First female commander of the C-130 (Flossie)
SA SOLDIER
The official monthly magazine of the SA Department of Defence

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FRONT COVER: Maj Caro Duven, the first female commander of a Hercules C-130 aircraft (Flossie). Read all about this remarkable woman in the SANDF on page 24. (Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma)

For the latest news on defence matters in South Africa, visit our website at: www.dod.mil.za

ABOVE: Delegates at the The DOD Gender Conference at St George Hotel in Irene in August 2012 under the theme: “Towards a United, Non-racial and Non-sexist DOD”. (Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole)

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(Secretary)
The main theme for this edition is the heart of the nation, and these days this is without a doubt the women - the mothers of South Africa.

Last month was Women’s Month and the nation also celebrated Women’s Day on 9 August to honour all our remarkable women.

The well known and inspiring archbishop emeritus Desmond Tutu recently said he believed that women were the most wonderful creation of God and that it was time men stopped clinging to leadership positions because women would do a better job than men.

Archbishop Emeritus Tutu was recently awarded the Shoprite Checkers Women of the Year Lifetime Achiever Award at an elegant event to celebrate women’s achievements and their role in the future of South Africa. During this momentous event he said: “I am very proud of the contribution of South African women towards our liberation and our new society. Through many decades their hard work has often been spectacular, although it was sometimes taken for granted and they did not always receive recognition for it.”

He added: “I dedicate this Award to our country’s remarkable women.”

I thought it fitting to convey these sentiments to our readers.

And remember, always believe in yourself. Never let your circumstances keep you or your dreams back.

I feel honoured to share with our readers this month’s stories about remarkable women in the SA National Defence Force who strive towards a better future for all.

Wa thinta Abafazi Wa thinta Imbokodo - If you strike a woman, you strike a rock …

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
The vehicle was displayed during the 7th Africa Aerospace and Defence which took place in September 2012.

PROUDLY AFRICAN SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGY ON THE WORLD STAGE

At Denel, we are proud to be the strategic partners of our National Defence Force. Our aerospace and landward defence technology rates amongst the world’s best. Not only do we supply new technology equipment for our Forces, we are there to make sure that the maintenance and refurbishment of this equipment keeps our country secure.

We are global designers and suppliers of world-class defence and aerospace solutions. Small wonder we are a key contributor to the country’s economy and a committed player in skills development.

The vehicle was displayed during the 7th Africa Aerospace and Defence which took place in September 2012.
BEAUTY OF A WOMAN

A good woman is the glue that holds the family together; success is the wife’s role in a family. A good wife is not ignorant, but an enterprising leader, who uses her time, talent and abilities for the good of the family and community. She is a steward over the family resources, shows kindness to the poor, and possesses character to bring honour to God and to her husband.

A good woman’s goal is to live life above reproach and to win the husband’s trust. The woman’s role in marriage is not only the ability to manage the household properly, but primarily to minister to her husband. Women have the power to make or break their men. A good woman builds a relationship with everyone. She guards her heart, for it determines the course of her life. She will not allow herself to be deceived by bad company because bad company ruins good morals, so she does not associate with them.

Treat older women as you treat your mother and younger women with purity of intention as you would your own sister. A good woman loves at all times and wisely builds friendships because if you are alone, it is easy to be attacked and defeated, but with friends around you, you have some protection. A wise woman knows her place. She is a living example; she serves with joy in her heart; she studies to improve her knowledge. She speaks well of others wherever she goes. She is kind, using no unpleasant words or actions. She shows how to love and be tender-hearted by being tender and loving. She brings joy and laughter into her busy world, yet she is ready to weep with those who may be suffering and in deep sorrow. She must keep her tongue under control.

She keeps her speech and actions pure concerning others. She will seek guidance and wisdom daily. Her heart instructs her hands to do good works. She gives support through trials and torment, understanding the work as she labours in her home, community or nation. She is a mother, wife and friend, who can be depended upon when emergencies arise, day or night.

She gives all of herself. A wise and good woman can accomplish much in her lifetime. She does well and works willingly. She has no time to become unhappy with her place in life. She manufactures happiness when she wakes up in the morning. A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. Her face is the mirror of her heart. A good, wise woman has nothing to hide; the beauty of her heart will shine in her face. She need not be ashamed of her beauty. She is a victorious woman. As a good woman her beauty reflects the brilliance of a well-polished jewel. She may have struggled a lot, but her efforts are fruitful and she is obedient. A good woman has the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, and a wise woman has priorities.

A wise woman’s heart and understanding are opened to receive the truth. The beauty of a good woman is in making herself attractive through the good things she does and her performance. There is great beauty in performing good works. By nature a good woman seems to be adapted to any deeds requiring kindness, tenderness and gentleness of feeling that proceeds from pity, sympathy and affection. Be a humble woman.

A woman should be beautiful inside as shown by her deeds. In spite of any obstacle in life she will win as a good, wise woman. She will be victorious in life with her children, business, etc. Refuse to fail as a woman. Tell yourself, your calling or purpose is to be a winner. Winners always have the end picture in mind. You will have 100% of life improvement. Thandiwe Ndinisa, email

WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EXCELLENCE

A woman is an adult human, a female with a different image. She is there as a mum, aunt, niece, mother-in-law, sister and housewife who is dedicated in her role as a homemaker. Women are first and foremost human beings and not sexual beings, thus their primary ends must be fulfilled as human beings not as women. They have lived too much for others and not enough for themselves.

In the past apartheid era, women were vulnerable and exploited. They were deprived of human qualities, not allowed to participate in party politics, and not given equal opportunities and status in civil society. Their only recommended place was to stay at home, bear children and look after the family.

In the new era women have stood up and organised themselves into social movements with the object of obtaining change in the country’s laws to accord themselves basic civil and human rights. Their need as women is not to have power, but to grow their intellect and develop to live free and unimpeded. They have been given equal rights to property, education, health care, access to information, debate and the right to enter any occupation or profession. Education has enabled them to converse on an equal footing with their male counterparts, and has emancipated them from slavery and all types of abuse. At present we have women who are serving as ministers, MECs, directors, CEOs and COOs. Sgt Mamoeiti Suping, email

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.
Women are the mothers of the nation. They brought life to this earth because of their beauty. A woman’s beauty is not seen in her looks but in her heart. Yes, so are the women, our mothers. What will the world be without the mother’s beauty? Will there be peace without the mother’s beauty? Many South African citizens believe that there will not be a better tomorrow without our mothers. Our mothers shape the world; they are a source of inspiration and they provide a better future for their children.

There is in every true woman’s heart a spark of heavenly fire. This spark of heavenly fire gives the women eagerness to succeed. Unusual efforts, perseverance and determination added to the spark of heavenly fire make a woman succeed. Despite challenges, a woman will find a way to succeed.

A home without a mother is like a building without a foundation. It lacks a lot of happy moments, the warmth of the mother’s love, advice and secrets to a healthy and happy life. A mother ensures that every day is a blessing in her home, every day is worth living in her home and every day is treasured. A mother brightens the home and put a smile on everyone’s face. She removes all the pain and heartaches and plants some happiness and joy. She wipes away all the tears and creates some hope for a better tomorrow.

Women’s Day is celebrated annually in South Africa and has been declared a public holiday. On the 9th of August 1956 women of all races marched to the Union Buildings to protest against oppressive apartheid laws. The women fought for their freedom as well as the freedom of society at large. Their battle for freedom ended in victory. Women are now free and equal partners in the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

Because of our mothers, our equality is promoted and we reap the fruits of our own mother’s hard work.

Lately women have shown they are no longer afraid to apply for jobs that were only said to be for men, they are no longer afraid to take the lead in male dominated organisations. Women are now advancing into male dominated environments and doing the jobs that were only done by men. Women are now often at the head of male dominated industries and are heading departments and big companies.

What will South Africa be without women and where will joy and love come from? That’s why we honour the women; that’s why we respect them and that’s why we love them. We salute you women, you are the mothers of our country and there is no life without you.

Lt Mokgadi Nkgapele, School of Engineers

Therefore I urge all women of the SANDF to wear their uniforms with pride, do what the Code of Conduct expects of you and strive to uphold the Constitution of South Africa. Then you will have no need to question your future in the SANDF.

Sgt Jacqueline Damons, email

As a woman in this day and age I am proud to be a member of the SANDF due to the organisation’s dedication to allowing women not only to participate but also be in control of a flag hoisting parade.

The women of JSB Garrison were in control of the flag hoisting parade on 22 August 2012. I was given the opportunity to be the Acting Platoon Commander as there are a few of female officers in our unit.

As a female Non-commissioned Officer I have many times felt undermined by my male peers in the regiment simply due to being a woman. We should not allow our spirit and moral to be broken by our virtue of being women.
SPREADING HUMAN COMPASSION

Mr Nelson Mandela once said: “It is in your hands to make this country a better place for all.”

As we celebrated Mandela Day, members of Joint Support Base Garrison in Thaba Tshwane took it upon themselves to start at home and clean the Ikageng premises in Thaba Tshwane as “charity begins at home”. During the cleaning process it came to our attention that most of the waste generated consisted of empty bottles, plastic and cans. The shoulder-high grass needed to be cut. We then took the opportunity to assist the residents by cleaning their surroundings. The residents were given brushes and 20 litres of paint to paint to renovate their own rooms. As Mr Mandela said: “We need to unite and have human compassion; a better life and a cleaner living environment for all.”

Surprisingly, Maj Gen Robert Mandita (Ret) arrived and joined the cleaning. It was fantastic to see the unit members joining hands together for a good cause. “Yes, we cannot change the world, but every small effort you make can change somebody else’s life.”

The General Officer Commanding, Brig Gen John Kobbie, and the residents were pleased with the cleaning and appreciated the efforts done by the unit. It was Brig Gen Kobbie’s wish that the place should be upgraded again in future. 

Sgt M.A. Suping, Pretoria

ARISE AFRICAN WOMAN

Arise African woman
Arise the people are looking
Unto your warm hands
To produce good seeds
That will be sowed and reaped
Yes be cultivated by
The intelligence of this country

Arise African woman
Isizwe sibheke wena (the world is watching you)
Sechaba se lebeletse wena (the nation is watching you)

WOMEN IN THE SANDF

The South African National Defence Force is known to be an environment for men. Yes in the past it was, but women have proved that they can do anything they put their mind to.

It’s not easy though, with various activities demanding their attention in different corps, from undergoing Basic Military Training to taking part in various exercises on the borders and in different countries throughout the world to safeguard our country - WOMEN CAN.

It is challenging for us as women in the SANDF, especially in the Armour Corps, because we have to use dangerous equipment such as the Rooikat, Tanks and ZT3’s. But we made it because our instructors made sure that we qualified as Rooikat gunners and drivers, Ratel drivers, ZT3 gunners and B–vehicle drivers, because WOMEN CAN.

We were also taught about different weapons, including platoon weapons, and how to operate them. Everyone had a chance to shoot with the different platoon weapons, although the men thought we would not make it because platoon weapons are heavy and not that easy to operate, but we showed them - WOMEN CAN.

It’s really an honour to be in the SA Army as women, because we can really do what men are doing. Even if they criticise us, we are proving them wrong. There are many women who have made it to the top in this organisation, so we also want to be like them. If they made it to the top, why can’t we?

“Wa thinta Abafazi Wa thinta Imbokodo” (meaning: If you strike a woman, you strike a rock). Never underestimate the power of a woman.

Tpr Q.S. Bantsha and Tpr T.R. Loate, email

UGANDAN PRESIDENT’S SON ATTENDED ENSP

Yet another Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) alumnus made headline news around the world!

On 27 August 2012, Muhoozi Museveni, son of the Ugandan President, Mr Yoweri Museveni, became a Brigadier General and Commander of the Ugandan Special Forces in charge of VIP Protection and protection of strategic installations.

Brig Gen Museveni (then Colonel) attended the ENSP 25/12 at the SA National Defence College in Pretoria from January to June 2012.

The SANDF was honoured with a special visit from the Ugandan President to attend the Award and Certificate Ceremony. Daleen van Sittert, email

Brig Gen Muhozi Museveni.
SUCCESSFUL FEMALE PILOT RUN

A pilot run was launched in March 1976 to recruit civilian women and housewives for training as non-combatant soldiers. They were to be trained to “man” units while the “men” were sent to the borders to protect the country.

As it was considered a pilot run the South African Defence Force was not budgeting for these women to go to the SA Women’s College in George; instead they were trained in administration, finances, logistics, military law and basic fieldwork. In fact, they even had a little “Jujitsu” training.

Not one of the 40 women that joined the Benoni Commando was paid a single cent for working there during 1976 as each one was a “volunteer”, and they were there simply because they wanted to be.

It was during training in 1977 that the women received their force numbers and were then considered real soldiers. However, the late RSM H.J. Coetzter was the inventor of the women’s “new uniforms”, which consisted of a plain brown skirt with a web-belt and a very plain brown shirt to match, as the South African Defence Force did not supply commando women with uniforms.

The wonderful times of those days are remembered, as these women were in fact very special. They worked hard to obtain their rankings. Very soon they filled the commando with laughter and it is only a pleasure that I can count myself among them.

SA Soldier published an article in its Special Edition for Women in August 2006: “Two of the first women to join a commando” which referred to WO1 M.E. Bodenstaff and myself (S Sgt D. Marucchi).

