, January 2010 edition, page 10.)
A solid foundation is laid to honour the military veterans

Since assuming this appointment a few months ago, I have been awed and humbled by our men and women in uniform who are carving out for themselves a special place in South African history through their hard work. The impact of your work is significant and is recognised by our nation and the international community.

I have been greatly impressed by your professionalism, dedication and generous service, particularly when the DOD is requested to lend a helping hand to other government departments in times of need, in support of our people.

In accordance with its commitment to serve the people of our country, the DOD launched the Military Veterans Association. Being a Veteran myself I cannot begin to describe the satisfaction that this prospect brings to ordinary people who have wholeheartedly and professionally served our country in an extraordinary way.

These men and women who sacrificed their lives and livelihoods to take part in the struggle for freedom and a democratic order have not been adequately and appropriately provided for by the current system of military veterans’ benefits and services. These military veterans and former freedom fighters have faced critical challenges as a result of factors such as inadequate pensions or a lack thereof, improper and insufficient housing, unsuccessful reintegration and reskilling programmes, inappropriate honour and death benefits, and deteriorating health care, to mention just some of their critical needs. Indeed, we owe our freedom, democracy, constitution, peace, stability and respect for human rights that we now enjoy in our country to our military veterans. They sacrificed their youth for the struggle for our liberation. As such, these men and women should not be allowed to become estranged from the change they fought for.

The great work done by the Task Team will make the leadership of this Department sleep better at night, knowing that the hard work and sacrifices of our forefathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers and sisters will not only be acknowledged by the laying of a wreath, but will now form a permanent structure of our Government in the DOD.

It was not an easy road to travel, but it is pleasing to report that we are ready to present the final draft of the report to the Minister in the near future. I would like to thank the Minister for turning the plight of Military Veterans throughout the country, from all walks of life, into her passion. We thank her for confronting this matter to the benefit of all previously excluded Military Veterans.

It is fitting to thank all members of the Ministerial Task Team on Military Veterans for their time and commitment in establishing this necessary entity in the DOD. Minister, know that your work has helped in laying a solid foundation to honour and serve veterans in life and memorialize them in death for their sacrifices on behalf of the nation.

For many years there was a reluctance to face a variety of difficult issues regarding Military Veterans in the country. However, the speed and openness with which this problem is being faced by the new Ministry suggests that we are truly working towards the transformation of the Department. It takes a lot of moral courage for the leadership of an organisation to respond to a suggestion that there is such a challenge by opening up and working towards redressing it.

Accordingly, this may be a huge step for the Department of Defence and Military Veterans in the right direction, but there is still a long way to travel. For the new Military Veterans department to realise its purpose it needs to be well nurtured by good governance and professionalism to ensure an all-encompassing administration.

In conclusion: as Chairman of the Task Team, I have every confidence that the nature and extent of the challenges relating to Military Veterans have been captured fully in the report. As we begin the New Year, we should do so with great sincerity and commitment to our work. We must always remember the work done by people “before us” so that we can honour them by working even harder to serve the people of our country.

Mr Thabang Makwetla
Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, January 2010 edition, page 11.)
Minister Sisulu visited ASB Western Cape

By Chaplain (Rev) Hannes Steenkamp
Photo: S Sgt L.E. Dlova

When the soldiers at Army Support Base Western Cape and surrounding military units went to work on 17 December 2009, they were unaware of the opportunity and privilege they would have later that day to meet the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, in person. She has decided to visit some units informally towards the end of each year to convey her festive season greetings in person and to thank the soldiers for the hard work done during the year. This time it was Cape Town’s turn.

Ms Sisulu was accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, the then Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Solly Shoke (now Chief of the SANDF), and the General Officer Commanding of the SA Army Support Formation, Maj Gen Stephan Marumo.

The visit kicked off with a presentation by the Officer Commanding ASB Western Cape, Col Peter Kobbie, on the activities, successes and challenges of the base. The Minister took a special interest in the working and living conditions of the soldiers and stated that the upgrading of military facilities to an acceptable standard was a priority as it was a means of improving the commitment and productivity of the members of the DOD.

The next stop was a meeting with about 600 soldiers from different Services and units in the Western Cape. An atmosphere of expectation, especially with regard to the salary increases, was tangible when she stepped into the hall. She did not disappoint those present and, to enthusiastic applause, announced the pay increases in detail. She also explained the decision not to award performance incentives to a few members in 2009, but rather to distribute them equally among all soldiers who had upheld the Code of Conduct for Uniformed Personnel of the SANDF. It was done in this manner to show the Department’s gratitude to all soldiers who had done their duty well.

She emphasised that the pay increases were but the first phase in the improvement of the service conditions of soldiers. She is working on the establishment of a permanent commission along the lines of the Public Service Commission. She stated that die DOD was different from the rest of the Public Service and needed its own dispensation. A draft bill providing for this commission has been prepared for submission to the Cabinet.

In her speech she also announced that the SANDF would take over the protection of the borders in 2010 from the SA Police Service because it was the constitutional mandate of the SANDF to protect the country. HIV positive members will in future also be deployed on peacekeeping missions provided that they or others are not put at risk.

Ms Sisulu urged members to work wisely with the resources and funds of the DOD. The financial management of the Department must improve to address the repeatedly raised concerns of the Auditor General. If the Department can obtain unqualified audits, this can be a basis for securing more funds from the treasury. Every soldier must do his or her part to achieve this goal.

She ended her address by wishing everyone well during the festive season and the coming year and reminded those present: “We care for you!”

(For more information please read the article as published SA Soldier, March 2010 edition, page 12.)
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, and the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, linked up with members of 35 Engineer Support Regiment and 1 Construction Regiment at Military Base Dunnottar in Springs on 18 December 2009.

The aim of their visit was to inform members of the decision taken by the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Jacob Zuma, on the salary increases to SANDF members on salary levels 2 to 12, ie from Privates to Colonels. The increase will range from 2% up to 98%, and be effective as of 1 December 2009.

Speaking to the soldiers, Minister Sisulu said that she, President Zuma and the Deputy President, Mr Kgalema Motlanthe, had declared 2010 the year of the SANDF. “Currently we are treated as ordinary public servants; we are not ordinary workers, we are not ordinary at all,” she said.

Minister Sisulu said that many people had complained about living conditions in the barracks. “These conditions must improve immediately. We owe it to you to provide decent shelter, decent salaries and world-class working conditions with all the basic amenities of a world standard.”

She is of the opinion that troops must have swimming pools, playing grounds, the best academic and medical institutions and DStv in their own living rooms. “To fast-track maintenance, I am engaging the Minister of Public Works for us to do some maintenance ourselves as we are able to do so. I will come and join you in our own lesema in which we will paint, plant trees and kick-start a campaign to maintain our barracks ourselves. We can maintain these barracks better than many private companies,” Ms Sisulu said.

In her closing remarks she stated that the SANDF was a role model organisation and an able defender of South Africa. “Rest assured, you are in a better place. Let us inculcate the right spirit and attitude to continue to build on our tremendous achievements,” she concluded.

In addition, Mr Makwetla expressed the uniqueness of the military calling. He explained that from the broader perspective in any democracy the military provides support for the civilian population and the government. “We are approaching a point where uncertainty regarding your service conditions will be something of the past. In a spirit of patriotism let us go forward together as South Africans. Its people are grateful to you for never failing them,” he said.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, March 2010 edition, pages 13 and 14.)
The DOD takes corrective measures to achieve a clean audit

By Mr Sam Mkhwanazi, the then Director Communication Strategy and Content Development in the Secretariat for Defence

Following the appearance of the Department of Defence (DOD) before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) on 13 February 2010, media reports have painted a gloomy picture about, among others, the ability of the leadership of the DOD to manage the affairs of the Department, particularly its finances. It has also been alleged that this state of affairs has impacted negatively on the state of readiness of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to defend the country.

For the record, it is important to state that when the Department appeared before SCOPA on 13 February 2010, it was prepared to provide information and account to Parliament as required by law. It was ready to prove to the public that while it conceded that it had for nine years received qualified reports from the Auditor General, in some years with a record of 16 qualifications. In the past financial year, the qualifications were reduced to six under the stewardship of the Acting Secretary for Defence, who took over the running of the Department after the Minister and Deputy Minister resigned in one day and the Secretary for Defence, Mr January Masilela, died.

The Public Finance Management Act, No 1 of 1999 requires the DOD to comply with the Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP). The current financial system in the Department does not support the accrual requirements of GRAP as these systems are mainly cash based, old and outdated. Moreover, challenges such as the lack of capacity in key resource areas in the Department have not helped the situation regarding internal controls.

The Department, working with the team of experts under the leadership and guidance of the Minister, has spent many hours trying to understand the root causes of the qualifications so that it can develop proper systems and policies to stop years of qualifications. To this end, the Department has been developing modern financial and management systems to help build a new Department in which financial rules and regulations are central to all procurement processes and expenditure. Moreover, the Department has already put in place concrete and measurable corrective measures aimed at eradicating qualifications by the Auditor General. Key among these are to present a system upgrade deviation request from the Information Financial Management System Steering Committee, compile a user asset management plan, develop a DOD asset management plan and move the immovable asset management function from the Department of Public Works to the DOD before the end of 2010.