Two years ago WO1 Bodenstaff retired and now I am the last one remaining of the initial group of 40 women.

Not bad for a pilot-run! It has lasted for 36 years! I would definitely recommend such “pilots” for the future as all the women have done exceptionally well in serving their country and its people.

I am currently employed as a Reservist and I do not know what the future holds. I only know that the past was an adventure.

LIFE AND TIMES OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS

I stood and I watched as a mother cried, when she heard that her son had died. He didn’t die because he was sick or because he was in a wreck. He died doing what he felt was right.

I watched a father try to hold back his tears, his son had lived only a scant 19 years. His son had died nine thousand miles away, and what was there left for a father to say? He got down on his knees and said a prayer, his brave son knows his father did care.

I stood and watched as a little girl cried. She didn’t understand why her brother had passed on; why he never again played with her on the lawn. Looking at the little girl’s tears I knew that her big brother died fighting for you and me. Pte S.D. Mothapo, Potchefstroom

THE SOLDIER’S WIFE

Weary way-wanderer languid and sick at heart Travelling painfully over the rugged road Wild-visag’d Wanderer! Ah for thy heavy chance!

Sorely thy little one drags by thee bare-footed Cold is the baby that hangs at thy bending back Magore and livid and screaming its wretchedness.

Woebegone mother, half anger, half agony As over thy shoulder thou lookest to hush the babe Bleakly the blinding snow beats in thy haggled face.

Thy husband will never return from the war again Cold is thy hopeless heart even as Charity - Cold are thy famish’d babes - God help thee, widow’d one!

Pte S.D. Mothapo, email

We enjoyed the work and the wonderful people that guided and trained us. We have made history together and will always remember where it started, and what fun it was to know that we started something and finished it in style. S Sgt D. Marucchi, email

AM I NOT A WOMAN

That man over there says a woman needs to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches and to have the best place everywhere.

Nobody ever helped me into carriages Over mud puddles or gives me a best place… And am I not a woman? Look at my arms!

I have ploughed and planted And gathered into barns And no man could head me… And am I not a woman?

I could work as much

And eat as much as a man- When I could get to it- And bear the lash as well And am I not woman?

I could work as a man- When I could get it- And bear the lash as well And am I not a woman?

I have born 13 children And seen most of all were Sold into slavery and When I cried out a mother’s grief.

None but Jesus heard me …

And am I not a woman? That little man in black there says A woman can’t have as much rights as man

Cause Christ come? From God and a woman. Man had nothing to do with him!

If the first woman God ever made Was strong enough to turn the world Upside down, all alone.

Together women ought to be Able to turn it right side up again.

Spr M.C. Mashishi, School of Engineers

letters to the editor
THE POWER WITHIN A WOMAN

The battle of the sexes is as old as the hills. Women are conditioned to accept men as the superior sex. Awareness, education and the struggle of life have forced women to shed their inhibitions. Great women leaders, artists, scientists and other professionals have inspired other women to overcome their social backwardness and their fear.

As a young woman, I have the patience to listen and the strength to support others because to care is just within every woman. The fight that was fought to bring this current community to this state is acknowledged by us, the current generation. We learnt so much and believe that everything is possible and achievable, irrespective of gender. Great women have proved this, and many more are still proving this.

Now is the time to celebrate and not forget the bravery of the women of 1956. To all women: this is the time; let us now take our positions. Pte Zanele Goxo, Sudan

CELEBRATING WOMEN’S DAY IN DARFUR

9 August 2012 was a lovely morning when all women of Bravo Company Mellit Team Site in Darfur, Sudan, were excused from their duties to offer them time to celebrate Women's Day. Wow! we were told that a big surprise was waiting for us in the evening, and all the preparations were being made by our male comrades-in-arms. We did not do anything that day because they wanted to spoil us.

All the women came together to play indigenous games mostly played by women, such as "diketo"; skipping and hop-scotch; and reminded us who we truly are. Afterwards came the big evening event that we had all been waiting for. Women looked glamorous, even dazzling in their own different ways, wearing beautiful clothing, make-up and the like. These were the women of the SA National Defence Force, and most importantly our soldiers currently serving our country abroad with pride and dignity.

We arrived at the hall where we found the gentlemen of Bravo Company waiting for us. Seeing the decorations inside the hall brought tears to my eyes, making me feel and believe that we were trully special, and that our male counterparts really cared for us, which made most of us forget that we were even deployed in the Sudan.

We were served and treated like queens with all the food, poems, music and speeches about our history and the reason we were celebrating Women’s Day. It was breathtaking. Our day ended with a wonderful movie that was dedicated to all the women in the world.

We are the rocks of the nation and the special people in this world; let us not look down on ourselves. Rise up women, we now have the power. Pte Lerato Mmmakola, Darfur, Sudan

BREATHTAKING DAY IN THE CONGO

On 12 August 2012 members of 2 SA Infantry Battalion (Charlie Company) celebrated Women's Day in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Wow, what a joyful day to remember.

THEN SHE CRIED, SHE CRIED, SHE CRIED

This poem is dedicated to all the women we know and to appreciate the role you are playing in raising us, even though we change to be monsters when we grow up, which is due to a lot of influences we come across on the way. Keep up the good work. Sorry for all the pain we brought to you through our actions and decisions; deep down in our hearts we love you and will always love you.

When she gave birth it was to a bundle of joy that warmed her heart and brought an inerasable love when she first held and set eyes on that bundle of joy. Then she cried, she cried she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried. She nourished the bundle of joy with everlasting love everyday she gave out all the laws and orders that a child must follow when growing up and which taught good morals and values at all times. Then she cried, she cried, she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried for the society had robbed her. The bundle of joy is now a monster called by names she never gave her children - rapist, murderer, criminal, prostitute. The same society that destroyed her children is the same that wants nothing to do with them. Then she cried, she cried, she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried. No one saw her tears for she never shed them in public. Inside her heart it was red with pain. Every night she cried for her children. The children she loved with all her heart. The children she wished could change their lifestyle and behaviour and be proud of wherever they went. Then she cried, she cried, she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried. What the people did not know was the pain behind that beautiful face and grief behind that smile. For she once had a bundle of joy, but now it was gone, destroyed by the immoral society we live in. Then she cried, she cried, she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried. The society might have robbed her of the joy she felt when she gave birth, but it could not take away the love she had for the bundle of joy she gave birth to years ago. She still has the first love; the one she felt when she gave birth; that’s why she is a woman, the woman who still has hope for her children that they will live a good life. Then she cried, she cried, she cried.

Then she cried, she cried, she cried. This time it was tears of joy, knowing that she was a woman, a woman of good morals and values, a woman with hope even though nothing seems to go well, a woman who never stops fighting even with pain in her heart, a woman who always smiles through it all, a woman, a woman. Then she cried, she cried, she cried. Pte J.N. Biva, currently deployed at Ndumo Ops Base.
MY APPRECIATION AND EXPERIENCES IN THE DOD AS A FEMALE MEMBER

A wise man once said: “Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. To this end we have acknowledged that the objective of our reconstruction and development will not be realised unless in visible and practical terms we radically change the condition of women in our country for the better and that women at every level are empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society and government. We are committed to a reallocation of resources to ensure the achievement of this objective.”

This statement reflects the progress of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), which is proudly deploying thousands of women to carry out the mission of peacekeeping and the culture of Ubuntu. To all female soldiers in the SANDF I say: “A woman must not accept, she must challenge, she must not be frightened by that which has been built up around her; she must respect the women that struggle for expression because it is not how much we do but how much love we put into the doing”. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into the giving. I salute all those who are responsible for promoting women’s empowerment.

It is with sincerity that I extend my gratitude to Lt David Makiti, Medical Platoon Commander at Lenz Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Liaison Office, and our colleagues: Operational Emergency Care Practitioners (OECPs). The support and contribution they have shown while we are deployed here in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Operation Mistral (SANDF SPEC XXIII) under the command and control of Lt Col Jedibone Motswadi, Sector Commander, WO2 Paul Mazibuko, Assistant Fire Chief AFB Langebaan, have been exceptional. It has been noticeable that this support is not only rendered to members deployed in the DRC, but to all of us deployed internally and externally. Currently there are four Lenz EMS OECPs deployed all around the DRC, and all have received parcels from the office. That has kept members’ morale high.

Being away from one’s comfort zone is not an easy mental adjustment, especially as a wife, mother or woman in general. Working in a team of men is always perceived to be challenging, but as of now the team deployed at Mavivi Base Beni has made this place feel like a second home to me, though one faces harsh living conditions. The support I get from the team, my family and from the SANDF is really appreciated. Thus I salute the SANDF for its drive to make the resilience programme compulsory for all deploying members. Thanks and appreciation go to Area Military Health Formation HQ (AMHF HQ), and its SO1 EMS Medical Support Operator (MSO), Lt Col Kedibone Moshou. Her professionalism, pro-active approach and contribution, including being an adviser to Director EMS with regard to the members’ career management, management of internal and external deployments, operations, exercises, force preparation and utilisation for OECPs are outstanding.

Lt Col Linda Mntambo, former SO1 EMS MSO AMHF HQ, is an intelligent, professional and working senior officer who makes us juniors proud of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS). This is supported by his former colleagues at Lenz EMS Liaison Office, his former colleagues and students at the School for Military Health Training and his former colleagues, peers and subordinates at AMHF HQ.

The knowledge, skills and experience I received under Col Mntambo when I was detached at AMHF HQ for administrative work, deployments, force preparation, utilisation and operational processes as a whole in an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) environment is beyond compare, eg I always took the opportunity to learn and strive to be the best; hence I was nominated best senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) for February 2012 by Lt Makiti for a job well done during his in-post training period. The Lieutenant is a leader who recognises his subordinates’ contribution and hard work, and a leader with a charismatic leadership style.

Thanks and appreciation are due to AMHF HQ and CWO Thomas Jantjies (AMHF HQ NCOs Career Manager) for the promotion of some NCOs through his recommendations and motivations, eg the promotion of the best, competent, brilliant, workaholic and trustworthy Lt Joshua Mjoli (the PA of the Chief Director Military Health Preparation) and others was a practical example of transformation in the DOD. The SANDF is daily, if not hourly, involved in operations and exercises that are co-ordinated from Chief Joint Operations (C J Ops). My compatriots, let us work together to achieve the C J Ops mission and vision in co-coordinating national and international operations and exercises from a centralised point with all the Services around the table. The Code of Conduct stipulates it well: “I serve the SANDF with loyalty and pride, as a citizen and a volunteer”. It does not say: “I serve my service, ie SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy or SA Military Health Service”. S Sgt Zondile Mavuso (Mama Mavuso), currently deployed in the DRC.

LET US BE THANKFUL

After interacting with the local population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), I realised that as members of the SANDF we should be thankful. Unlike other African soldiers, we:

- Can look forward to pay day for quite a number of years

- Have access to quality medical services
- Have access to cheap military housing
- Receive sustenance and travelling allowances to attend courses, exercises, sports events, etc.
- Have an excellent defence governing system
- Receive pay increments
- Have an accountable quality pension fund administration
- And many more …

Somewhere in the Holy Book it states: “Be content with what you have”. Yes, let us be thankful. S Sgt S.A. Dingaan, currently deployed in the DRC.
President Zuma awards medals to Military Veterans

By Mr Kgabo Mashamaite
Photos: Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

It was an historic moment when President Jacob Zuma, the SANDF Commander-in-Chief, presented medals to 74 former Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) veterans during the first Military Veterans Medal Parade held at Air Force Base Bloemspurt on 2 August 2012.

The aim of the event was to pay tribute to these Military Veterans for their contribution in the liberation struggle against apartheid.

In his keynote address, President Zuma said that the gesture was in line with the Constitutional mandate of the Government to accord these military veterans the honours due to them.

President Zuma said: “The Constitution obliges us to ‘honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land’, which is also in line with Section 5(1)(c) of the Military Veterans Act 18 of 2011, enables the country to deliver on this mandate.”

He added that this event is but one of many at the Government’s initiative to show its appreciation of the sacrifices made by the gallant men and women who dared to challenge the system by turning their backs on their futures, sacrificing their youth and being separated from their families for us to enjoy the freedom we have today. For many their service did not end in 1994 but they continued to be active in their countries. The defence force of a democratic South Africa has been inspired by such luminaries as the military veterans that we are honouring today.

President Zuma elaborated: “Young and old - rich and poor - black and white – and nearly every category in between, they are men and women who served or still serve South Africa with commitment, loyalty and dedication. It is also heart-warming to see so many military veterans who graced the event, as some of them may have been forgotten while the rest of the country is enjoying the freedom you fought for so hard.”

“The has been my honour today, as the Patron-in-Chief of the Military Veterans, to confer Platinum Medals on the founders of MK, the MK High Command and those arrested with them in Rivonia and who served life terms as well as the MK Regional Commands. I have also conferred the Bravery Gold Medals on outstanding members of the Luthuli Detachment.”

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, told the military veterans about the Government’s commitment to assist whenever possible in bringing the mortal remains of freedom fighters buried in their country of exile.

She assured the public: “Even if the logistics and the protocols around the exhumation and the transportation of the mortal remains of our fallen cadres in foreign lands will always present us with some challenges, we hope eventually to bring some to their country of birth, to help their loved ones to find closure and bury them with the dignity they deserve.”