It is planned that by the end of 2011 the DOD will have completed the process of consolidating the manual and multi-accounting systems into a single Information System platform. This will be followed by the rolling out of the new Integrated Asset Management System (IAMS) in line with National Treasury requirements by the end of 2012.

Furthermore, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans has said that she will appoint a compliance officer to ensure that the DOD complies with all necessary financial and treasury regulations. This is an important milestone in addressing challenges of lack of capacity in key resource areas in the Department.

* Mr Tsepe Motumi has since been appointed Director-General of the newly established Department of Military Veterans.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, April 2010 edition, pages 22 and 23.)
The opening of the DOD VIP Lounge

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, officially opened the DOD VIP Lounge at the OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg on 19 March 2010. This well-established facility, incorporating African experience, is backed by the warm hospitality and friendly service of the professional staff of Defence Foreign Relations (DFR) and members of the Military Police Division.

Declaring the facility open, Minister Sisulu asserted that smart partnerships, building relations and sharing vision between key government sectors were very important. She said: “There is much more that we could do to enhance the hospitality and pleasurable experience of our international guests or foreign military dignitaries. The establishment of this facility is a gesture of solidarity, Ubuntu and humility.”

The Minister congratulated Maj Gen Dan Mofokeng, the Chief of Defence Foreign Relations, and his team, the Military Police and other role-players who worked tirelessly in support of this initiative. Minister Sisulu proudly said: “I wish to say to you all: it’s a journey worth taking. As we prepare ourselves for the 2010 FIFA World Cup spectacle this brings with it a degree of regional and continental responsibility. Put South Africa and the SANDF firmly in the spotlight.”

Maj Gen Mofokeng said: “This is an international facility in the diplomatic field in line with international standards. It is a project not only of the DOD, but also of our country, as we are part of the international solidarity. It is a very important installation. The SANDF is involved in co-operating with the militaries of other countries. It is imperative for us to project the right image when we receive the Generals and Admirals arriving and departing from our shores.”

Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, and Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, the then Chief of the SANDF, applauding after the unveiling of the plaque.

Minister visits SAS SALDANHA Gymnasium

Article and photo by Mr Ndivhuwo Mabaya, Director Media Liaison to the MOD

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, has started a programme to visit units of the SANDF to interact with soldiers and the middle management leadership and share with them the progress made since May 2009.

Minister Sisulu accompanied by the Chairperson of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence, Ms Hlengiwe Mgbadeli, who is also a member of the Interim National Defence Force Service Commission and a delegation of advisers and senior officers of the SANDF, SA Navy and the Ministry, visited SAS Saldanha Gymnasium in Saldanha, Western Cape. Ms Sisulu called on young people to consider a career in the military and specialise in scarce skills such as navigation, flying, engineering, diving and sailing.

She said: “I am very proud that during the holidays learners from high schools learn to swim and do other training as part of their leadership and development programme in your units. We need more youth to pass through the SANDF before they continue with their adult life.” The Minister indicated that the current Military Skills Development System (MSDS) which takes over 5 000 young people every year will be enhanced with the aim of offering scarce skills and various training opportunities for the youth. She said: “The MSDS has shown over the past year that the SANDF can contribute effectively by addressing the skills shortages in the country and creating jobs. Last year we took over 5 000 young people into the SANDF; we are training them in scarce skills, and at the same time we pay them to support themselves and their families.”

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu (middle), with Military Skills Development System members.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, May 2010 edition, page 15.)
DOD closes gaps on service delivery

By L Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos: Sgt Elias Mahuma

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

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

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

The MEC of Roads and Transport, Ms Pemmy Majodina, expressed her gratitude to all the stakeholders that had worked together to realise the goal. Along with the ministers, she affirmed that this would not end there, but would be extended to other areas in need. Mr Makwetla added that this was an opportunity for the Department to optimise collateral socio-economic capabilities to provide for service delivery. Many divisions in the SANDF are underutilised, and this was a way to take advantage of the available resources to assist with development.

At the beginning of the project the then Acting Chief of Joint Operations, Maj Gen Mbulelo Tshiki, led a delegation to inspect the progress in the construction of the last bridge, the one in the Umzimvubu Municipality. He said: “The significance of building bridges, especially in rural areas of our country, cannot be overemphasised. Apart from serving as a connecting point for the delivery of essential commodities for the survival of people in rural areas, bridges also serve as a means to reduce the fatality rate during floods in our communities.”

The municipal speaker, Mr Sipho Tshekela, said the river had had a negative impact on their community for a long time and that it had claimed over nine lives in recent times. He said that their municipality had low budget revenue. However, with the help of the Department of Public Works they had approached the DOD about the construction of a bridge.

It took 32 men approximately four weeks to construct a suspension bridge over the Daluhlanga River. The team leader from 1 Construction Regiment, Capt Marinus Engelbrecht, said his men were dedicated and had the necessary expertise to complete the objective. They started working on 16 February 2010 and completed the bridge by mid-March 2010.

Chief Daluhlanga Jojo, who rules the two villages separated by the river, expressed his gratitude on behalf of his people. The often flooding river has caused enormous damage to the Lubaleko and Cabazana villages during the rainy season. Chief Jojo said this would bring relief to his people.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, May 2010 edition, pages 16 and 17.)
The MOD Budget Vote 2010 is packaged with milestones

By Kgabo Mashamaite
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, delivered her second budget vote in Parliament in Cape Town on 4 May 2010. She announced an increase in the Defence budget from the current 1.3% budget (R34 billion) to 2% of the current Gross Domestic Product (R17 billion).

“The SANDF is special because members take an oath that commits them to giving their lives in order that you may keep yours, and no country or nation worth its salt should expect any less for members of its defence force.

“We have gone a long way towards establishing a separate dispensation for the SANDF, and the Cabinet has approved the regulatory mechanism to govern and oversee the dispensation, as soldiers are not workers, precisely because the SANDF is so different from all other arms of Government in that we take extraordinary measures to enforce discipline. Our relationship with the Government is not that of workers/employees as it is not governed by an employment agreement, but by an oath.

“The relationship the Government has with its soldiers is unique and is based on an exceptional amount of trust and responsibility. It requires the Government to make an enormous investment in each member, including his conditions of service, education and training. We have been working on this and over the past year we have made significant progress in a number of areas. However, we still have serious challenges in the SANDF, most of which are as a result of serious underfunding. If we do not invest in our SANDEF, we are doing ourselves an injustice,” the Minister said, to much applause and the delight of the SANDF members and stakeholders in Parliament.

The soldiers were further stunned when Minister Sisulu announced recommendations by the Interim National Defence Force Services Commission (a commission equivalent to the Public Service Commission established in late 2009 specifically to look at, among others, the unique conditions of service of SANDF members and their salary dispensation) that resulted from the tight budget allocated to the DOD. The Department still has a huge backlog in terms of the salary adjustments of the SANDF members.

Minister Sisulu further announced that the Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD), as recommended by the commission, had been attended to. “We have had to find the budget for the salary adjustment for the Military OSD. The details of the backdated payments will be discussed at a later stage. I would like to thank the commission for the wonderful work they have done to ensure that our dispensation responds to our unique environment,” she promised.

On the continuous call-up of Reserve Force members, Ms Sisulu promised that “legislation would be put before Parliament which will enable a call-up of those members who would like to be deployed by the Chief of the SANDF during peacetime. At the moment they can only be deployed in time of war or national emergency. We look forward to this as the Reserves are an essential part of our SANDF and, as our responsibilities increase, so does our need to absorb them”.

There was also jubilation from all quarters when the Minister announced the provision of decent pensions to all the Non–statutory Force Military Veterans, which will be effective as from 15 May 2010. This will also be implemented incrementally and the first adjustment will be made in May 2010. The office of the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, is responsible for the administration of the Military Veterans’ affairs.

To address the social challenges that are currently tormenting our society, Minister Sisulu also announced the establishment of the voluntary non-conscription National Service for the unemployed youth of South Africa. It is envisaged that after the introduction of the legislation and the appropriate infrastructure is put in place, the service will offer life skills and on-the-job training to alleviate the shortage of artisans and to instil discipline and patriotism in the youth of the country. It is hoped that the SANDF will help to provide the necessary expertise in this regard.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, June 2010 edition, pages 14 to 16.)
Operation LITCHI
10 years down the line

By Kgabo Mashamaite

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

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

Owing to a lack of capacity and resources to rescue stranded villagers, Mozambique requested the South African Government to offer humanitarian assistance. The rescue mission, called Operation LITCHI, was undertaken in response to the request. The decision to send SANDF members to the distressed villages in Gaza Province had a positive impact on the people being evacuated from the deadly floods. When this mission was broadcast and published on the international media the world witnessed the bravery, humanity and empathy that the SANDF had for the less fortunate in times of difficulty. An Oryx helicopter of the SA Air Force, one of four deployed on the Operation Litchi rescue mission, was seen hovering over a tree to rescue a newborn baby and her mother.