ABOVE: Col Fezeka Mabona, Officer Commanding SA Military Health Service Nursing College, received the Platinum Class I Medal and the Platinum Class II Medal from President Jacob Zuma on behalf of Mr Govan Mbeki for distinguishing himself (Mbeki) through courageous leadership and for the National High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe and those who served with them on Robben Island after the Rivonia Trial.
The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, whose department was instrumental in organising the medals committee, urged the members of the public not to forget the contribution made by the military veterans to the freedom of this country.

The medals presented included three classes of the Military Veterans Decoration in Platinum, namely the Platinum Class I Medals for the founding members of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) who distinguished themselves through courageous leadership; the Platinum Class II Medals for the National High Command of MK and those who served life sentences with them on Robben Island after the Rivonia Trial; and the Platinum Class III Medals to those members who were in the first Regional Command structures of MK who distinguished themselves by their daring acts of valour under perilous conditions to withstand the wrath of the apartheid state. The Military Veterans Bravery Medal in Gold for those members who executed acts of outstanding bravery in battle and for the success of their mission while having no regard for danger to their own lives in the struggle for liberation, freedom and democracy in South Africa.

One of the Platinum Class II Medal recipients, Mr Andrew Mlangeni (MP), expressed his gratitude to the Government for coming up with the idea of honouring the military veterans.

Mr Mlangeni (MP) said: “As struggle military veterans we are immensely grateful to our government for having seen fit to honour those who contributed to the democratic order. This event was long overdue and it is a pity that some of those whom we shared the trenches are not with us anymore to receive their hard earned rewards.”
Human rights and Humanitarian Law in military operations

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The SANDF continues to pursue an ambitious development agenda in the strategic areas of peace and security, the rule of law, human rights and humanitarian law.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, addressed academics, senior government officials, military analysts, delegates and representatives from various countries attending the conference on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Military Operations at the University of Pretoria on 31 August 2012.

In her opening remarks, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said that the SANDF had a definite interest in complying with the Law of Armed Conflict, which promotes military discipline.

She said that the Law of Armed Conflict was introduced to the South African Department of Defence in 1997, when it was officially rolled out as part of the Civic Education Programme.

She added that Chapter 4 of the SANDF International Humanitarian Law Course deals specifically with the relationship between the Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Law.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Our members are taught that in times of armed conflict the ability of the Government to apply Human Rights Law may be affected, necessitating that other means of ensuring respect for fundamental human rights be put in place. In our view, although the International Humanitarian Law is a manifestation of Human Rights Law in time of war, it does not replace the human rights obligations of the Government as humanitarian law enjoins parties to an armed conflict to respect and preserve the lives and dignity of captured enemy soldiers and civilians, who are in their power.”

Regarding the SANDF contributing greatly to external peace support missions under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) she noted that South Africa had always deliberately included a large number of women as part of peacekeeping operations.
Chief of the SA Army interacts with members of the media

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, hosted his first media breakfast as Chief of the SA Army at SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane on 23 August 2012. This event afforded Lt Gen Masondo an opportunity to interact with and engage members and representatives of the media with regard to key issues in the SA Army.

One of these issues was his relationship with the media industry, and the significant role the media plays in the SA Army. He also highlighted the developments that have taken place in the SA Army since he resumed command.

He reported on successes achieved by the SA Army where our soldiers were called upon to change the lives of ordinary South African citizens, and in this met the SA Army’s mandatory obligations.

A number of challenges facing the SA Army were outlined during the media briefing. These included escalating costs and dilapidated facilities that result in soldiers having to improvise to execute their functions. The reversal of the deteriorating infrastructure of the DOD requires both financial and technical capacity.

During his address with the media, Lt Gen Masondo took the opportunity to thank his principals for giving him the opportunity to lead the SA Army, and the trust that they have shown to achieve its Constitutional mandate output, including meeting its ordered commitments, and mission ready defence capabilities within the Regulatory Framework. Its value system upholds such values as discipline, transparency, fairness and excellence through leadership, honesty and integrity.

He added that since the return of the soldiers to the borders they have been able to work with other agencies to curb cross-border crime. The soldiers have confiscated contraband and this prevented it from being smuggled into the country. There is also a noticeably sharp decrease in the number of undocumented migrants entering the country.

The Chief of the SA Army affirmed that it was the SA Army members’ deepest commitment to achieve its Constitutional mandate output, including meeting its ordered commitments, and mission ready defence capabilities within the Regulatory Framework. Its value system upholds such values as discipline, transparency, fairness and excellence through leadership, honesty and integrity.

Lt Gen Masondo took the opportunity to encourage members of the SA Army to use the grievance system that has been established instead of voicing their grievances through the media. He mentioned that the SA Army had gone a long way to ensuring that our members understood the recently instituted Grievance Procedures in the DOD and encouraged them to register their grievances on the system available at all SA Army units. He added: “Processes of the Human Resources Division are under way to capacitate our commanders on the ground to deal with members’ grievances. We will soon roll out the grievance system that will allow members to air their grievances in every military unit.” He committed himself to ensuring that discipline was not compromised in the SA Army and was at all times upheld by members of the SA Army. In his view a soldier needed certain elements such as the ability to act instinctively when given commands, adapting to various leadership styles, demonstrating commitment to success, impartiality and effectiveness in reaching a goal, demonstrating behaviour that is ethical, honest and transparent, promoting respect for life, pledging oneself unconditionally to a cause, and displaying loyalty towards the country and citizens. Lt Gen Masondo concluded by saying this was what was expected of each member of the SA Army, nothing more and nothing less.

In closing, the Chief of the SA Army urged members of the media not to be used by our soldiers as a platform to raise their individual and collective concerns. He invited and pleaded with the media to join hands with the SA Army, to be part of change management aimed at educating and informing ordinary South Africans about the National Defence Force. He requested them to isolate those elements with bad intentions who wish to portray a negative image about the SANDF that adversely impacts the image of South Africa as a whole.
The South African Defence Review Committee members held a public participation meeting at Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto, on 15 August 2012.

On this day Soweto community members were given an opportunity to contribute towards the administration of the South African National Defence Force.

The aim of these public participation meetings was to enable the committee to engage with the broader civil society in drawing consensus for the future defence strategy with key partners, stakeholders and communities around the country.

According to the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Roelf Meyer, the community interaction was long overdue. He said: “Since the inception of the Commission exactly a year ago, the former Minister of Defence and Military Veterans has given us strict guidelines, among them to consult with members of the public in order to update the Defence Review, which is in line with the democratic process. We should remember that the last Defence Review was updated in 1998. Among the requirements are to develop defence policies that will support Government’s priorities and strategic intent and sound policies for determining the blueprint of the defence force design and force structure. It is therefore important to meet with the people to get their inputs before their incorporation in the new Defence Review document.”

Dr Moses Khanyile, a Resource Group member of the Defence Review Committee, explained the role and functions of the SANDF in line with the Constitution of the Republic. He said: “The Defence Review Committee is predicated on a few principles, such as that the National Defence Force should be seen as a representative and trusted non-partisan national asset that adheres to sound civil and robust legislative oversight and it must be fully compliant with national and international law, specifically International Humanitarian Law, statutes, national policy and regulatory frameworks.”

The event also afforded community members such as Ms Bizwe Mawela an opportunity to raise security and other social concerns within their area. Ms Mawela’s concern was the high level of crime in the neighbourhood.
and she appealed to the Committee to get the SANDF to help the members of the South African Police Service to eradicate rampant crime in the area.

Ms Ntabiseng Mlangeni, a family member of whom was apparently killed and buried in his country of exile, appealed to the Committee members to assist the family to return the mortal remains of this person for a proper burial.

Ms Doris Makurapa, a patient with a chronic illness from Mapetla Section in Soweto, requested the Committee to ask top management to assist with essential services, such as responding to emergency situations in case of a shortage of medical personnel.

A youth organisation representative, Mr Musa Kara, appealed to SANDF to increase the age of the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) members to 26 years and the graduates up to 30 years because in these age groups unemployment is rife and the temptations to commit crime is very great.

Lt Col (Ret) Godfrey Giles, a Resource Group member of the Defence Review Committee, also appealed to Soweto community members to help the youngsters and encourage them to study and pass with flying colours in order to fill the critical skills gap within the SANDF.

LEFT: Lt Col (Ret) Godfrey Giles, a Resource Group member of the Defence Review Committee, speaks to Soweto community members to help the youth and encourage them to study in order to fill critical skills gaps within the SANDF.

ABOVE: Ms Bizwe Mawela, a member of the community, appeals to members of the Defence Review Committee to ask the SANDF to help the SA Police Service to eradicate the rampant crime within their area.
Celebrating the age of opportunity for women in the SANDF

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photos: Sgt Elias Mahuma

On 9 August 1956 thousands of women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to hand over petitions signed by women from all over the country demanding an end to the pass laws.

Every year since then, 9 August has been remembered as a very special day in our country’s calendar to remember and honour the 20,000 heroines who took action and came together to strive for a society free of all kinds of discrimination and inequality.

On 24 August 2012 the Chief Directorate Transformation Management hosted the SANDF Women’s Day Parade at the Pretoria Military Sports Ground in Thaba Tshwane to celebrate our military diversity and pay homage to the country’s women who died in past struggles and to remember the unity in action of the women of 1956.

The theme of this year’s celebration was: “Women unite in fighting inequality”.

Addressing the gathering and about 400 women soldiers on parade, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, pointed out the significant strides made in the SANDF, commended the role of women in the DOD and applauded the important role of the amazing SANDF women soldiers deployed internally and externally in peacekeeping missions who go beyond their normal call of duty, something that has been acknowledged by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Office.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula told the gathering that there were very few women at the highest levels of the command structure. She pledged: “Although women have risen to various senior positions, including as heads of units, we still have very little presence at the highest level of command in the SANDF. I commit myself to elevating women into positions of command.”

She said that the Women’s Day Parade served to celebrate and acknowledge the progress made by our National Defence Force in promoting the contributions of women in the military. It also offered an appropriate occasion to reflect on the current situation.

The Minister pointed out that female members of the Force deployed beyond the borders of the country were not provided with amenities for their special needs, including provision for privacy and sanitary requirements.

She mentioned that over recent years the SANDF had, in naming its fleet of naval vessels and submarines after heroines, deliberately chosen these women who led by example. She said: “These brave women who left us a legacy of the true meaning of courage, sacrifice and determination are an example we should emulate. Among these are Ms Charlotte Maxeke, Ms Lillian Ngoyi, Ms Ruth First and Ms Victoria Mxenge.”
Minister Mapisa-Nqakula applauded the recognition and elevation of women to strategic positions and said they were making headway, for example the recent election of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma to the Chair of the African Union.

Our heroic women in the SANDF have generally had a positive impact on the lives of ordinary women and girls in our country and beyond. At the end of the parade young female learners from four local primary schools (Vallie Park, Phuthaditshaba, Matseke and Laudium) marched behind the two platoons of women soldiers temporarily back from external deployment.
South Africa’s former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, said: “Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. To this end, we have acknowledged that the objectives of our reconstruction and development will not be realised unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of women in our country has radically changed for the better, and that women at every level have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.”

The 1998 Defence Review assumed that the changes that were taking place in the country were profound and were to develop into a general social change in the way society understood the role of women. It was impossible for the SANDF to escape this change. It would have been a great disservice to women, and to the country as a whole, if the SANDF missed the opportunity to ensure that as a government department, it was governed by the principles of non-racism and non-sexism in all its endeavours.

The Chief Directorate Transformation Management convened the annual DOD Gender Conference at Saint George Hotel in Irene from 29 to 31 August 2012 under the theme: “Towards a United, Non-racial and Non-sexist DOD”. The theme was a national call for a united and cohesive approach towards achieving gender equality by ensuring that all women had equal opportunities in all facets of life.

Historically, defence forces throughout the world have been monopolised by men and ruled by gender stereotyping. There is a perception that matters of defence and security are the prerogative of men. However, women have proved their mettle in battle and are increasingly recognised as equals in matters of defence and security.

The DOD, as one of the government departments, is duty bound to support the Government’s endeavours to build a non-racial, non-sexist and human rights based society where class, gender disability or sexual orientation do not exclude anyone from enjoying the rights enshrined in our country’s Constitution. It therefore becomes of importance that all levels of the organisation should be united on this strategic issue.

The gender conference was held to facilitate the integration of gender mainstreaming into Services and Divisions in order to design strategies to ensure compliance and monitoring of transformation in the DOD. The primary focus of the conference was to report on progress made in implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Plan of Action during the past year and to reflect on the research findings regarding the current DOD equity and the status of women in the DOD, military culture and gender statistics on women leadership.

During the conference Services and Divisions provided their status report on transformation and equity and briefed the conference on social cohesion programmes and challenges experienced by their different Services. In examining the role of women in the SANDF, the conference considered the environment and its enabling qualities, the nature of defence forces, policy formulation, opportunities in the SANDF, and the equal opportunities forum.

In her opening address, Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, Deputy Chief of Human Resources, indicated the challenges facing women in South Africa as poverty, unemployment and inequality. She said that women could not advance the Gender Equality Agenda alone without male support. She said women needed to leave a good legacy for those coming after them, and maintain high morals.

Gender aspects need to be incorporated in everything they do in the deployment areas. She added that the debate on gender equality must also be promoted from level 2 to unit level, and concluded by saying women needed to build this united organisation and come up with sustainable strategies to take it forward.

Ms Mary Monomela from the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities confirmed the challenges faced by women. She emphasised that gender mainstreaming must be included in all policies and procedures and that...
The DOD needs to be transformed for members and employees that will take over from us. Institutional mechanisms must be in place in all government departments to ensure the implementation of the policy, to ensure that the policy is implemented and that the Induction Programme is in place for senior management.

Prof Lindy Heinecken from the Military Academy emphasised the implications of gender equality for leadership. She said that there should be a shift from gender equality, which is a human rights issue, to equal opportunities for both men and women. Leadership on a strategic, operational and tactical level should all take note of gender issues.

Delegates raised concerns with regard to outdated policies that need to be updated urgently and interpreted in such a manner that implementation did not leave grey areas. Another concern was a need for different ways of accommodating all learning and reading modalities by communicating policies in different communication forums to ensure transparency and adherence by all members.

Women in the SANDF contend that their empowerment and their full participation in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making processes and access to power, are fundamental to the achievement of equality, development and peace.

Despite the military environment and participation in the defence and security field, masculinity is not an attraction for women in uniform. They acknowledge with pride the full spectrum of their traditional domestic and professional roles.

In summarising what needs to be done going forward, Chief Directorate Transformation Management, Maj Gen Ansuyah Fakir, raised a number of issues with regard to the way forward. She mentioned that gender mainstreaming legislation, policy and practices must be fair and equal for both men and women.

She added that gender mainstreaming on a strategic level needed to have DOD indicators and accountability, performance agreement, gender budget per division, structure and a gender focal point and transformation imperatives in all policies.

At the operational level she said that we needed to recognise the value of female peacekeepers, understand roles and skill, selection and recruitment, manage career paths, rank age, courses versus family responsibility and adjust training to address biological and physical difference, but not to compromise.

The situation at present is that the SANDF prohibits any form of discrimination against women employed either in the permanent or part-time components of the SANDF. Women are offered the same career opportunities and scope as men, and enjoy exactly the same service benefits.

Women are free to choose whether they want to be employed in infrastructure posts, support services such as administration, personnel, finance, logistics, signals, catering, training as instructors, in combat positions or to undertake foreign affairs duties as military attachés.

The conference afforded the delegates an opportunity to galvanise their energies and, as women and men in the DOD, to steam ahead with endeavours to eliminate inequalities within their ranks. The participation of women in all spheres of life is a key element of Government’s transformation agenda, and a constitutional imperative. South Africa is a global leader in terms of women’s participation in Government and Parliament.
Of the four Services in the SA National Defence Force, the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) can only account for a few female Generals in the command line. However, the Service has made great strides in other Divisions, with Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, Deputy Chief of Human Resources, as the most senior female General in the SANDF and Maj Gen Ansuyah Fakir, her successor, who was appointed as Chief Director Transformation Management.

SA Soldier features Brig Gen Debbi Tempelhoff, a medical officer, a career soldier and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Area Military Health Formation, who has progressed from a clinical intern to head one of the biggest formations in the SAMHS. Brig Gen Tempelhoff became the fourth woman to be appointed a General Officer Commanding in the history of the SAMHS.

Who is Brig Gen Debbi Tempelhoff?

I am a medical officer, and I started at the SAMHS straight from university. I did my internship at 1 Military Hospital in 1992. I worked in 1 Military Hospital for a long time, specifically in the paediatric department for nearly ten years, which was a great part of my life.

I also worked with the Reaction Force at 1 Military Hospital at the time and we did some wonderful things and saved lives, and that cemented the fact that I really wanted to be in the military. I did all my military courses, starting from Officers’ Formative and onwards, until I had to leave clinical work to work in an office.

What does your Formation deal with?

This is the Area Military Formation HQ in Pretoria. We have nine other units in each province countrywide with their sickbays. My Formation attends to all uniformed patients countrywide, including their dependants. We also attend to retired members and military veterans. We are basically involved in primary health care, which is the first contact with the patients. Patients are attended to at military clinics and sickbays.

Should their situation be serious, they will be referred to tertiary health care, namely the military hospitals. We do the concurrent health assessments. We are also deploying for Operation Corona, so our members are taken from the sickbays and sent to the border. We also do external deployments.

Tell us more about your professional background as a medical doctor and what made you join the military.

I came into the SAMHS having obtained my qualification and started as a civilian intern. Only then was I able to start military training. I joined the military because I was impressed by the SAMHS clients and the fact that we served the brave people.

I am talking about the Special Forces, the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy, etc who are doing the most amazing things everyday and we are the ones looking after their health. I was so impressed with these brave and enthusiastic people who are our patients.
It is said that you are one of the few women in the SAMHS appointed to the command line. What did it take for you to get here?

It is actually sad because only two GOCs are women in the SAMHS and only four unit commanders are women. But I think as women in the SAMHS we do get much more recognition compared to other Services because we are in the caring profession; we have nurses and doctors who are women and that is why we are held in high regard.

For me to be in this position took a lot of hard work and sometimes it is expected of a woman to work harder than a man to achieve the same results and be at the same level. However, I do not see myself as a woman, I see myself as a soldier.

How does military medical practice differ from public and private practice?

The clinical duties are the same, but our scope as military medical practitioners is much bigger because we have to look after our members in such a way that they do not fall ill in the first place because we need healthy soldiers. In other sectors people access health care when they are already ill.

The difference is that in the SAMHS we try to see patients even before something is wrong. The public and private medical officers never have to deploy to either the borders or externally and are not exposed to life-threatening situations like we are.

As the best overall student achiever on your Executive National Security Programme (ENSP), do you feel that it has contributed in your appointment as GOC of this Formation?

The ENSP is a brilliant course and one that is attended by members in the security cluster. For five months you are exposed to lectures and other learners. I cannot tell if it really contributed to my being appointed, but I have learned a lot from the course and from other students and it really helps in terms of what I have to do because you have to interact with other sectors across the country, for example when we have a strike or an event occurs such as the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

What do your achievements bring into your working environment?

I think any person is the sum total of all the individual things they did. This adds up to who they are. I was so fortunate that the SAMHS and the SANDF gave me exposure to so many things and each one of these has contributed to how I understand things and how I handle challenges.

Any words of encouragement for women within the SANDF aspiring to reach your level?

If you have the support of your family, there is nothing you cannot do; there is no position you cannot achieve as a woman. It takes hard work and commitment, but there is no glass ceiling anymore. In the National Defence Force and in the SAMHS the sky is truly the limit for any young woman who is in the SANDF today.

Celebrating Women’s Day

Article and photo by Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

The Joint Operations Tactical Headquarters Gauteng hosted their Women’s Day celebration at Boksburg Correctional Services’ Centre on 10 August 2012. The spouses of unit members were treated to a day of celebrations and fine cuisine coupled with musical performances by inmates at the Centre.

Representing the host, the Head of Correctional Centre C, Mr Isaac Shabangu, gave a warm welcome to members of the SANDF.

Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, Deputy Chief of Human Resources, indicated in her address that the emphasis on the advancement of women was not to leave men behind, but to make equal contributions and receive equal opportunities. She said women should pave the way for the next generation.

She mentioned that a lot was expected of women where male dominance was concerned. Maj Gen Memela-Motumi highlighted the rationale behind her thinking as to why women should be part of decision-making structures.

Maj Gen Memela-Motumi said that the conditions in which women were deployed were undesirable; by contrast their male counterparts are not affected by such conditions. Women serve as good role models. They influence locals to rebuild and restructure their own affairs. Women have to go the extra mile to climb the corporate ladder.

Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, Deputy Chief of Human Resources, speaks at the Women’s Day function of Joint Operations Tactical Headquarters Gauteng.
Meet the first female commander of a Flossie in Africa

By Lt Sheena du Toit, historiographer of 28 Squadron
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

Maj Caro Duven (32) successfully qualified as the first female commander of a Hercules C-130 (fondly known as the Flossie) at 28 Squadron, Air Force Base Waterkloof, on 14 May 2012. Maj Duven has been a pilot in the SA Air Force since 2003 and has achieved over 2 300 flying hours.

She said she achieved this milestone, but not because she is a woman. Maj Duven said: “I realised my dream with the assistance, support and backing of my family, friends and colleagues. It is merely coincidence that I am a woman, because to achieve this milestone depends on how well you can fly and not who you are.”

Maj Duven joined the SA Air Force on 12 January 2000 and successfully completing her Basic Military Training and Officers Formative Course. She attended the Military Academy in 2002 before going to Air Force Base Langelagabaanweg where she successfully completed the Pilots Wings Course 102/3. Maj Duven received her wings on 5 December 2003 after 216 hours on the PC7MKII Astra.

In January 2004 Maj Duven was posted to 41 Squadron where she flew over 900 hours as a C-208 Commander and over 60 hours as a co-pilot on the PCXII. Major Duven was then employed at 44 Squadron from January 2007 to June 2008 where she flew over 350 hours as a commander on the CASA 212.

In July 2008 Maj Duven arrived at 28 Squadron and has flown more than 800 hours on the Flossie. She successfully completed her final route check on a flight to Kinshasa on 12 May 2012 and flew her first solo command sortie on 14 May 2012.

Maj Duven is currently the only female pilot at 28 Squadron and the only female ever to have received command of a Flossie in Africa.

In the beginning she thought, like most potential pilots, that she would fly fighter aircraft. Maj Duven said: “When the SA Air Force informed me that I was going to the transport line, I promised myself that I would at least become a C-130 commander and here I am today!

“I am very fortunate to be living my dream and am grateful for this opportunity every day.”

Maj Caro Duven is the only woman ever to have received command of the Hercules C-130 (fondly known as the Flossie) in Africa.
SANDF Spouses Forum celebrates Women’s Day

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) hosted the SANDF Spouses Forum Women’s Day celebration at the SAMHS Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane on 18 August 2012. The theme of the day was “Celebrating Women, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”.

Each year in South Africa, National Women’s Day is celebrated on 9 August. Thousands of events occur not just on this day, but throughout August (Women’s Month) to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women.

This year’s Women’s Day celebration of the SANDF Spouses Forum was not only used to socialise and network, but to reflect and look back to a tradition that represents at least five decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.

Ms Charlotte Shoke, Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum, took the stand to call upon all spouses to take practical actions to end violence against women and to celebrate heroines of yesteryear such as Ms Helen Suzman, Ms Lilian Ngoyi, Ms Charlotte Maxeke and others who stood against the apartheid government. She said: “We have improved the position of women so that they can assume their role in the public sphere, protect the sovereignty and security of our country and play a role as peacekeepers in Africa.” Furthermore, she encouraged people to use every platform to change the mindsets of men and women to respect one another.

Ms Shoke requested members of the Forum to support unit programmes aimed at managing diversity and building cohesion with regard to transformation goals. The spouses also committed themselves to providing counselling to the young leaders and members to deepen their patriotism and unity. She also encouraged those in attendance to be grateful for what they have and to learn to share with those less fortunate. She motivated everyone to believe in themselves and reminded the guests of how fortunate they were to be South African citizens.

During her address, General Riah Phiyega, Commissioner of the SA Police Service, said that women must play their role in society, and women of power or substance should contribute wherever they were. She asked what the women of today were doing to produce the women of tomorrow. She concluded by applauding the SANDF Spouses Forum for their excellent work in the SANDF.

National Women’s Day

National Women’s Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history, and is rooted in the old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men. The event reaffirmed the significance of the struggle for the liberation of women, and fostered social cohesion, nation building, economic development and inclusive citizenship. It also created awareness through educational programmes and dialogue of the importance of women to the youth and sought to promote unity in diversity in the SANDF.

Women’s Day (and Month) celebrates women’s achievements and contributes to the redressing of past inequities. It deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experiences of others. It facilitates healing, and both material and symbolic restitution and promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs.

SANDF Spouses Forum

The SANDF Spouses Forum is an official association structured to empower, give support and form networking relationships among the spouses of Generals and Flag Officers in the DOD. This Forum is mandated to conduct outreach projects for identified areas of concern within the SANDF. In this regard it upgraded the children’s ward at 1 Military Hospital and donated food hampers to members in deployment areas.

The SANDF Spouses Forum was established six years ago and is recognised as an official entity of the DOD community. It is led by Ms Charlotte Shoke, wife of the Chief of the SANDE, Gen Solly Shoke. The Forum members meet voluntarily once a quarter to review the progress of its annual goals.

The Forum promotes inter-governmental dialogue and encourages society to reconnect with the past in order to shape the direction of the future. Social segments such as youth, women, people living with disabilities, students, learners, civil society, religious and cultural fraternities, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, business, recreation and sport have an important role in helping sustain discourse on this theme.
Northern Cape lass breaks stereotype mould

By Cpl Tebogo Kekana, Ad Astra

As one of only five female engineers in the SA Air Force, Capt Segomotso Tire (30), knows all about chasing her dream.

She was born in Galeshewe, Kimberley, in the Northern Cape. The third child to 60-year-old Ms Maggie Tire (a single parent), Capt Tire said she had always excelled in her career despite hardships. “I stayed principled thanks to a strict mother. She added: “It was school and best results or nothing.”