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

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

“I am grateful for the SANDF’s help during the floods in our country, Mozambique. It is due to it that we are alive today.” Rosita is a clever girl and excels in her schooling and enjoys Portuguese. “Her peers regard her as a national symbol and a heroine for having triumphed over the devastating floods in 2000, and it is because of her that the world has come to know about our plight and that the SA Air Force assisted us,” said Ms Chiure who thanked the Government of South Africa for sending the SANDF to her country to rescue its citizens from the floods.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, June 2010 edition, pages 16 and 17.)
The SANDF returns to border control

By Mr Manelisi Ndaba, DCC: Specialist Writer
Photos: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The SANDF recently returned to safeguard the country’s borders, and the general public has received the return of the SANDF to borderline control, known as Operation CORONA, positively, particularly the communities closest to these borders. This was evident during the visit of the Portfolio Committee on Defence in which they wanted to examine the conditions under which the SANDF was being redeployed on South Africa’s borders.

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

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

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

The SANDF is currently finalising an operational plan to ensure that it effectively secures the borders. This plan will be rolled out in phases due to budgetary constraints.

Part of the plan was to introduce technological sensors such as a force-multiplier to monitor even longer stretches in a short space of time. Although this is expensive technology, it is necessary for the effective protection of the border.

Operation CORONA will also support Operation KGWELE, the aim of which is to ensure that South Africa hosts a free and secure 2010 FIFA World Cup Soccer Tournament. In this regard the SANDF will work in close cooperation with all Government departments involved to ensure optimal control of the RSA borders, not only before and during the 2010 World Cup, but also into the future in execution of the mandate of the Defence Act.

Having seen the challenges faced by the SANDF, the parliamentary committee has committed itself to supporting the SANDF in dealing with its limitations. “As this visit has a direct link to the Defence Minister’s budget speech, it gives us as the Portfolio Committee an insight into the realities that are currently facing the Department of Defence (DOD) in terms of this operation, particularly on the issue of funding, which will be debated during the budget vote,” said Mr Booi.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, June 2010 edition, pages 18 and 19.)
Military Veterans honoured for their contribution

By L Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela and Mr Thabo Shirinda
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The democratic state of our country can, among other reasons, be attributed to the Military Veterans, who over the years have sacrificed their lives to rebuild the nation.

In an attempt to compensate them the Department of Military Veterans was officially launched at the Denel Campus in Centurion on 30 April 2010. It was a jovial affair as the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, and her Deputy, Mr Thabang Makwetla, formally announced the existence of the new department.

Months of hard work by a team led by Mr Makwetla finally led to an idea, which unfolded in what we have as the Department of Military Veterans. It was an idea the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Jacob Zuma, had when he established the Department of Military Veterans.

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans gave an overview of the department's structure and its directives. The launch was the culmination of long discussions and debates. It had been incumbent upon the Commission to draft policies that best suited the challenges of the military veterans. The solution would then have been to attempt to resolve the issues of the past, the present and the future.

Mr Makwetla said these policies should be relevant to the young and in accordance with their background. He mentioned, however, that the resolutions were mainstream as they addressed socio-economic issues as well. The Department will also be a platform to launch a career of choice and the Deputy Minister has pledged his support.

The former Acting Secretary for Defence, Mr Tsepe Motumi, was appointed as the Director-General of the new department. After years of struggle to be recognised the Military Veterans now have a department to deal specifically with their challenges. The President of the SA Military Veterans Association (SAMVA), Mr Kelby Mphatso, emphasised the fact that it was an honour for them to get recognition and to have a platform to express their issues.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude at the launch of the newly established department. He said that they would continually meet to discuss their organisational growth and empowerment. After their relentless struggle to achieve their goal, they are honoured finally to be recognised for their efforts.

On behalf of the SAMVA he pleaded for peace and co-operation with the new department so that consensus could be reached on matters affecting them. Mr Sandi Sijake of the Veterans League commended the outcome and proclaimed this a long travelled journey. In support of the military veterans he said history had been made and they were merely adding to it. He was also hopeful that the department would meet its expectations and pledged his total support.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, June 2010 edition, page 22.)
Minister improves SANDF service conditions

By Mr Kgabo Mashamaite
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

Members of the Air Force Base (AFB) Makhado will cherish 19 April 2010 as a special day in their careers and the history of their unit after the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, visited them.

The aim of the visit was for the Minister to interact with SANDF members and get first-hand experience of the conditions under which they operate. This was also one of many trips the Minister had scheduled to visit SANDF bases countrywide.

During the ministerial inspection of the AFB Makhado facilities, she was introduced to the basics of operating a Hawk Mk 120 combat fighter jet by means of a simulator training programme presented at 85 Combat Flying School, one of the flagships of the SA Air Force combat training facilities, which trains fighter pilots to make South African airspace among the safest in the world.

Addressing the media after her interaction with the soldiers, Minister Sisulu said that through the Interim Defence Force Service Commission that was established to improve the service conditions of the SANDF members, her Department was committed to addressing challenges that the soldiers experienced in executing their duties. She said: “In my interaction with our soldiers I also assured them that the Government was committed to addressing their challenges despite the unfavourable global economic conditions and creating an environment in which the SANDF became the first career choice to aspirant youth, with attractive salary packages and excellent career pathing as a means to rejuvenate and modernise the National Defence Force. Contrary to the reports that our soldiers are living under appalling conditions, I found the AFB Makhado facilities one of the best and also encouraged them to look after and maintain their amenities.”

Minister Sisulu added that her visit to different SANDF units would also help her Department have an insight into the complexities of running a modern and highly sophisticated SANDF, especially with the conditions brought about by the economic downturn.

She said: “Talking to our soldiers I also assured them that the Government was committed to addressing their challenges despite the unfavourable global economic conditions and creating an environment in which the SANDF became the first career choice to aspirant youth, with attractive salary packages and excellent career pathing as a means to rejuvenate and modernise the National Defence Force. Contrary to the reports that our soldiers are living under appalling conditions, I found the AFB Makhado facilities one of the best and also encouraged them to look after and maintain their amenities.”

The media team during the ministerial visit were introduced to the preparations of a combat ready pilot, whose task was to secure the country’s airspace by intercepting unidentified aircraft. Last year, during Operation KGWELE, such pilots were employed to safeguard the Confederations Cup stadiums.

According to Brig Gen John Bayne, Director Combat Systems, the SA Air Force was ready to safeguard the country’s airspace during the FIFA Soccer World Cup from 11 June to 11 July 2010. Brig Gen Bayne confirmed that the SA Air Force deployed quite a number of aircraft to help in patrolling our airspace. He stated that the Gripen fighter jet with the capability of providing an airborne radar system would be utilised for both the World Cup and border patrol duties.

According to Brig Gen Bayne the SA Air Force will work closely with the Air Transport Navigation Systems to intercept suspicious aircraft cruising in the red zones (closer to the World Cup venues). “We have been successful in this because during the Confederations Cup last year we managed to escort a light passenger aircraft that flew in the demarcated zone and we rerouted it to Lanseria Airport. We subsequently handed it over to the South African Police Service, as it was called then,” Brig Gen Bayne said.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, June 2010 edition, page 24.)
Understanding the Defence Amendment Bill

By Prof Sipho Seepe, Strategy Consultant and Special Adviser to the Minister of Defence

An appreciation of the current Defence Amendment Bill would be incomplete without locating it within the constitutional mandate and developments in the ever-changing defence environment.

The South African Constitution is deliberate and unambiguous with regard to its expectations of the National Defence Force. It purposefully enjoins us to establish a defence force that is “structured and managed as a disciplined military force.” The emphasis on discipline is obvious. Without discipline the Defence Force would be unable to fulfill its primary function of defending and protecting the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force. This translates into defending and protecting our critical interests, supporting our foreign policy by assisting our allies and supporting peace operations on the continent. In addition, the Defence Force helps to beef up the civil power through extraordinary measures to enforce the dispensation, which allows us to deal creatively with our own needs and the specificities of our own unique security requirements.

All these commitments, which are the subject of the present bill before Parliament, were undertaken to motivate the DOD’s personnel and encourage recruitment and retention. The Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans has gone a long way towards establishing a different dispensation. The concept was approved by Cabinet. It also approved the regulatory mechanism to govern and oversee the dispensation, which allows us to accommodate the unique nature of the Defence Force. It is precisely for this reason that we demand and take extraordinary measures to enforce discipline. Soldiers are not tied to the state by an employment contract, but by an oath.

More often this responsibility involves exposure to enormous personal risks and sacrifices arising from heavy operational commitments. Members of the SANDF are expected to spend large amounts of time away from home on back-to-back deployments. To the extent that they bear the responsibility as the last defence of our democracy, they are our ultimate insurance policy against any threat within or outside the country. For their sake, and ours, we must preserve their calibre and morale.