In 1997, at the age of 15, she completed matric at St Boniface Christian Brothers College in Kimberley. Thereafter she decided to do a degree in medicine, but first she completed a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) at the University of the Free State. She lamented: “Somewhere during the three-year course, I realised that I had made a bad study choice.

“But, fearing a reprimand from my parents, I decided at first not to tell them about my inadequacies. The following year, however, I received an internship with Eskom in the Mangaung Municipality at the energy distribution and transmission facility.”

She said: “If there was anything I had learnt from my days as a student at the university, it would be that no matter how big the obstacles and disadvantages, I should strive to graduate.”

Capt Tire reminisced nostalgically: “When I read the engineering profile for the first time, I suddenly knew that I had made a good choice. I decided immediately that I would turn to engineering. I joined the SA Air Force where I was offered state funding to pursue my studies.”

In 2002 she did Basic Military Training at the Air Force Gymnasium and the Officers’ Formation Course at the SA Air Force College. “In that year my life made a complete turnaround, all because I trusted my intuition. I felt like a veteran,” she said with youthful buoyancy.

After being commissioned, she pursued full-time time studies at the University of Pretoria towards a four-year degree in electronics. She finished the Bachelor of Electronics degree in 2008. Later she was posted to Air Force Base Waterkloof, where she performed well as a design engineer for 5 Air Servicing Unit.

She said that the transition from
student life to office life was an anti-climax. Capt Tire said: “After the high-paced life of studying and being in constant stress mode it took strong stimuli to adjust to the slower pace of the office.”

In 2010 she was transferred to the SA Air Force Headquarters, where she serves in the Directorate Combat Systems. Here she is involved in developmental and functional courses, including the Junior Logistics Officers’ Course, Project Officers’ Course and Operational Test and Evaluation Course (OT&E). In the OT&E Course tests and evaluations are conducted on the aircraft before acceptance into service as well as after an upgrade to determine whether it complies with the operational requirements of the SA Air Force.

Besides being computer literate, Capt Tire was trained and qualified in Health Usage and Monitoring Systems. These systems are used to check the engine life and structure of the aircraft. Other courses that she completed were Airworthiness Certification, Safety Management and Safety Assessment.

Capt Tire said: “In this organisation I am part of something bigger; more information would help us become more enlightened in our different mustering.” She also regretted that there were still people who referred to her as a female engineer. She said: “It almost suggests there is a separate manual that I read as a woman to qualify in the field. I hail people with decency and respect for my craft. I did not just land here; I am a systems engineer for both the Hawk and the Gripen, which should count for something else, not my gender. My only concern is that the SA Air Force does not recruit nearly enough female engineers.”

She had the following to say about Women’s Month: “In this Women’s Month, let us remember the sacrifices that women across all racial groups made 56 years ago for the privileges and opportunities that we enjoy today.”

Capt Tire is the proud mother of 7-month-old Ditebogo Oarabile.

SANDF pharmacist also a world-class sports star

By Maj Rina Coetzee,
Corporate Communication
3 Military Hospital

Maj Dinah Heymans is a woman on a mission – to break as many athletics records in high jump in her age group as possible.

Maj Heymans is the Assistant Manager Pharmaceutical Services at 3 Military Hospital. Behind her desk in the hospital pharmacy she appears vulnerable and tiny. But this iron woman is strong-willed and extremely dedicated and when she puts her mind to something, she does it!

She holds the record in all the African and South African Masters Women’s High Jump age categories up to 49 years.

Maj Heymans attended the Free State Senior Athletics Championships in February this year and set the record for the SA Masters’ Women’s High Jump at 1,64 m.

She represented South Africa in Finland from 3 to 8 April 2012 when she participated in the World Masters Indoor Athletics Championships and broke a World Record (at 1,65 m) for Master Women High Jump in the category 45-49 years!

At the South African and African Masters Athletics Championships in May 2012 she won the Gold Medal again with a new Africa record of 1,64 m!

Maj Heymans already became a World Champion in 2003 when she participated in the World Masters’ Athletics Championships in Puerto Rico.

This world-class athlete is training herself and empowering learners after-hours at the Free State Stadium. Besides her athletics training and busy schedule, she is currently doing research for her Doctorate in Pharmaceutical Services.

She is married to Wouter and they have two children, Walter (15) who is also a star in athletics, and Leané (13).

Her philosophy in life is: “Aanhouer wen!” She never gives up and she tries till she succeeds.

Maj Dinah Heymans with her Gold Medal, certificate and SA Flag in Finland.
The Pride of an African woman

By L Cpl Lebogang Ramaboea, Ad Astra
Photo: Sgt Thomas Mulaudzi

Lt Tebogo Gumbhi (30), an electrical communication technician at Air Force Mobile Deployment Wing, spoke to the Ad Astra correspondent about Women’s Month. She was born in 1982 in Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria, the seventh child of Ms Lenah and Mr Harry Ramalekana (her mother passed away when she was 16 years old).

She completed her Grade 12 at Pretoria Technical High School in 1999. After matric she worked part-time at retail stores to save money for further studies. She then registered at Pretoria College and Atteridgeville College.

She studied Electronics Engineering (N6) and graduated in 2003. In 2006 she declined an internship with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa and opted to join the SA Air Force. She reported for Basic Military Training at Air Force Gymnasium in Valhalla. After the passing-out parade she was posted to 68 Air School for further training in April 2006. She completed Technical Training (TT1) and (TT2) at 68 Air School. In 2006 she received a diploma in electronics from Centurion Technical College.

Lt Gumbhi was commissioned as an officer in June last year. Apart from being a technician the soft-spoken officer is also the Chairperson of the Swartkop Ladies Forum.

This enthusiastic technician admits: “Generally, I am an optimistic woman, so my approach is to find my way around issues without hurting others. I have observed that my peers prefer to dwell a lot on problems rather than long-term results. Women have always been marginalised and looked down on by men. Since the 1956 pass law march we have made inroads into places never thought possible before.”

Lt Gumbhi said that the appointment of Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the first woman to preside over the African Union was a milestone to cherish. Seeing other women succeed in life inspires her to succeed. She noted that her wish was for South Africa to have a female leader. She said that African countries such as Liberia (President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) and Malawi (President Joyce Banda) with female leaders provided hope for South Africa.

She believes that women have the power to change the world for the better, especially now with all the opportunities given to them. As a young woman herself, she advised her generation to take charge and ensure that true democracy is maintained with their involvement.

Lt Gumbhi said her career choice is the best because the world has a demand for her profession. She said: “A good choice of a career is one that makes a difference and allows one to contribute to change; the kind that one is passionate about.” She still aspires to a career in legal studies.

Furthermore, Lt Gumbhi is married and they have a two-year-old son, Bokamoso. The greatest moment of her life was when her husband proposed, without warning. She said at once: “Yes, I will marry you”. She enjoys spending time with her family and watching romantic movies. Her destination of choice is Las Vegas (the entertainment capital of the world).

Her message to women is: “It is very important that positive people always steer themselves towards people who are misguided. An optimist chooses to accept happiness, success and pleasure and as a result that is what they are destined with, the way in which they live and their attitudes have an influence on one’s actions and attitudes. Women, regardless of age, should always remind themselves that a South African needs your input”.

Since 9 August 1994 National Women’s Day has been commemorated annually to commemorate the aspirations and achievements of South African women. On 1 August 2012 the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Ms Lulu Xingwana, at the beginning of Women’s Month said the theme was: “56 years of women united against poverty, inequality and unemployment”.

Lt Tebogo Gumbhi, an Electrical Communication Technician at Air Force Mobile Deployment Wing.
Cpl Molatelo Nkoana (26) is the personification of steely will-power. She is the first female paratrooper in the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) and is currently stationed at 7 Medical Battalion Group.

She joined the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) at the age of 22 years in 2007 and shortly after completing Basic Military Training went for paratrooper selection at the School of Infantry in Oudtshoorn.

Shortly after completing the extreme three-month paratrooper selection she went to 44 Parachute Regiment in Bloemfontein for Basic Static Line training, which included the ground phase for 1 month until the first jump. She also completed the Air Assault Course and helicopter drills. She said that the fact that she was a small fish in a massive pond provided her with enough adrenaline to succeed. Cpl Nkoana responded with amusement: “I borrowed the lyrics of Frank Sinatra who sings: ‘If I can make it here, I can make it anywhere’.”

Cpl Nkoana added: “Joining a male-dominated field in the SANDF was a major stepping stone in my career. Young as I am, I believe in sticking to one goal and making the best of it so that when I look back, I have something to be proud of and know that in the next year I shall be able to meet the next challenge. As women in the SANDF we have proved that we can handle the heat and pressure, so imagine what more we are capable of if we raise our level of awareness.”

She had always valued education: she holds a Certificate in Primary Health Care and Auxiliary Nursing that she obtained from Empilweni Nursing College in Randburg in 2005/2006. In 2007 she graduated as a Basic Ambulance Assistant and in 2008 as an Ambulance Emergency Assistant. In 2011 she completed the Operational Emergency Care Practitioner Course at the SA Military Health Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane. Her ambition is to further her studies in the field of the social sciences to become a social worker.

The highlight of her career was when she was deployed with the SA Special Forces at the Madimbo Training Area in Limpopo in 2009 to provide medical support. She says that during deployment mutual support in joint operations provides a common goal that enables operational integration to occur.

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Cpl Nkoana described life at Madimbo as follows: “Madimbo is full of wild animals and surprises, eg visits from wild animals, scorpions and snakes that live in this environment and the heat. One needed to adapt well to such circumstances.”

She says that she is very calm under pressure and in adverse work circumstances and does not let emotions get the better of her. Her message to women is: “Life is a struggle to satisfy one’s ego. Do not be so proud that you cannot learn something from another person. Destroy your limiting beliefs.”

She was born and brought up in Senwabarwana (Bochum) in Limpopo and matriculated at Kgolouthwana High School in 2004.
Meet the first SA Army female Band Group Leader

August is dedicated to celebrating the exceptional achievements of women in their working environment.

SA Soldier went out to look for that lady who took the road less travelled.

This person is WO2 Nolutando Nkomo, the first-ever woman to lead the SA Army Entertainment Band at the National Ceremonial Guard in Pretoria. WO2 Nkomo, who hails from Section D in Umlazi, Durban, is a qualified musician who can sing and play various musical instruments, such as the piano, trombone, tenor horn (alto horn) and euphonium.

Her musical career began in 1995 after she enrolled at the Durban Music School, followed by the Siyakhula Music Centre in Umlazi and the National Youth Band. Her biggest achievement came in 1997 when she passed her Grade 5 Theory of Music of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in London.

In her career as a musician, WO2 Nkomo has been to various countries and has performed before different audiences from different platforms. Among the places she has toured are Accra in Ghana where she performed with Sharon Katz and the Peace Train, and in Hong Kong for their New Year in January. The Department of Arts and Culture of KwaZulu-Natal sent her to the Bahamas, Jamaica and Montego Bay to represent the youth of South Africa. On this occasion she was performing cultural acts as lead singer. She also visited Germany as a South African Youth Culture representative.

WO2 Nkomo said: “I should like to thank the management for having afforded me an opportunity to advance my music career and my talent through the SA Army Band. Was it not for top management I do not think I would have achieved the credits I have earned thus far, eg passing my Advanced Level Grade 8 Certificate from Trinity College, London. Their support also led to my receiving an OAU/AU Durban Certificate for participation in the African Union Parade, performing at the Grahamstown Jazz Festival, and passing the Senior Musician Grade.” She has received many accolades, most of which have been achieved through the SANDE.

WO2 Nkomo, the first African female Group Leader of the SA Army Entertainment Band.

According to her colleague and fellow group leader, WO2 Samuel Nako, WO2 Nkomo is dedicated to her work and she is a professional.

WO2 Nako said: “If one could think about any person who takes his or her work seriously that person would be WO2 Nkomo. Since I got to know her at our church, and at the Salvation Army and other local groups in KwaZulu-Natal, I have thought of her as a good leader as she had demonstrated good leadership in all her activities till then. All her qualities and efforts have been noted by the Band management and now she is also the Acting Group Leader of the SA Army Band Pretoria. She is also an accomplished trumpeter and has a melodic voice.” It was this melodic voice that captivated the audience during the KwaZulu-Natal Military Tattoo 2011 at the Pietermaritzburg Show Grounds when she performed an African Dream, a song made popular by Vicky Simpson.

WO2 Nkomo said: “When I went for the interviews in Pretoria to join the SANDF, I was so tiny and the panelists were wondering whether I was at the right place. I was offered a piano to test my proficiency and they were all puzzled by the skills they saw in me. One of them asked me twice whether I would be interested in joining the SANDF, and I told her that I was. She even prepared me mentally for the challenges associated with Basic Military Training (BMT). I then received a call in November to report to 3 SA Infantry Battalion to do my BMT.”

With a view to becoming a versatile musician, she then enrolled for some practical lessons with the Salvation Army in 1995. She received further lessons at the Durban Music School from people such as Mr Brian Thusi, a renowned musician who had toured the world with the musical Sarafina! (Composed by Mr Mbongeni Ngema, a world acclaimed singer, songwriter, composer and actor.)

WO2 Nkomo said: “When I went for the interviews in Pretoria to join the SANDF, I was so tiny and the
Embracing diversity within SANDF ranks

Article and photo by Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

Transformation is not only what is desired in policy documents, but a reality and an opportunity for the diverse South African society to enjoy. WO1 Vini Pillay became the first female Indian Warrant Officer Class One in the SA Navy. She is currently the SO1 Personnel Administration Support and a grievance officer in the SA Navy.