It does not take much to appreciate that their commitment cannot be reduced to issues of pay. There are other intangibles such as pride in the service of one’s country and “enjoyment of a lifestyle that involves adventurous training and activities [that] make remuneration only one of many factors that motivate personnel.”

In her budget vote of 2009, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, sought to underscore this very issue when she said: “I want to assure Defence Force staff that their conditions of service are a concern … We are acutely aware that the state of readiness of the SANDF depends primarily on the morale of our soldiers”.

She went further and said: “We are considering making a request for a separate dispensation for the Department of Defence that would allow us to deal creatively with our own needs and the specificities of our own unique security requirements.” All these commitments, which are the subject of the present bill before Parliament, were undertaken to motivate the DOD’s personnel and encourage recruitment and retention.

The second amendment relates to remedying the lacunae in the legislation. The Constitution refers to the President having the responsibility, among others, of appointing the military command. However, no definition is provided in the legislation of what the military is or entails.

The last aspect of the bill deals with the empowering of the Chief of the SANDF to recall members of the Reserve Force. At the moment members of the Reserve Force can only be recalled when the country is at war or during a state of emergency. As a resource, they are underutilised and their combat readiness is severely compromised. The bill aims to remedy this situation inasmuch as it responds positively to their request to be recalled for service when the Chief of the SANDF deems fit.

Far from wanting to assume dictatorial powers, the Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans is taking all the necessary steps to ensure that it delivers on its mandate of structuring and managing a professional, disciplined Defence Force in the service of the country and the nation.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, July 2010 edition, page 12.)
MOD visit to embattled hospitals

By Lufuno Netshirembe

Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

Chapter 11 section 200 (2) of the South African Constitution focuses on the security services of the country: “The primary objective of the SANDF is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force”. The Constitution as the supreme law of the country stipulates in section 201 (2) that among other political responsibilities the SANDF can be employed to assist any State department and so help the Government discharge its duties.

Since the beginning of the Public Service labour action the SANDF has deployed more than 3 500 soldiers to different hospitals to assist the Department of Health in rendering medical service and providing security support with the South African Police Service (SAPS).

This assistance was rendered as prescribed in section 18 of Chapter 3 of the Defence Act, Act 42 of 2002, section 18 (1). It explicitly stipulates that: “In addition to the employment of the Defence Force by the president as contemplated in section 201 (2) of the constitution, the president or the minister may authorise the employment of the Defence Force for service inside the Republic or in international waters, in order to (a) preserve life, health or property in emergency or humanitarian relief operations, (b) ensure provision of essential services, (c) support any department of state, including support for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment and, (d) effect national border control”.

In Gauteng the SANDF members were deployed in Natalspruit, Chris Hani Baragwanath, Helen Joseph, Kalafong and George Mukhari (Ga-Rankuwa) hospitals. In KwaZulu-Natal soldiers were deployed in King Edward, Mahatma Ghandi Memorial and Chief Albert Luthuli hospitals. In the North West: Brits and Bophelong hospitals. In Limpopo: Van Vreden Hospital. In Mpumalanga: Witbank, Tonga, kwa Mhlanga, Mapulaneng, Rob Ferreira and Ermelo hospitals. In the Eastern Cape: Dora Nginza and Livingstone hospitals.

On 23 August 2010 the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, the Minister of Health, Mr Aaron Motsoaledi, the then Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Solly Shoke (now Chief of the SANDF), and the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Vejay Ramlakan, visited the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto and the George Mukhari Hospital in Ga-Rankuwa to find out first-hand the situation at these hospitals. This visit was meant to help the Ministers of Defence and Military Veterans and Health decide on the next step. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans was not happy with the situation at these two hospitals she visited. “This situation brought about by the strikers is completely unacceptable. We have a constitutional mandate to protect Government facilities and we will execute this mandate,” said Minister Sisulu. She assured the non-striking doctors who were afraid of being victimised by the strikers that the military would do everything in its power to protect them. This protection included patients and nurses who put their moral obligation to serve first before their right to strike.

The Spokesman of Minister Sisulu, Mr Ndivhuwo Mabaya, said they had deployed more than 130 personnel at George Mukhari Hospital and over 70 at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. Minister Sisulu was adamant that she would increase the military personnel at any hospital should the need arise. She said the patients needed to be confident that they could go to the hospital and be attended by either the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) members or the non-striking nurses. When doctors residing in the medical university hostels close to the hospital premises told Minister Sisulu that they had received threats, she immediately issued an instruction that the military personnel needed to make sure that they were protected from any harm.

She told the media that the Department of Defence, the Department of Health and the SAPS were doing all they could to reduce the stress on the non-striking medical workers. These three departments had established a toll-free helpline where distressed medical workers could call in case they were threatened, and help could then be dispatched.

The Minister of Health was quite pleased with the presence of soldiers at Baragwanath and George Mukhari hospitals. He praised the soldiers for doing an excellent job and thanked Minister Sisulu for her willingness to call upon more soldiers for assistance and for the toll-free helpline.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, October 2010 edition, pages 14 and 15.)
SA Air Force boasts the first female Gripen pilot in the world

By Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The SA Air Force can boast of its having produced the first female Gripen fighter jet pilot in the world – Maj Catherine Labuschagne. With over 12 years of service in the SA Air Force Maj Labuschagne has approximately 1 900 flying hours to her credit, 1 000 of these in military jets. “This is fantastic for me; and I am excited,” remarked Maj Labuschagne.

“It’s amazing what you can do with the aircraft, but you need to be persistent and work hard.” In 2004, after joining 85 Combat Flying School in Hoedspruit, Maj Labuschagne had an opportunity to become the first female fighter pilot in the world to fly in the back-seat of the Swedish built Gripen fighter jet at the opening of the Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) Exhibition.

In 2010 she did her first solo flight in a Gripen. Three male Gripen fighter pilots qualified at Air Force Base Makhado with Maj Labuschagne. The four of them completed their Operational Conversion Course in which they flew solo in Gripens on 7 October 2010.

Maj Labuschagne, Maj Lance Mathebula, Lt Kevin Chetty and Lt Col Gys van der Walt will form a pool of fighter pilots. They have paved the way for up-and-coming talents. The Operations Officer of 2 Squadron, Lt Col Musa Mbhokota, indicated during a briefing that their objective was to define excellence in multi-role air combat operations by the way they conducted themselves.

The Squadron has proved its capability judging by its performance during World War II in Europe and Africa, and later in Korea. Gripen training comprises an integrated training system that includes classroom attendance, computer training systems and the actual flying. The unit has built a Gripen simulation-training centre that allows the students to have a virtual experience of a flight.

Gripen courses include the flight leader course, operational conversion course and the flight attack course. The Officer Commanding of AFB Makhado, Brig Gen Chris Delport, said the unit was responsible for managing fighter aircraft. The fleet of 15 Gripens (9 with dual seats and 6 with single seats) are utilised for specialised combat operations and exercises. He pointed out that Maj Labuschagne as a Gripen pilot was an achievement for women flying these jets.

Three of the four Gripen fighter jet pilots leaving the hangar after landing their Gripens, fltr: Lt Kevin Chetty, Maj Catherine Labuschagne and Lt Col Gys van der Walt. (Maj Lance Mathebula was in Sweden when the photo was taken.)

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, November 2010 edition, page 17.)
The Interim National Defence Force Service Commission report

By Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma


In a short space of time after Minister Sisulu was appointed by President Jacob Zuma as the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans it became apparent that the SANDF had many problems that needed to be solved. Some of these problems were highlighted when a small number of soldiers demonstrated their discontent at the Union Buildings. The immediate response of the DOD was to find an “avant-garde modus operandi” to address grievances. The problems in the SANDF were not going to be easy to solve, but Ms Sisulu was equally determined to deal with these problems effectively and efficiently.

In October 2009 the INDFSC was established to deal with the following: (1) the unique challenges of the SANDF that fall outside the ambit of the Public Service; (2) to advise on a regulatory framework for unique service dispensation; and (3) to investigate and provide advice or recommendations on conditions of service for members of the SANDF.

The Minister highlighted the four categories that the recommendations by the interim commission fell under: (i) recommendations that required Cabinet approval (ie budgetary considerations and executive responsibilities that needed to migrate from one department to the other) (ii) those that the Minister could attend to as part of her work and responsibilities as a member of the Executive (iii) those that could be addressed by either or both the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SANDF, and (iv) those that related to the Military Service Commission.

The ten-member commission was chaired by Judge R. Bosielo with Mr A. Ismail as the Deputy Chairperson. Other commission members were Lt Gen (Ret) L. Moloi, Maj Gen (Ret) B.H. Holomisa, Mr P.J. Groenewald, Ms H.C. Mgabadi, Dr A. Mokgokong, Bishop M.M. Mpumulwana, Prof R.L. Christie and Mr Z.T. Ngcakani.