During an interview with SA Soldier, a confident WO1 Pillay said: “I have been working in the Department of Defence for 17 years. I joined the SA Navy in 1995 as a recruit. After completing Basic Military Training at SAS SALDAHNA, I served as a junior rating at SAS SCORPION, now known as Naval Station Durban”.

WO1 Pillay said that the exposure she had had is what led her to join the SA Navy. She giggled as she explained: “The opportunity made it possible for me to join the SA Navy. They painted such a nice picture to make you see that you had so much potential in the SA Navy.”

She said: “During my training phase I had to leave my home town and proceed to Cape Town where my training commenced. It was a difficult phase as I had never been outside KwaZulu-Natal. It was a challenge for me, but I was not going to let anything deter me. During my training I had learned to embrace the military culture, something other than my own. It was a testing time, but I adopted it with ease.”

WO1 Pillay conceded that while on training she had to interact with other race groups with a different and diverse cultural background and through this has matured a better understanding of people.

She also believes that transformation is not an event, but rather a process, and the Department of Defence is making rapid strides to achieve the goals of transformation as required by Government.

She was born and raised in Ethekwini in KwaZulu-Natal. After completing her matric, she applied for enlistment in the SA Navy and subsequently received a letter for possible appointment.

Asked why she wanted to join the SA Navy she said: “When you grow up, you want to pursue almost everything until you come to a point of realising that this is your life. It becomes a drive until you achieve your self-realisation. This was when I decided that I wanted to join the SA Navy as there were opportunities awaiting me”.

In October 2008 she was appointed as Warrant Officer Class 2, responsible for Grievance and Public Service Act (PSA) staffing for the SA Navy. On 1 February 2012, WO1 Pillay was appointed as Grievance Officer for the SA Navy, where she is responsible for monitoring and evaluating grievances in the SA Navy.

She concluded: “I have reached the epitome of the non-commissioned officer cadre and I think that within the next ten years I could become a mentor for upcoming and aspiring Warrant Officers.”
SA Navy women submariners defy the odds in a man’s world

It is quite amazing how in a few years so much can change. The integration of women into combat roles within militaries worldwide, and particularly in South Africa, has always been a contentious issue. Despite this, the SA Navy has succeeded in integrating women into all combat environments, including as divers, combat officers on its Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries ships and on board warships and submarines.

Women submariners, alongside their male counterparts, are now a permanent feature in all aspects of the SA Navy’s submarine service, a job still considered “too dangerous and scary” for women in most navies worldwide. The SA Navy is fortunate in having these opportunities, as in most other countries women only serve in supporting roles.

In the SA Navy women are now seriously taking up challenges by joining careers traditionally reserved for men. They join their “sisters” who have for the past 14 years successfully integrated into other combat fields, eg as divers, coxswains and other seagoing musterings on board warships.

The SA Navy now boasts fourteen qualified submariners, namely two chefs, five mechanical artisans, five electrical artisans, a radio/radar operator and a communicator. In addition, ten other women are working towards qualifying to become Navy Ships Divers.

Training to become a submariner is extensive and can take anything from six months up to four years, depending on the type of specialisation on board. The following are expected of submariners, irrespective of their gender:

- Submarine Escape Training
- Keeping watch in the control room – it is done by both the electrical and mechanical department and they are responsible for steering, diving, surfacing and timing the submarine at sea
- Operation room watchkeeper – is responsible for the safety of a submarine by manning the radar and sonar when it dives and by being a lookout on the bridge when the submarine surfaces. This is done by the radio/radar (operational room department)
- Fire-fighting – containment and extinguishing of all types of fires
- Duty watch – member of the overnight security, fire-fighting and emergency party
- Communal duties – working in teams to help clean and maintain all work and living areas
- Damage control – assisting with submarine emergency rears (emergency rears refers to a situation on board when leaking into the boat is prevented, which is just one of a few damage control procedures)
- Replenishment at sea – assisting with the resupply of submarines at sea
- Submarine husbandry – maintenance and upkeep of submarine surfaces


The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Mudimu, had this to say about women in the SA Navy: “The SA Navy has made enormous strides in transforming itself to allow men and women to participate freely and without prejudice in all facets of the organisation and, in so doing, to become the very best that they can be. To these women I say: Your relentless efforts, commitment and enthusiasm are an inspiration to us all. You make South Africa proud”. 

Celebration of womanhood
The Force That Cares.
Paying tribute to women

**Article and photo by Maj Emoret Serfontein, SO2 Operational Communications Joint Operational HQ**

In celebration of National Women’s Day and in appreciation of the contribution by women from all walks of life who played their role in the freedom of women today, the Joint Operational Headquarters (J Op HQ) commemorates Women’s Day every year, and encourages all tactical headquarters and operational bases nationally and in the peace support environment to do so as well.

More than 80 women of the J Op HQ gathered on 8 August 2012 at the Pretoria Military Sports Club to participate in this year’s celebrations. To make this year’s function unique, eight hostesses, in conjunction with their team members, decided on a unique theme to decorate their tables and to prepare the food and snacks with this in mind.

Colourful tables with a variety of themes were prepared, representing each team’s unique identity, but it was the team with the “Caribbean Olympics” theme that impressed the judges most. Each team member complemented the theme by dressing according to a certain sporting codes.

The women were entertained by various speakers who addressed a wide spectrum of topics. Sister Ross Lorentz of the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) gave a very interesting, eye-opening presentation and lecture on breast cancer awareness and the prevention and treatment of the disease, followed by an introduction of various fund-raising and awareness projects launched by CANSA.

This was followed by a positive, uplifting presentation and life-enriching exercise on aspects of “mind matters” by Ms Riana Vermeulen from I’m Possible Life Coaching.

The Chief of Staff of J Op HQ, Brig Gen Winnie Bobelo, emphasised the role women played and said no woman should flinch from any challenge or male counterpart in achieving her goals. She also paid tribute to the women who over the years played an integral part in the empowerment of women and who fought for the freedom and equality of all women.

Another highlight of the day was live entertainment by our local talented dance group. Although still young, these girls drew lots of applause, encouragement and laughter from those present.

After lunch, the women dispersed happily and relaxed and with a high level of esprit de corps. No one can stand in the way of these women achieving the highest goals. As they say in Xhosa: “Wa thinta Abafazi Wa thinta Imbokodo” – if you strike a woman, you strike a rock!
Women in leadership within the military

By Amn Bibi Sibanyoni
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

A Soldier spoke to Col Monica Müller, who was among the first women soldiers in the SA Defence Force, to compare the past with the present in how far the military has changed to accommodate women today, especially in senior management posts. Col Müller is a former Regular Force member currently serving in the Reserve Force.

Col Müller said: “Before 1971 the South African military was a world for men and no provision was made for women. After the first women were enlisted their training and fields of utilisation were mainly segregated from the men.”

She joined the South African Defence Force (SADF) in 1971 and this was out of the love she had for being a soldier. Seeing her father in uniform made her leave the teaching profession to join the then alien world which had many restrictions, but that did not deter her passion to be a soldier and she was determined to make it regardless of the barriers that existed at that time.

Col Müller states confidently that women in the military today should not take lightly the benefits they have and should make use of the opportunities they have. She said: “When we joined the military there were no general prospects of us holding a rank beyond that of Major. Very few career fields and senior ranks were open to women.”

Col Müller says: “When we joined the military there were no general prospects of us holding a rank beyond that of Major. Very few career fields and senior ranks were open to women.”

She started her military career at the SA Army Women’s College in George where she acquired many of the attributes she still holds today. It is where she learned the value of discipline and military conduct. The College was a protective environment for new female recruits who after Basic Military Training – which in those days was presented separately for men and women – would eventually enter a male dominated career environment. Today she still firmly believes that women should preferably undergo their Basic Military Training separately as it would equip them better for the challenges awaiting them in a male dominated environment.

Col Müller said: “Women were only recruited for career fields limited to the supporting corps, such as Administration, Signals, Finance, Stores and Catering. In those days it was not even considered that women would ever be trained and utilised within the combat fields.” In later years as a Staff Officer she played a leading role in issues such as the design of suitable uniforms for women, development and promotional courses for women and the broadening of career opportunities for them.

She later became one of the first women to be nominated for the Senior Staff Course and eventually became the Director Women of the SADF. Col Müller said: “In my time it was unheard of that women would be promoted beyond the rank of Colonel.”

Col Müller added: “Although I had left the SADF I always remained informed of new developments for women in the SANDF and many of the issues we had been fighting for were implemented after 1994. Examples of these included: the expansion of certain service benefits to female soldiers of which they were previously deprived and the opening of career fields within the combat corps to women. The brave step of the SANDF in allowing women to exercise an individual choice regarding their future role of utilisation resulted in not only women being deployed in peacekeeping missions in Africa, but also in the SANDF and boasting the first female Gripen fighter pilot in the world – Maj Catherine Labuschagne! What a wonderful achievement not only for the individual, but also for the SANDF. What a proud moment to see women marching in the same squad with men in a National Ceremonial Guard of Honour. What a breakthrough when women were not only allowed equal opportunities, but also service benefits equal to those of their male counterparts. The most notable of these are the medical benefits that female soldiers and their dependants enjoy today and being offered the same opportunities as their male counterparts to attend the Senior Staff Course and other leadership programmes, thus making their presence in the top structure of the SANDF more visible. All these changes felt like personal achievements to me. Women soldiers should know that the benefits and opportunities that they are enjoying today are the result not only of the struggles of the previous generation, but also because women have proved themselves within the military environment and have gained the trust of their Commanders.

“Yes, we have moved great hurdles as many women in uniform today serve as Generals whose contributions continue to shine through their dedication, competence and managerial skills. Gender equality as it is found in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) today offers the most satisfying full and part-time career opportunities to women in the military.”

Col Müller has the following advice for young women soldiers: “Nothing should be taken for granted, success can only be achieved through hard work and pride in the uniform and the organisation that you are part of. The military is still very much a male dominated environment and young members – irrespective of their gender - should be guided to serve the SANDF and their country with pride and excellence”. If I could offer the junior members some advice it would be the following: never try to be a soldier like a man – be a soldier like a woman as this will be your key to success.”

Col Monica Müller was among the first women soldiers to join the SA Defence Force.
Refrain from drinking alcohol during pregnancy

Article courtesy of Martina Nicholson Associates
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

On 9 September International Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Day is commemorated annually to improve awareness of the dangers of consuming alcohol while pregnant.

Many mothers are not aware that drinking excessive amounts of alcohol during pregnancy can be harmful to their unborn baby. Alcohol may be toxic to the foetus and can cause a variety of different birth defects, including spontaneous abortion, premature labour, stillbirth and foetal alcohol syndrome.

What is foetal alcohol syndrome?

Alcohol easily crosses the placenta from mother to child. Excessive drinking may cause foetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), which is a range of conditions that affect the baby. Children who are born to mothers who drink heavily may suffer brain damage, mental handicaps, emotional and behavioural problems, and defects of the face, heart and other organs. It should be noted that such damage caused to an unborn child is permanent and irreversible.

An individual who has been affected by FAS may experience a range of mental difficulties, including a low IQ, developmental delays, learning problems, behavioural problems, mental health problems such as depression and disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and increased risk of substance abuse.

It is estimated that between one and two thirds of children with special educational needs are affected by their mothers’ alcohol drinking according to the SA National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA). South Africa has one of the highest incidences of FAS in the world.

Additional risk factors

The damage that may be caused to a baby by drinking alcohol varies greatly and depends upon a number of factors and not just on the amount of alcohol that is consumed during pregnancy. It has been shown, for example, that women who smoke and take other drugs with alcohol tend to have children who are more severely affected by FAS.

The nutrition of the mother during pregnancy also plays an important role. The children of women who have had the benefit of better nutrition during their pregnancy...
tend to be less severely affected than those who are not well nourished. FAS therefore tends to be a more severe problem among the poorer sections of the population. However, it has been shown that even the children of wealthier women who have been well nourished often suffer from developmental, behavioural and learning problems if their mother has consumed a lot of alcohol during her pregnancy.

Among the risk factors for FAS are:

- Age - an older mother who is over the age of 30 is more likely to develop problems than a younger woman
- Poor nutrition and poverty
- Genes - some babies seem to have more of a predisposition to developing a problem than others
- The consumption of other substances such as tobacco, prescription drugs, illegal drugs and caffeine
- A lack of knowledge about the dangers of alcohol

**Diagnosis**

FAS is not always easily diagnosed as it causes conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which may not necessarily be traced back to drinking. Indeed, doctors and parents may not even be aware that certain problems in a child are caused by FAS.

**Treatment**

As has already been noted there is no cure for children who have been affected by FAS, although special educational programmes and behaviour modification therapies are available to support children affected by the condition. There are also medications available to treat problems such as ADHD, and surgery for some congenital defects, such as a heart defect. These treatments may be expensive, however, and it is preferable to prevent the condition rather than treat its symptoms.

**How much is harmful?**

Just how much alcohol can you drink during pregnancy? Small amounts of drinking have not yet been shown to have any negative effects on the foetus, but experts warn that alcohol is a very powerful drug for an unborn baby. Interestingly enough alcohol is considered to be more harmful to a foetus than illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and even heroine, but none of those should be taken during pregnancy as they too can have an impact on the development of a growing baby.