The Acting Chairperson, Bishop Mpumulwana, announced that the Commission had handed its final report to the Minister on 16 November 2010, one month earlier than the scheduled date of delivery. Among other issues that the Commission had to deal with were issues relating to the Defence Budget, infrastructure, Health Service Support, a grievance mechanism, Military Skills Development System (MSDS) recruitment and military careers.

The then Minister of Public Works, Ms Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, confirmed that the Department of Defence and Military Veterans had requested an overhaul of the military facilities. She said her department was giving soldiers’ accommodation priority attention.

Since the INDFSC was established some of its recommendations were implemented immediately and the results of the commissioners’ tasks and recommendation have indeed brought much needed change to the lives of South African soldiers.

(Previously published in SA Soldier, January 2011 edition, page 16.)
Armed Forces celebrated

December is a day dedicated to unity, healing and reconciliation. The day also reminds us of all the wars of resistance, wars of liberation and conflicts South Africa has gone through and that we were once a nation divided whose people were at war against each other for many decades.

It was fitting that the Commander-in-Chief, President Jacob Zuma, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, the then Chief of the SANDF, Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, and Service Chiefs were able to commemorate National Reconciliation Day with members of the SANDF at an event called Armed Forces Day.

The Programme Director, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile, welcomed the President, members of Cabinet, dignitaries, and guests from foreign countries to rejoice with the SANDF, military veterans and the rainbow nation.

Armed Forces Day was a dignified, ceremonious event that will linger in the memories of members of the SANDF, military veterans, dignitaries, guests and the public who made the time to come to Thaba Tshwane City Hall in Pretoria for the address of the Commander-in-Chief to the soldiers and nation.

Speaking at the Armed Forces Day at Thaba Tshwane, President Zuma said that the SANDF was the country’s last line of defence, and the men and women of the SANDF had never disappointed when called upon to discharge their duties at home. He applauded the SANDF’s unwavering dedication to the country and its people.

He mentioned that there was a need for SANDF members to exercise discipline, commitment, reliability and dependability and that these attributes were non-negotiables.

President Zuma said: “We reiterate too that our soldiers are not ordinary civil servants who are guided by the Public Service Act. Precisely because of this unique situation of our soldiers, they require special attention, which we are working on as Government.”

President Zuma said that the Government had created the Department of Military Veterans within the defence portfolio to take care of military veterans’ affairs, thus helping us finally to formalise support for the military veterans. He reiterated that some of the military veterans who had fought with all they had to break the shackles of the apartheid system were today largely destitute. However, he said a number of departments, including Human Settlements, Social Development, Arts and Culture and the Government Employees Pension Fund had been roped in to assist the military veterans.

In conclusion, President Zuma mentioned that he had signed into law the Defence Amendment Bill which, among others, manages all the affairs of the SANDF.

16 December 2010 was an appropriate time to recall that the new SANDF was formed through the integration of various armed forces to unite former enemies in an integrated force. The day was also marked to pay tribute to the military veterans.

(For more information please read the published in SA Soldier, January 2011 edition, pages 18 and 19.)
Defence contributes towards skills development

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, welcomed and bade good luck to 4 000 young men and women who had complied with and been accepted for the first intake of the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) for 2011 at the Thaba Tshwane Sports Ground on 9 January 2011.

The MSDS remains the primary mechanism through which the DOD contributes towards structured military skills development, occupational functional skills development and leadership development among the youth.

The aim of the MSDS is twofold, namely to enhance the SANDF’s mission-readiness through the systematic rejuvenation of its human resource composition, which is done through annual intakes of young, fit and healthy people. Secondly, the MSDS serves as the feeder system for the Reserves and seeks to provide scarce skills for the youth of the country to enable them to contribute meaningfully to the growth of the country.

The MSDS recruits will be divided, as per organisational requirements, into the four Services of the SANDF, namely the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service. They will undergo six months of Basic Military Training. Deserving MSDS members are afforded an opportunity to choose training in specific careers, e.g. as engineers, pilots, surveyors.

The SANDF has become a training institution of choice for employers such as the SA Police Service, Transnet, the aviation industry and engineering as it is able to take in young people, train and empower them with the necessary skills, and make them available to different sectors. This is the DOD’s contribution to skills development said Minister Sisulu when she welcomed the class of 2011.

She wished all the recruits well, as they were embarking on an unforgettable journey. Minister Sisulu mentioned that the DOD was a unique family and prided itself on discipline and commitment. Minister Sisulu said: “We build tomorrow’s leaders”. Then she thanked the parents for allowing their children to join the SANDF and to be part of the military family.

Speaking to SA Soldier, 23-year-old Wayne Olivier from Randburg and 18-year-old Tiaan van Schalkwyk said they were very happy and honoured to have been chosen to serve their country and to be counted among those serving in uniform. They concluded by saying they would give their utmost best to remain in this noble profession.

(For more information please read the published article in SA Soldier, January 2011 edition, pages 20 and 21.)
MOU signing ceremony between SA and Argentina

Article and photo by WO1 Manny Gounden, the then PRO Naval Station Durban

History was made when the representatives of the Governments of South Africa and Argentina formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on defence co-operation and military development. The signing ceremony was held on board SAS DRAKENSBERG in Buenos Aires on 20 November 2010.

The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Mudimu, the Director Maritime Plans, R Adm (JG) Sagren Pillay, Flag Captain, Capt (SAN) Andre Katernic, and the Defence Attaché, Capt (SAN) Lesley Johnson, were present at the signing ceremony.

The South African Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, and the Argentine Minister of Defence, Ms Nilda Celia Garre, formally signed the MOU.

The MOU included an additional protocol on the protection of classified information exchanged between the parties within the framework of the MOU agreement.

The agreement will strengthen co-operation in the areas of training and search and rescue operations in the Southern Atlantic Ocean. The two countries will also co-operate in the exchange of students, defence science, technology and industrial development.

In her address, Minister Sisulu said: “Madame Minister, you and I come from a generation of militants who fought for a just cause. Therefore, I feel a profound pride in that two women are signing the MOU today. I am convinced that this symbolic act will allow for greater co-operation in the Southern Atlantic Ocean. It has been a lonely environment for me till I met you. We as women have ‘that’ with which no one can compete.”

The agreement allows for an exchange of technology, innovation, military health development and for participation in joint training exercises and partnerships to co-ordinate search and rescue operations in the Southern Atlantic Ocean.

The two countries also agreed to explore areas of defence, industrial co-operation in the aviation, avionics, command and control communications, air-to-air missile technology, grenade launchers and maritime environments.

Both Ministers agreed that the threat of conflict between nations had almost disappeared and that new threats and challenges of a special type had emerged to challenge the stability and security of nations. The most obvious of these are terrorism, piracy on the high seas, the proliferation of nuclear weapons among rogue countries, biological and chemical weapons, cyber-warfare, resource scarcity and climate change.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, January 2011 edition, pages 22 and 23.)
Heeding the President’s call for job creation

In support of the Government’s drive to achieve more with less, more partnerships are pursued with other organs of state to assist in the delivery of the justifiable socio-economic needs of rural areas and those at local level.

The vision of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, to establish a National Youth Service was further enhanced when 500 youths from the country’s eight provinces received their certificates at a function held at the Department of Defence Mobilisation Centre at De Brug near Bloemfontein on 17 March 2011.

The youth were recruited by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform and seconded to the Department of Defence for a seven-week foundation phase of pilot training. This specially designed foundational training of a non-military nature was intended to train the youth in, among others, self-discipline, patriotism, civic education and civic participation (voluntarism).

This programme is called the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC), the main goal of which is to recruit and develop a National Rural Youth Service Corps of members aged between 18 and 35 years to be trained to perform community service in their own communities.

The NARYSEC is a Government effort to curb migration to urban areas with a view to dealing with the escalating levels of service delivery protest action and high levels of unemployment that are prevalent among the youth and people in rural areas and to reskill young citizens. It is therefore another opportunity for economic participation through maintenance of existing infrastructure.

The focus of the programme is youth development in the rural areas and the need to address the challenges of a lack of skills and unemployment.

During her Budget Vote speech on 4 May 2010, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans announced her intention to introduce a bill that would provide the necessary legal framework for the creation of a National Youth Service. In this regard the DOD has embarked on a public consultative process to solicit inputs from various defence stakeholders, particularly youth formations.

Once established, the National Youth Service will, among others, seek to address the challenges of youth unemployment. This will be done by ensuring that all youth are introduced to the Department of Defence’s facilities where they will be offered skills to build on.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, April 2011 edition, pages 12 and 13.)
SADC Defence Committee
united against piracy

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Defence Chiefs, and heads of intelligence agencies met to work out a joint regional anti-piracy and maritime crime strategy at the Velmore Estate outside Pretoria from 24 to 27 July 2011.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, accompanied by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, addressed those attending the welcoming function and described the meeting as a historic occasion, as this was the first time that all the Defence Chiefs of the SADC had gathered in the same place, and South Africa and its SADC neighbours were ready to work collectively on a joint anti-piracy and maritime-crime strategy.