Some experts say that pregnant women should not drink regularly or heavily, and certainly never get drunk. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that pregnant women and women who are trying to get pregnant should give up drinking completely. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health agrees: it says that FAS is thought to be the third highest cause of intellectual disability in babies, and women should completely “refrain from drinking alcohol during pregnancy”.

Drinking during pregnancy is dangerous for the baby and is not recommended. Any woman who is pregnant or who plans to get pregnant is well advised to give it up immediately. Those mothers who have a drinking problem should contact one of the many support groups that are available.

* Sources:

The International Culinary Art Exhibition (IKA) is held every four years in Germany under the auspices of the federal Ministry of Defence of Germany during October. As part of the IKA, the German Chefs Association organises an international competition for military culinary teams: “Troops Catering for Military Cooks”. National military culinary teams from all over the world compete in the different categories.

An SANDF military culinary team consisting of six members will participate in the IKA 2012 exhibition to be held over the period 5 to 10 October 2012 in Germany. They are F Sgt James Maphitsi (Team Captain), F Sgt Stephan Nel, Cpl Jacqui Muller, LS Dumi Gordon, L Cpl Pule Legabi and Pte Janice Matthews.

The aim in entering the SANDF team for IKA 2012 is to afford SANDF members of the Hospitality Services environment the opportunity to participate as a team in the world’s largest and most prestigious quadrennial culinary art exhibition. The team will compete against the world’s best military chefs for Olympic victory in Germany, the Mecca for cooks and patisseries.

Capt Kwele said that the knowledge and experience acquired and best practices shared would help to improve the quality of SANDF catering standards, and concluded that participation was important in striving for Hospitality Services Excellence in the DOD. She said that the competition would impact positively on the morale and attitude of the Hospitality Services personnel of the DOD.

To ensure that the team chosen to participate in IKA 2012 was representative of the entire SANDF, an SANDF Chef of the Year Competition was presented. This has provided a pool of 16 competitors from which the team was chosen.

According to IKA, the aim of this professional competition is to offer the guests a healthy, gently prepared and digestible meal, seen from a nutritional point of view. Apart from this, for the next four years, the results of the international military teams’ efforts should point the way for military catering all over the world.

The military teams taking part in the Category B Culinary Art will prepare seven menus, consisting of a hors d’oeuvre, a main course and dessert for one person. This category is served cold as a display. The team must provide the platters and décor for the displays.

In Category “R” (Restaurant) for military teams, each team will have to prepare its own national (local) dishes on mobile stoves. The team must prepare and present one menu chosen by the organisers from the seven presented in Category B for 150 persons. The team is responsible for all the ingredients, small kitchen utensils and décor.

The SANDF team must prove their skills in both the art of preparation and presentation.
Training the nation’s Defence Force cooks

By Mr John Miller, The Diner magazine
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

Just as air force planes rely on jet fuel to launch them into the sky, the SA Air Force knows it has to keep its serving men and women fuelled as well. Food enables the military to sustain itself through peace and war and the air force is particularly proud of its tradition in training hospitality staff.

The Diner magazine visited the South African Air Force’s dedicated School of Cookery at the famous ex-Gymnasium complex opposite Air Force Base Swartkop where the SA Air Force trains its chefs.

The school is run by career hospitality specialist, Maj Derick Pieterse, and he is supported by Warrant Officer Ian Stewart. Maj Pieterse says: “Air Force catering is like many other large-scale operations where many people are involved. We cook in bulk, much like any institution, but within a strict budgetary and rationing regime.”

The School of Cookery’s primary objective is to train hospitality personnel for placement in the 14 countrywide bases and at SA Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria. Each base has its own Hospitality Manager, usually with the rank of Captain or Major, and a “Club” Manager under him; usually a Warrant Officer. Overseeing the kitchens is a fully qualified Flight Sergeant who operates as a “floor manager”. His responsibility is to supervise the chefs and any other staff related to food preparation. It is the head chef’s duty to prepare menus and make sure the correct “rations” are served.

Those accepted into the Air Force hospitality mustering are obliged to complete a minimum two years of military training before candidates can start with their hospitality training phase, after which they receive practical experience in the various kitchens. Maj Pieterse says: “The Air Force is far more focused on selecting those with a genuine interest in hospitality and catering. We are well past the stage of accepting trainees who simply want a job rather than having a passion for cooking.”

The team that will be representing the SANDF in the International Culinary Exhibition in Germany in October 2012, fltr: L Cpl Pule Legabi, LS Dumi Gordon, Pte Janice Matthews, F Sgt James Maphitsi (Team Captain), Cpl Jacqui Muller and F Sgt Stephan Nel.

Once through their military subjects, candidates are mustered for the School of Cookery to begin courses aligned with the Government’s Culture Arts Tourism Hospitality Sector programme. They emerge with credits towards a national qualification in professional cookery that embraces Sector Educational Training Authority (SETA) standards, allowing them to join the civilian life after their military service has finished. During their initial training period, servicemen are paid a regular monthly salary of around R6 000 and are provided with on-base accommodation.

The day-to-day instruction falls under the supervision of F Sgt Stephan Nel, who is not only passionate about catering and food; he has also won numerous inter-service and air force awards. The School of Cookery, with Sgt Nel as the “Head Chef”, also happens to cater to many visiting military dignitaries during official functions. Sgt Nel says: “Our training regime spans four phases. The first is modular-based theory, followed by a demonstration phase that includes all the physical skills related to our hospitality doctrine. Next is a workplace phase that includes exercises conducted under normal working conditions - many taking place in our own training kitchen. This is followed by an assessment phase. Students start at 07:00 and complete their classroom work by 15:30 before continuing studies in their own time.”

Base hospitality managers are always keen to hear from quality suppliers in this area. Furniture and other consumables are acquired through the air force’s normal acquisition programmes - a good example being the 26 brand new hybrid Defy gas and electrically powered stoves used in the teaching area. Another future acquisition is likely to be a TV-based training system.

The Air Force’s School of Cookery typically qualifies up to 48 new hospitality specialists a year. It is run separately to that of the SA Army and the SA Naval that have their own training schools. With diminishing defence budgets an ever-present challenge, the school has become highly efficient and even provides catering services for unscheduled air force functions on a commercial basis. However, the training standards themselves have been scrupulously upheld with air force staff being considered well disciplined contributors to the private sector after they leave the service.
The SA Army Signal Formation recently celebrated Women’s Day at Wonderboom Military Base in Pretoria. The theme for the event was “Empowering Women”. Participants consisted of women nominated from the various rank groups and Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) working at the units and regiments under the command of SA Army Signal Formation.

The audience was welcomed by Ms Lebogang Monyatsi from Sanlam Group Office who taught them the value of saving money saying. She said: “It is good to always save money, especially for when we reach retirement: it is here that our efforts will pay off.” The women were given free guidelines to make their own beauty products from home. There was a pamper workshop from Ms Ma Girly Mokoape, a member of the SANDF Spouses Forum, to teach them the importance of pampering themselves at no cost. Ms Mokoape said: “We are the crowns of creation and it is up to us to keep ourselves stress free and looking our best.”

As the activities for the day continued Ms Sharen Eggers, wife of the General Officer Commanding SA Army Signal Formation, showed the women how to revamp their shopping bags and turn an ordinary bag into a fashionable bag by painting it. It was a well spent day and a good way of motivating and empowering the women.

Ms Rosemary Mangope, a member of the SANDF Spouses Forum, gave the motivational address for the event, urging the women to be positive thinkers. She spoke about “Transformed positive attitudes as women in the DOD” saying “as women in uniform and in male dominated careers you should not lose your femininity and compassion”.

In closing she alluded to the fact that as women we should always prove ourselves twice as worthy of the higher positions we hold. Even today transformation is still a challenge. However, we must remember that we can only be as good as we were yesterday and strive to change our attitudes into positive ones, keeping in mind that good attitude transforms the world and attitude (altitude) determines how high we will go.
Managers invigorated to execute their duties diligently

Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

Arguably on average if an employee starts working at 18 he or she will spend approximately 47 years of his or her life at work. From the above premise one can deduce that it is therefore important that throughout the employment period ideal employees must be as healthy at the time of their retirement as the day they started working. It is preferred by employers that employees’ health should not be affected by what they are employed to do.

In an effort to see this ideal come to fruition, the SA Army hosted the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Conference at Army Support Base Port Elizabeth (ASB PE) from 20 to 24 August 2012.

The objective of the conference was to raise awareness and to address challenges encountered by the OHS personnel in executing their mandate. All the departmental OHS managers were invited to attend this little acknowledged, but very crucial part of the work of employees. Other invitees who were also sponsors of the event were the SA Police Service (SAPS), ER Signs and Safety (a company specialising in OHS signs and posters), Pienaar Bros North (suppliers of safety equipment and clothing) and NOSA (a global supplier of occupational risk management services and solutions). All the sponsor invitees and other OHS role-players, eg Bayteck Holdings, were given an opportunity to share views on OHS and how they assisted clients to reach OHS targets.

As expected of an event of this nature, Lt Col Alilali Lishivha, Chairperson of the conference, and SO1 OHS Army HQ, issued a brief unambiguous instruction on opening of the conference to have all emergency exits unlocked and explained how to evacuate the conference hall without panicking to avoid unnecessary injuries and where to assemble in case of emergency.

Col Nkandzeni Ndou, Officer Commanding ASB PE, had an opportunity to welcome guests and attendees. He briefly introduced the chief functionary at the event, Brig Gen Elvis Mathaba, Director Logistics Plan.

Addressing the conference, Brig Gen Mathaba explained the necessity of being healthy and safe at work and highlighted some of the health hazards that employees face daily. He said that the employer ought to take the necessary measures to reduce health hazards as much as possible. Brig Gen Mathaba said: “Being safe at work is about using the correct tools of the trade in accordance with their design and, as mentioned in the operation manual, it is imperative that when handling equipment the handler must always bear in mind the safety aspect of that specific equipment.” He mentioned that authority of the OHS as reflected in South African law was about promoting the health of employees and preventing or minimising the possibility of accidents in the workplace. He cautioned people not to take “short cuts” because the consequences of such actions might be dire.

Brig Gen Mathaba advised the OHS managers in attendance not to misuse their authority by unnecessarily seeking to punish those who transgressed OHS rules and regulations, but rather go to greater lengths to inform the perpetrators of their wrongdoing and to take remedial actions rather than punitive measures. Brig Gen Mathaba said: “You must not act as watchdogs, but rather as custodians of the Act and seek to keep OHS at the agreed standard level. You must not be demoralised by those who do not appreciate being told what not to do or how to do what needs to be done.”

An OHS specialist, Col Lindiwe Nkoko, in her presentation asked the thought-provoking question whether the Department’s OHS was up to standard and if there were OHS policies specifically relevant to the military environment. She emphasised the urgent need to establish an OHS corps in the SANDF.

Mr Andre Nel, an international fire-fighting consultant, physically demonstrated the correct use of fire-fighting equipment and how to deal with fire. He also explained the do’s and don’ts when handling such equipment.

Did you know?

OHS at the workplace is a legal obligation governed by the OHS Act No 85 of 1993.
 Defence manufacturer, Denel, will use the Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (AAD) Expo in Pretoria in September to showcase the unique quality of its products and services.

The AAD will attract some 120 international delegations and 20 000 trade visitors to Air Force Base Waterkloof from 19 to 23 September. Mr Zwelakhe Ntshepe, the Group Executive Marketing of Denel State Owned Company, says Denel will exhibit a full range of products across the spectrum of its capabilities in the landward defence, aerospace and aviation sectors.

He says Denel has through the years developed some niche products and capabilities that are global leaders in their fields. “Many of our systems being used by the SANDF are well-proven in an operational environment and can be readily adapted to meet the requirements of prospective clients.”

The Badger infantry combat vehicle, a Denel Land Systems product, has been developed to meet the requirements of the SA Army for a vehicle that can be used both in peacekeeping operations and high-intensity warfare. “The Badger is more than 70% local content,” says Mr Ntshepe, “locally designed and customised to meet the unique requirements of operational deployment in an African environment.”

Denel Dynamics is collaborating with Brazil on the development of the A-Darter air-to-air missile system with production expected to commence in 2014. The A-Darter was successfully fired from the SA Air Force’s Gripen fighter jet in February 2012.

The company will also display its Seeker II unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and its next generation product, the Seeker 400 tactical UAV, at the AAD Expo.

Denel Aviation is actively marketing its ability to provide maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for both helicopter and fixed wing aircraft in Africa. The company is responsible for the servicing of aircraft in the SA Air Force’s fleet and is also accredited to perform MRO for Eurocopter and Lockheed Martin Aircraft.

The company’s most famous product, the Rooivalk combat support helicopter, was designed and manufactured for the SA Air Force over a period of more than 25 years. It will occupy a prominent position at the AAD Expo.

Denel Aerostructures is the only company outside of Europe which is a top-tier manufacturer of critical parts for the Airbus A400M - the world’s most advanced military airlifter. The parts were designed in South Africa and are being manufactured at Denel’s Kempton Park plant and then shipped out for assembly onto the A400M in Seville, Spain.