Minister Sisulu said that the effectiveness of the meeting would be greater if individual countries combined their efforts rather than if each member country had a plan of its own. It was important that the SADC Defence Committee should synchronise its legislative, political, economic and judicial policies to allow the armed forces of member countries to operate swiftly and effectively against maritime criminals, including pirates.

She said: “The SADC member states should put in place robust laws to curb piracy effectively. The current practice of ‘catch-and-release’ of pirates should be stopped, since it allows experienced pirates to become more sophisticated and there have been around 1 600 acts of piracy, which have caused immeasurable harm.”

Ms Sisulu added that the increase in piracy off the Horn of Africa was directly linked to the continuing insecurity and the absence of the rule of law. In this respect piracy had increased the cost of trade. She said: “As regions are increasingly regarded as threatened by piracy, they are seen as unstable, or volatile, and entire trading routes are altered, insurance premiums increase, and cargo shippers use alternative ports to pick up and deliver their goods.”

The meeting provided a forum to establish a common framework of cooperation and a regional network of maritime nations for a free and secure maritime domain. Regional issues of mutual interest were discussed and the strategic ramifications of the SADC initiative were highlighted as a major development in the maritime arena.

Regional maritime security capabilities were required that would make the SADC region a world-class maritime player and this would boost economic development.

There was much discussion of transnational maritime networks that posed a threat, human trafficking, piracy, terrorism and other factors that could retard regional maritime and general economic interests. The provision of maritime environmental protection and maritime resource coordination would ensure the safety of seafarers, chartered vessels and other shipping. Coastal monitoring, surveillance, identification and tracking would be invaluable to the navies, government entities, ports authorities and maritime industry.

The Chief of the SANDF pointed out that SADC member states would have to take responsibility for their own maritime security in cooperation with other regions, task forces, navies and role-players.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, September 2011 edition, page 22.)
As the DOD celebrates ten years of its official monthly publication, *SA Soldier*, it becomes imperative to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work done by DOD members in telling military stories of the past decade in their own words.

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

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

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

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

The starting point was the establishment of the Interim National Defence Force Service Commission to look into the conditions of service of the members of the SANDF. To further advance this effort in 2010, the DOD submitted to parliament an Amendment Bill to the Defence Act of 2002. The bill proposed, among others, a separate dispensation for the DOD from the public service sector, which would give it legal standing and a permanent service commission. This is in the process of being established and the names of nominees have already been submitted for consideration.

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

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

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

The Department of Military Veterans was proclaimed as a separate and stand-alone department within the ministry. This was done in order to create a department within government whose sole responsibility was to govern and cater for the affairs of all former members of military organisations, both from before the dawn of democracy and those who have served in the current South African National Defence Force.
focus on pertinent defence matters

Compiled by Itumeleng Makhubela

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

As host of the Soccer World Cup, and the first of its kind on the continent, we set out to ensure that the country provided ironclad security for the duration of the tournament.

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

During the same period the National Defence Force was called upon to assume responsibility during the crippling three-week national health workers strike. This required deploying medical personnel and taking over 74 abandoned hospitals in eight provinces. In addition, members of the SANDF provided protection for those members who were prepared and had volunteered to assist in helping other services.

The DOD's National Youth Service (NYS) Programme got off to an exciting start. The programme aims to build the youth through civic education and training in basic workplace skills while also encouraging self-respect, respect for others, integrity and societal responsibility.

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

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

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, May 2011 edition, pages 10 and 11.)

Focus on pertinent defence matters

Compiled by Itumeleng Makhubela

t Gen Derick Mgwebi, the then Chief of Human Resources (now Chief of Joint Operations), held his Communication Period at the Personnel Service School in Thaba Tshwane on 7 June 2011.

He wanted to use the occasion to address pertinent issues unfolding in the Department of Defence (DOD) and he conceded that the Department, with emphasis on the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) was in a better state than it had been since the dawn of the new dispensation.

Lt Gen Mgwebi spoke about the Defence Amendment Bill that had been passed by Parliament and said the DOD could now concentrate on the pertinent issues, eg conditions of service, remuneration and grading of posts and matters affecting the core functions of the SANDF.

He said that the long overdue draft of the Defence Review was ready to be presented to Parliament, after which the DOD would embark on a public consultation process before the submission of the final Defence Review to Parliament.

He added that Defence Works Capability would urgently attend to the matter of the declining state of defence infrastructure. The DOD had begun discussions with the Department of Public Works on the establishment of the Defence Estate Management Mechanism, which will result in the DOD progressively exiting from the current arrangement on property and facilities management by the Department of Public Works. The rolling out of the Defence Works Capability, which is an in-house capability to maintain and repair defence facilities, has been implemented.

Lt Gen Mgwebi said that the DOD's National Youth Service (NYS) Programme, currently in partnership with the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, with more government departments to join the programme in the near future, had gotten off to an exciting start. The programme aims to build the youth through civic education and training in basic workplace skills while also encouraging self-respect, respect for others, integrity and societal responsibility. The desired outcome is in better shape than it was three years ago, though there is still a long way ahead. This is only the beginning of a new dawn for members of the DOD who have taken a pledge to serve this country and its people with their lives.

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

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier, May 2011 edition, pages 10 and 11.)
The Military Police Division (MPD) has successfully participated in the Opening of Parliament over the past three years since the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, assumed office. There are currently six policewomen who are qualified to drive motorcycles in the MPD, and two of them participated in the Opening of Parliament in February 2012 thereby enhancing gender equity in a male dominated field.

The MPD has successfully executed the ceremonial duties in the form of foreign State visits, letters of credence, accreditation of military attachés and SANDF parades over the above-mentioned period.

The Division has creditable exhibited its policing capability at the Rand Show from 6 to 15 April 2012. It has professionally handled complaints from various stakeholders over this period thereby displaying its commitment to serve the people with enthusiasm and loyalty. Its high policing visibility at the Rand Show has restored public confidence, security and the protection of State property.

The MPD has complied with its own performance objectives over the past Festive Season (1 November 2011 to 31 January 2012) by executing high levels of deliberate crime prevention actions in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies. These deliberate crime prevention actions constituted of random searches, roadblocks, stop and searches, disciplinary and traffic patrols at SANDF business areas. During the festive season 46 members were arrested for various crimes and recovery of State property was immensely estimable in various parts of SANDF business areas in the country.

The MPD has displayed its combat readiness in dealing with any prevailing circumstances when confronted with criminal activities whenever it manifests at any time at any place. These policemen and women in combat have worked long hours in pursuit of a military policing excellence in the Department of Defence.
The ruby berets of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) have become a known and welcome sight over the years as part of the health care system and lately in support of world-class events, such as the 2010 Soccer World Cup. The “angels of mercy”, as they were nicknamed by the media during the health care professionals labour action at government hospitals, have since 2009 been deployed to numerous hospitals to assist the Department of Health to protect the most vulnerable and make sure they receive the best possible medical care when others are failing them.

In 2009 the groundbreaking Directive on the Health Classification and Deployability of SANDF Members with HIV and AIDS was approved. The implementation of the HIV policy had the following benefits and outcomes for serving soldiers and the SANDF:

- There is currently a uniform approach to the health classification of all SANDF soldiers and new recruits presenting with certain chronic medical conditions, including HIV and AIDS.
- It also allows for the optimal selection of soldiers for the operational requirements of the SANDF, per health and post profile, so that they can be trained and utilised in the interests of both the individual and the SANDF.
- The policy has also made provision for an increase in the total number of deployable soldiers and for prepared and supported military health capabilities, services and facilities to support these soldiers where reasonable and possible.

The content has been made available to the United Nations and the African Union as the applied protocol and guidelines for the operational deployment of SA Peacekeeping Forces.

The SAMHS also showed its mettle during the 2010 Soccer World Cup by providing highly developed technological support from its National Health Operations Centre in Centurion to all the stadiums involved in this spectacular event. This was widely recognised as a world-class facility providing medical support on time and to the right place.
SANDF continues to inspire South Africans

By Lt Col Frans Pale, SO1 Operational Communication
Photo: Capt Matthew de Jager

The Joint Operations Division (J Ops Div) continues to inspire the South African population as it employs forces in the defence of the Republic, and the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. On the other hand, the J Ops Div also complies with the international obligations of the Republic to international bodies and other states.

During the financial year 2011/2012, the J Ops Div deployed South African National Defence Force (SANDF) cadres for participation in a wide range of prominent and internationally recognised external peace support operations.

During these operations, the SANDF deployed a total of 2 249 members. They were deployed in three large to medium scale peace support operations, such as Operation MISTRAL in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Operation CORDITE in the Sudan and Operation COPPER in support of the Mozambique Government’s counter-piracy operations in the Mozambique Channel.

Other military assistance operations carried out by the SANDF included Operation VIMBEZELA in the Central African Republic, Operation DAWN in South Sudan, Operation RUSH in the Republic of Tanzania, Operation SONONDER in Equatorial Guinea and Operation SENOKO in the DRC. The latter involved the successful delivery of material from South Africa to the DRC during the recently held parliamentary and presidential elections in that country.

Fellow soldiers, ladies and gentlemen, charity begins at home. In support of the people of South Africa, the SANDF completed one Bailey bridge in April 2011 at Nquthu River in the Eastern Cape and another at Hammanskraal in Gauteng in June 2011. These bridges were donated and built by the SA Army Engineers to provide safe and easy access to communities.

The SANDF provided fire-fighting assistance during the floods in the Brandfort area in the Free State in July 2011 after the municipality could not provide water for the community.

The SANDF also provided flood relief assistance during the floods in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces. We again provided medical care to crewmen of a Chinese ship, the LAI-CHING in the vicinity of Tristan da Cunha in May 2011.

With regard to the border safeguarding responsibility of the SANF, Operation CORONA continues according to a phased roll-out approach. The SANDF completed phase two of the roll-out successfully by deploying two subunits at Pontdrift and Musina in Limpopo, two subunits at Macadamia and Skukuza in Mpumalanga, two subunits at Ndumu and Pongola in KZN and one subunit at Ladybrand in the Free State. The border safeguarding responsibility encompasses all three environments, viz land, air and sea. The deployment of the SANDF for border safeguarding resulted in 16 850 illegal immigrants being apprehended, 368 criminals arrested, 60 stolen vehicles recovered, 8 weapons recovered, 1 394 livestock recovered, 453kg of copper cable recovered and 9 068kg of dagga confiscated.

The SANDF also provided maritime and airspace control. This support was provided by the SANDF backed by the collateral value of core conventional capabilities. As part of Operation CORONA, the SANDF is executing Operation HORIZON (anti-poaching) with the aim of stopping rhino poaching in the country, especially in the Kruger National Park.
Chief of the SA Navy receives Honorary Doctorate

The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Mudimu, received an Honorary Doctorate from the Durban University of Technology on 19 April 2012. This is one of the highest honours a university can bestow on a person. A council of academics comes together to decide on such a deserving individual.

An Honorary Doctorate is a lifetime achievement and must be treated as such. The SA Navy is privileged to have the leadership of V Adm Mudimu. In his acceptance speech, the Chief of the SA Navy made mention of many strong leaders who gave hope to their fellow countrymen and women, for example Napoleon and Doctor Nelson Mandela.

The first black Officer Commanding of a submarine

The SA Navy and members of the media were there to witness Cdr Thamsanqa “Handsome” Matsane being sworn in as the first black officer to assume Command of a Type 209 submarine, SAS Queen Modjadji I, in the naval dockyard at Simon’s Town on 26 April 2012.

Cdr Matsane or “Handsome” as he is affectionately known to most of the naval members enlisted in the SA Navy in 1998 and completed his Military Training for Officers Part I in December 1998. Cdr Matsane went on to complete his Bachelor in Military Science degree through the University of Stellenbosch at the Military Academy in Saldanha. He has completed all military courses required to assume the command of a naval submarine.

In 2007 Cdr Matsane joined the Submarine Squadron and qualified as a submariner. Eventually he was appointed as Operations Officer of the SAS CHARLOTTE MAXEKE. He was the Executive Officer of SAS CHARLOTTE MAXEKE until 26 April 2012 when he officially took command of the SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I.

According to Cdr Matsane the highlight of his career was when he sailed in a number of yacht regattas, including the Cape to Rio race in 2003 and the four months he spent on the sailing ship B.E. Esmeralda on its round the world voyage from Chile. He was mentored by the Skipper, John Martin.

Interviewed by Naval Base Corporate Communications, Cdr Matsane boasted: “I am not good at languages, but give me any numbers to solve and I will always have a solution”. This illustrate why he was the best student in the mathematics class during the three years he spent at the Military Academy. Cdr Matsane speaks proudly of his grandmother, his other mentor.
First major exercise for 2 Squadron in Europe

Article and photos by WO2 David Nomtshongwana, photographer Ad Astra

The SA Air Force participated for the first time in Exercise LION EFFORT 2012. Countries that took part in the exercise were the Czech Republic, Hungary, South Africa and Sweden (the host) and Thailand as an observer. The main exercise elements took place from 1 to 4 April 2012.

The exercise was the result of these five countries signing a technical arrangement, in which it was agreed that they would work together as a Gripen Users Group. The aim was to improve the understanding of and use of the Gripen aircraft. The exercise provided a training opportunity in Nordic weather conditions for air units preparing for operational assignments, especially Combined Air Operations.

The ground crew of the SA Air Force were ready to marshal the last four new Gripens on 27 March 2012 when they landed at Ronneby F17 Air Base to take part in the exercise. It brought the total number of Grips of 2 Squadron (SA Air Force) to 26. These four new Gripens will be shipped back to South Africa later.

The F17 Air Base is located in the south-east corner of Sweden; from here the flights took place mainly over the Baltic Sea.

Two waves of Gripens were launched every day over a four days period, the Blue forces operating from south-west against the Red forces from the north-east. One force defended an area while the other performed air interdiction, and vice versa. The sounds of more than 20 fighter aircraft taking off and landing could be heard at the Ronneby Air Base in the morning and afternoon during the exercise.

On their arrival the SA Air Force pilots went directly to Linköping in Sweden to be fitted with suites and to have measurements taken for the Helmet Mounted Display. Ad Astra magazine spoke to Maj Catherine Labuschagne, the first female Gripen pilot in the world, after she landed for the first time at Ronneby. She said that they had been briefed by Mr Robin “Skater” Norlander (SAAB test pilot) and she was prepared for their first flight in European skies. Although it was a cold day with only a thin layer of cloud at 5 000 feet, it was a great day for flying by European standards, she said.

Maj Labuschagne said: “Everyone was looking neat and professional in camos, new jackets, and the vibe around Lion Camp (our base camp at F17 Air Base) was exciting. What an honour to be a part of this exercise.”

The Head of the SA Air Force contingent, Col Pierre Venter, in an exclusive interview with Ad Astra magazine after the exercise said that there was no doubt about the importance of the participation of the SA Air Force in this exercise, and they did very well in the role they played. Col Venter said: “The success of the
exercise could be measured in terms of the high morale of the staff. The flying part of the exercise was well planned and the willingness of the Swedes to assist us was much appreciated. We are among the best in the world in terms of operating the Gripen. The preparations for this exercise in Makhado helped 2 Squadron to do well.”

Col Venter concluded: “The SA Air Force flew everyday during Exercise LION EFFORT 2012 while the ground crew made sure that the fighter jets were ready to be flown. We did not know what to expect, but we came back having acquired a lot of expertise. We will be able to plough this back at home (SA).”

Maj John Matlou, one of three fighter controllers of the SA Air Force in the exercise, said: “My work was to control the fighters.” He added: “I gained experience in controlling large fights during the war. The Swedish Armed Forces operate differently: they function on slots, whereas at home we operate on single. Operating on slots can assist air traffic controllers because if one makes a mistake, it can be corrected immediately. We must be realistic; we cannot copy everything on account of environmental differences. I learned something of value, viz airspace management, which we can apply in 2018 when South Africa will be the host country for Exercise LION EFFORT 2018.”

Lt Col Gys van der Walt, Acting Officer Commander of 2 Squadron, who led the SA Air Force contingent on the operational side, said that the SA Air Force did very well. He said: “The ground crew made sure that we were airborne everyday. The Gripen Users Group bonded well during this exercise. We flew 40 hours. Although the systems of the different countries differed, it was not a major issue. We benefited greatly from the exercise.”

ABOVE: Fltr: Maj Catherine Labuschagne, Lt Col Lancelot Wellington, Lt Col Gys van der Walt and Lt Col Frans Labuschagne from the SA Air Force landed with their Gripens at the Ronneby F17 Air Base in Sweden.
Since coming to office as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in 2009 Ms Lindiwe Sisulu has enjoyed many successes in the various Services, Divisions and Directorates in the Department of Defence and Military Veterans.

Not only did she bring about positive change to the Department, but she is the first woman to be appointed Minister of Defence in South Africa. Thus, it is appropriate that in this article we reflect on her success in the Human Resources Division of the Department of Defence (DOD).

**2009/10**

The Human Resources Division (Directorate Language Services) successfully completed its first international assignment in support of three participating member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Brigade, namely Mozambique, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), by participating in Exercise GOLFINHO, an international and multilingual peacekeeping field training exercise at Lohatlha held during September 2009.

The translation of documents of significance and the interpreting of exercise proceedings were an indispensable support function during the exercise.

The DOD conducted language training courses in Arabic, French and Kiswahili for 170 members (SANDF soldiers and attachés) to enhance communication during their deployment to countries in Africa such as the Sudan, the DRC and Burundi. The DOD also forged interdepartmental collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs, a partnership that resulted in massified Arabic training for another 554 DOD members, who were outsourced to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

During the reporting period 759 DOD learners enrolled for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Air Force Base Hoedspruit achieved the best results with a 100% pass rate for its 88 learners.

A total of 240 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members have been transferred to the South African Police Service (SAPS) as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Defence and Military Veterans and the SAPS, which ultimately contributes to the rejuvenation of the SANDF.

The DOD Individual Grievance Procedure during 2009. After interaction with all role-players, the Individual Grievance Procedure was finalised and approved by the Plenary Defence Staff Council during February 2010. This approved Procedure will have a huge impact on the finalisation of grievances as it is electronically supported and now encompasses one process for both the military and civilian members of the DOD.

Altogether 93 members completed their training at Naboomspruit and have now been appointed by the South African Revenue Services (SARS) as inspectors and are deployed at Ports of Entry.

**2010/11**

A process of initiating a regional strategy on how to mainstream gender in SADC Defence Forces was finalised. This resulted in an approved Action Plan which is being discussed at the Inter-state Defence Security Committee (ISDSC) Personnel Work Group meetings.

The deployment of a Gender Adviser in the SA Contingent in the DRC has resulted in SANDF personnel in mission areas being assisted in preventing, stopping and addressing sexual harassment. Serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse against women and girls offences levelled against SANDF soldiers should therefore diminish as a result of this deployment.

The promulgation and successful implementation of the Individual Grievance Procedure Regulations allows both members and employees to lodge their grievances without fear of intimidation and victimisation.

**2011/12**

The Human Resources (HR) Division facilitated the joint review of the Military Skills Development System to all Services and Divisions’ headquarters and units across the country.

The HR Division facilitated the joint review of the Military Skills Development System (MSDS). A Decision Brief was presented to the Military Command Council on 5 September 2011 where the recommended option was approved.

In satisfying Government imperatives, the HR Division focused mainly on facilitating job creation opportunities for the exiting MSDS members and has been engaged in interdepartmental transfers of National Defence Force personnel.
to fill 350 posts at the Department of Home Affairs.

The Non-statutory Forces (NSF) Pension Rules have been approved and gazetted with effect from 8 July 2011. A number of payments have already been processed according to the categories as set by the Government Pension Administration Agency. The Government Employees Pension Fund Law and the Special Pension Amendment Act have been tabled in the National Assembly to accommodate the NSF Pension.

Great strides have been made in the administration of the Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill Health Retirement (PILIR). The authority to condone the outstanding transactions of deceased members or those who exited the system was received from the Secretary for Defence. Services and Divisions have been informed and a revised Standard Operating Procedure with regard to PILIR was promulgated and disseminated to all Services and Divisions.

The HR Division was able to finalise the collective grievances of the former members of the NSF in the Finance Management Division (FMD). All members who were found by the audit committee to have been prejudiced during the demilitarisation of the FMD were compensated and those that were found not to have been prejudiced were informed in writing.

The HR Division submitted 5 200 applications for redress of pension discrimination to the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). The applications were from serving and former employees. Once verified by the PSCBC, the applications will be sent to the Government Employee Pension Fund (GEPF) for consideration. In the event that the GEPF determines that they were indeed discriminated against, their period of service will be recognised and they will be compensated as such. This process was undertaken in order to give effect to PSCBC Resolution 7/98.

The Division embarked on an investigation to identify certain executive functions that could be decentralised to the Services. The aim of the decentralisation is to limit the high rate of qualified audit reports received by the DOD from the Auditor General, as Services would now play an active role in the quality control of submissions from unit level. The following functions were identified for decentralisation: Marketing, Recruitment and Selections. The appointments function with the relevant delegation is to remain with the HR Division, Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) Administration for Salary Levels 1 to 10 and medical and housing administration.

The Division submitted two substantial written legal opinions to the Priority Crimes Litigation Unit under the National Prosecuting Authority. The legal opinions related to the International Humanitarian Law Court cases in which the Republic of South Africa was involved.

In June 2011 a representative on the Law of Armed Conflict in the HR Division was elected and appointed as a member of the General Assembly of the International Institute for Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. This Institute is a non-governmental organisation that consults for the United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross and provides education in International Humanitarian Law.

Chief Human Resources interacts with the media

By Kgabo Mashamaite

The Chief of Human Resources, Lt Gen Thembekile Nkabinde, provided members of the media with the latest developments in the Human Resources Division of the Department of Defence (DOD) during a media breakfast briefing in Pretoria on 27 March 2012.

He outlined several projects his Division was involved in, such as employment opportunities for those in the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) who completed their two-year service period with other government departments or organisations in accordance with the concept of job creation and the Non-statutory Forces Pension Dispensation, as well as the retaining of scarce skills within the South African National Defence Force (SANDEF).

Lt Gen Nkabinde said: “It is a known fact that since taking office in 2009, Minister Sisulu has demonstrated her passion into turning things around in the SANDF. Among the issues close to her heart is the improvement of service conditions for the National Defence Force members when she appointed a permanent National Defence Service Commission (NDSC). The NDSC will also help the SANDF to retain scarce skills as it will provide the kind of working environment, which will improve the morale of our personnel. The process of appointing the commissioners is at the point of finalisation, as are the support structures and the employment packages of the commissioners. It is envisaged that the NDSC will be fully operational by the first quarter of the new financial year.”

Lt Gen Nkabinde said in order to aid the Department the DOD has developed the new grievance mechanism for both members of the SANDF and the Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) in response to a number of complaints lodged by DOD employees and the queries raised by Members of Parliament. Among these is the Military Ombudsman who complements and reinforces the mechanism already in place.

According to Lt Gen Nkabinde, among the greatest achievements since the formation of the SANDF were amendments to the Non-Statutory Forces (NSF) Pension Fund in accordance with the Government Employees Pension Act. Huge progress has been made with the support of the Government Pension Administration Agency since the middle of 2011. This includes, among others, the recognition of 8 061 applications for full NSF service for the in-service members, the finalising and processing of 2 126 members; recognition of 11 106 applications for full service of members exiting the active public service; the finalising of 5% member contribution refunding of 1 091 members; payment and recalculated arrears annuities and gratuities for 1 261 members have been finalised and the recalculation of the additional gratuities for 3 959 members. He also revealed that the Transnet Freight Rail would be recruiting at least 200 exited MSDS Reserve Force members every third month over a five-year period with the aim of utilising them at other national ports of entry. Currently the Transnet Freight Rail has 241 members who were appointed by the Transnet Freight Rail in the following sections: Transnet Rail (178), Transnet Pipeline (10) and Transnet Artisan Training (53).
The third Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo courtesy Navy News

The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Mudimu, welcomed the delegates to the third Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) held at the Cape Town Convention Centre from 10 to 13 April 2012. This was the first time this symposium was held in Africa.

The IONS has been established as a biennial event since its inception in New Delhi, India, in February 2008. In recent years it has expanded to become one of the largest and most significant maritime conferences convened in the Indian Ocean region. The IONS plays a pivotal role in enhancing maritime co-operation and security.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, and the Secretary for Defence, Mr Sam Gulube, officially opened the 2012 Indian Ocean Naval Symposium on 11 April 2012.

This year’s symposium, as one of the most important maritime conferences in the region, brought together approximately 86 countries and more than 350 delegates to discuss ways and means to deal with this scourge and achieve the main objective of constructive engagement and dialogue in order to enhance maritime security in the Indian Ocean and to promote areas of common interest and co-operation. The theme for the 2012 symposium was regional maritime security initiatives aimed at reducing modern maritime security threats. Looking at recent rampant illegal maritime activities (including, but not limited to piracy, human and narcotics trafficking, plundering of maritime resources and many other illegal sea-based activities) this was relevant as acts that threaten maritime security are becoming commonplace along the East coast of Africa, and are extending further to include the whole Indian Ocean.

Minister Sisulu pointed out that the South African Government and its citizens were committed to ensuring that the outcome of the symposium would become a top agenda item of security for South Africa and the region. She said: “We commit ourselves to ensuring that we give you the political support that you require in dealing with this clear, present and menacing scourge, so that you direct yourselves to the reduction of maritime security threats emerging in your respective environments.”

According to Minister Sisulu this commitment is very real as approximately 90% of our African trade is dependent on the sea for transportation. The increasing maritime security threat becomes a clear menace that endangers the livelihood not only of South Africans, but of all the member states of IONS. As a result of this fast growing maritime threat, the SA Navy is patrolling the seas as per the recently signed trilateral agreement of cooperation with Mozambique and Tanzania to curb this threat.

She encouraged countries to co-operate to combat maritime insecurity and said that collective co-operation would be mutually beneficial in finding solutions to regional maritime security.
Collaboration and co-operation for African landward defence and security.

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  Chief of the South African Army

- **Lieutenant General Chander Prakash**
  Force Commander for the UN Stabilisation Mission to the DRC (MONUSCO)

- **El Ghassim Wane**
  Director of Peace and Security, African Union

- **Major General Fabian Zakes Msimang**
  Chief Director: Policy and Planning, SA Air Force, South Africa

- **Antonie Visser**
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