Mr Ntshepe says the experience gained in participating in major international projects will enable the company to pursue other contracts successfully and take a leading role in South Africa’s own plans to expand its maritime patrol capacity.

Denel Mechem is a global leader in the provision of humanitarian de-mining services in post-conflict areas. Mechem is responsible for the lifting and removal of landmines and unexploded ammunition in eleven African countries and has supported international peacekeeping operations in other conflict zones.

Mr Ntshepe says the AAD Expo will also underline Denel’s position as a strategic national asset whose products and services are increasingly being utilised outside the defence environment. He says: “Our products and services can help to combat rhino poaching, drug and contraband smuggling, cable theft and in international efforts to address the scourge of piracy.”
Artisan training - a top priority for the SA Air Force

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photos: Sgt Elias Mahuma

Air School hosted a reclassification, commission and passing-out parade of the newly qualified artisans of the SA Air Force on 22 August 2012.

Technical and vocational skills are vital and one of the critical sectors sorely required in the SANDF.

With the implementation of the Government’s National Skills Development Strategy artisan training has become a top priority for the SA Air Force. The graduates have completed a three-year apprenticeship programme. Their training began at the SA Air Force Gymnasium, followed by an intensive 18 months’ training programme at 68 Air School.

The training comprised a school block and workshop phase at the Tshwane South College, which was followed by Duty A, Technical Training I and Technical Training II at 68 Air School. After that they were transferred to other SA Air Force bases, aircraft servicing units or squadrons for a year to undergo practical training on different types of aircraft and systems.

Their work also covers the rebuilding of damaged aircraft and the overhaul and rebuilding of major components. They are specialised in a number of unique capabilities, such as aircraft mechanical support, technical, engineering avionics and reconnaissance functions, electronics and instruments.

Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, the Chief of the SA Air Force, presented certificates to all the members and declared the course a success. He said it was well planned and executed and thanked the Officer Commanding of 68 Air School, staff members and instructors for their hard work.

Expressing his pride, Lt Gen Gagiano said that the newly reclassified artisans and commissioned engineers represented the next generation that would be taking the SA Air Force to greater heights.

Congratulating the graduates who did well, Lt Gen Gagiano said: “You should be rightly proud of yourselves and your achievements. You have achieved what many have failed to do, but this is just the first of many steps that you need to take in your career within the SA Air Force. From now on a new journey begins for you.”

Cpl Divan Adams (21) from 22 Squadron Oryx at AFB Ysterplaat was named the best performance artisan. Speaking to SA Soldier he said that he was grateful for the opportunity to serve in the SA Air Force. He said: “I am extremely proud of myself and the people who stood by me through my studies. I want to thank them for their unwavering support. What a privilege it was to be given an opportunity to reach my dream. My hard work has finally paid off.”

His message to those aspiring to follow artisan trades in the SA Air Force is: “Always put your best foot forward. What you plant now you will harvest later. Make tomorrow a vision of hope.”

ABOVE: Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, the Chief of the SA Air Force, presents certificates to the newly qualified artisans.

ABOVE: Cpl Divan Adams from 22 Squadron Oryx at AFB Ysterplaat - the best performance artisan.
Youngsters report for National Youth Service

By SLt Ruwayda Grootboom, PRO
SAS SALDANHA

Since the commencement of the first National Youth Service (NYS) Programme at SAS SALDANHA in 2011, the unit has received its second intake of approximately 1 000 youngsters over the weekend of 4 August 2012. This programme, still in its infancy stage, is a Government imperative between the Ministry of Defence and Military Veterans and the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Reform that have entered into an agreement for the Department of Defence (DOD) to provide the NYS Programme for the National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC) members of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform.

This is the third intake of its kind, and what started off initially with youth from one province, spread throughout the country and now proudly boasts youth from four different provinces.

On Monday 6 August 2012 the Officer Commanding SAS SALDANHA, Capt (SAN) Valason Pillay, welcomed the learners to the unit. He emphasised that they must remember that even though they drill, they are not soldiers. However, they must at all times maintain the highest standards of discipline. He further gave the learners a breakdown of what exactly awaited them over this four-month period and introduced the staff members to them. Ms Felicia Mashigo, one of the programme learners, expressed her gratitude to her local community counsellor who informed her about this programme. Having matriculated recently, she views this programme as a stepping stone toward realising her dream of ultimately becoming a social worker.

Capt (SAN) Pillay stressed the fact that the youngsters should not be part of the programme simply because they want a stipend, but because they genuinely want to learn something in order to play an active role in changing their environments.

What comes to mind is the old saying “… for every action there is an equal reaction …”, meaning that for every force there is a contrary force that is equal to it. This implies that youngsters entering the programme because they genuinely want to make a positive contribution, will experience a similar positive action in their communities, making society as a whole a better place.

Husband and wife excelled as best shottists in Gauteng North

By Lt Katlego Thobejane, SO3 Corp Com SA Army Signal Formation

Photo: Lt Theo Fourie

The Gauteng North Combat Rifle Association annual Merit Awards Function was held at Furrow Lane Hotel and Conference Centre in Pretoria on 18 August 2012. The event was hosted to acknowledge the Gauteng North shottists who excelled throughout the year.

The Sportsman and Sportswoman Awards were awarded to husband and wife, Lt Col Bieb Gouws (Defence Intelligence) and Maj Nerina Gouws (SA Army Signal Formation). It was the first time that these prestigious awards were bestowed on a husband and wife in the same year.

Lt Col Gouws’ main achievements were his selection for the National Combat Rifle Shooting Team in April 2012. This was the 8th time Lt Col Gouws received his National Colours for Combat Rifle Shooting. He also received his SANDF Colours during the SANDF Combat Rifle Shooting Championships and was crowned the SANDF Regular Force Champion for 2012 during the Closed SA Army Combat Rifle Shooting Evaluation held in March 2012.

Maj Gouws was crowned the SANDF Woman Champion during the SANDF Combat Rifle Shooting Championships held in Bloemfontein in April 2012. She also received her SANDF Colours for the first time and ended third in the Women’s Category during the Nationals.

The trophy for Most Improved Shottist was also shared for the first time: it went to Sgt Peet Snyders (School of Signals) and Sgt Francois Smith (SA Police Service). Sgt Snyders excelled during the SANDF Combat Rifle Shooting Championships, received his SANDF Colours and was also selected for the President’s Team during the Nationals. This team consists of the Top Open Sight shottists who participated during international matches as an invitational team.

Other medals were handed out during the function to WO2 John van Rooyen as Veteran Combat Rifle Shooting Champion, Rfn Vaclav Tvardek as the Masters Champion and L Bdr George Mathipa as the Junior Champion, while Pte Verlyn Troskie received the Blue Bull Trophy.
SA National War College students stretch their legs

By Cpl Itumeleng Makhubela

On Saturday morning, 18 August 2012, at the Air Force Museum Swartkop, the students of the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme and members of the SA National War College embarked on a 10 km fun walk around the base.

The aim of the walk was not only to ensure that members on course participated in physical activities and exercises, but to boost the morale of the students by allowing them to flex their muscles.

As this is one of the SANDF military training institutions, the College does take the necessary steps to ensure that compulsory physical training programmes are included in the programme.

The Commandant of the SA National War College, R Adm Patrick Duze, had given instructions that recreational activities should be organised for staff members and students of the College with the aim of promoting esprit de corps within the SA National War College.

Defence (WP) Golf Club Development Championships

Article and photo by S Sgt Colin Fitch, Representative of Defence (WP) Golf Club

No less that 19 aspiring golfers took to the fairways of the Parow Golf Club on 7 August 2012 for the first Defence Western Province (WP) Golf Club Development Championships.

The competition was open to all registered members of the Club with current handicaps between 25 and 36. These golfers were split into four groups consisting of 25 - 29 handicaps (A division), 30 - 36 handicaps (B division), 25 - 36 handicaps (Women’s division) and a group with no current handicaps.

The golfers were accompanied by a low handicap player to assist with the rules and etiquette of the game.

The event was well supported by members of Pelma Truck Repairs, Tread Master and the Golfers Club.

The National Manager of Pelma Truck Repairs, Mr Nico Alberts, congratulated the players and the organisers on their commitment to transformation within the game of golf and for the development of the game across all rank groups within the SANDF, with extra effort being made to get more women to play golf.

The Chairperson of the Defence (WP) Golf Club, Col Tol Snyman, congratulated the winners of the various divisions and remarked that this competition showed the commitment of the Club to invest in new players and its support for a well-structured development programme.

Golfers of the Defence (WP) Golf Club Development Championships, fltr: Col Tol Snyman (Club Chairperson), CPO Elroy Scheepers (Winner: B Division), L Cpl Althea Cronje (Winner: Women’s Division), Maj Jakobus van der Westhuizen (Winner: A Division) and Mr Nico Alberts (National Manager Pelma Truck Repairs).

Winners

A Division
1st - Maj Jakobus van der Westhuizen (AFB Ysterplaat)
2nd - MWO Clint le Roux (Regional Task Force West)
3rd - WO2 Quintin Jacobs (SA Navy) (DOD School of Logistics)

B Division
1st - CPO Elroy Scheepers (SAS MENDI)
2nd - S Sgt Nathan Peters (ASB Western Cape)
3rd - Cpl Dane Andrews (ASB Western Cape)

Women’s Division
1st – L Cpl Althea Cronje (ASB Western Cape)
2nd – S Sgt Dee Pridgeon (ASB Western Cape)
3rd – Sgt Eudene Booyse (ASB Western Cape)
4th - WO1 Letitia Feet (SA Navy) (Naval Base Simon’s Town)

Best Non-handicapped Player: Cpl Johan Lottering

Closest to the Pin: Mr Danie Blignaut

Longest Drive: WO1 Elroy Seymour (SA Navy) - Men
S Sgt Dee Pridgeon - Women

* Any aspiring military golfers in the Western Cape who would like to find out more about the Club or would like to join or attend any of the Wednesday afternoon development clinics can contact CPO John Valentine on 021 787 5515 or 083 414 8140.
Remember Me!

By Col (Rev) Tammy Rweqana,
Acting SSO Communication and
Liaison Chaplain Service
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

As Woman’s Month comes and goes every year, I hope that the activities to the event have left an indelible mark in our minds, otherwise it will be a fruitless exercise.

Let us look at Hannah, one of the women of faith, who lived like any one of us and had the same problems that all of us encounter on a daily basis, but she was faithful to her convictions.

Hannah had two obstacles throughout her married life: She was barren (childless) and Peninnah, her rival, tormented and humiliated her because she could not bear children.

Like any woman who was unhappy in her marriage, she wanted to have a child and be honoured. Although her husband, Elkanah, was not bothered about her condition, to Hannah this meant the whole world.

One day she was deeply stressed and cried bitterly; she went up to the house of the Lord and prayed: “Lord, Almighty, look at me your servant! See my trouble and remember me! Do not forget me!” (I Sam 1:11)

This was a simple prayer of humility. Hannah, barren and hurt as she was, had found refuge in prayer. In God’s house, she sought God’s face and favour. She poured out her soul to the One who never fails us. Her unspoken prayer of supplication was heard by God. When we pray, God does not look at our faces – He looks at the inner person, He looks at the broken heart and answers the sincere prayers.

You and I may not be barren as Hannah was, but we may have different thorns in our flesh that make life so difficult to withstand. Let us pray to the One we believe in – it may be God or Allah or Qamata or Zim. Let us just ask or plead for one thing, as Hannah did: “Remember me! Do not forget me!”

The High Priest, Eli, thought that she was drunk at first, but after he heard Hannah pleading her innocence and pouring out her heart to him, Eli blessed her. As Hannah was leaving God’s house, she was content and had a strong conviction that God had heard her prayers and would answer them.

May we all have that conviction, faith and hope that in whatever problem, trouble and tribulation we find ourselves in - we have our God in whom we can take refuge and be healed.

Col (Rev) Tammy Rweqana.

Plant and preserve our trees

By Lt Col Frans Pale, SO1
Operational Communication

The Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi, called on the members of Joint Operations Division to work like members of one family to achieve the objectives for which the Division was established.

Speaking at the tree-planting ceremony organised by Joint Operations Division at Swartkop Park during National Arbour Week on 7 September 2012, Lt Gen Mgwebi thanked members for working hard in support of one another to enable the Division to achieve its objectives.

Lt Gen Mgwebi said: “I urge you to continue working like family members who assist one another irrespective of their weaknesses or failures. I would also like to express my appreciation for your professional conduct here at the Division.”

He emphasised the need to plant and preserve trees, as they promote a healthy life for human beings. Lt Gen Mgwebi said: “Apart from helping us to make furniture, trees are important to us as they are also used for medicine to heal people.”

Leading Joint Operations Division members in planting a tree, Lt Gen Mgwebi planted a Water berry tree (Syzygium cordatum) an evergreen and water-loving tree, which grows to a height of 8 - 15 metres. This tree is often found along streams or forest margins in swampy areas. The tree is also a home to many birds and insects.

After the tree-planting ceremony, Lt Gen Mgwebi led members of the Joint Operations Division in a 4.8km walk in support of people living with disabilities. He also encouraged Joint Operations Division members to contribute to the plight of people living with disabilities by buying stickers for Casual Day.

Lt Gen Mgwebi said: “The money accruing from the sale of these stickers will go a long way in alleviating the plight of people with disabilities in the South African National Defence Force.”
Promoting the development of middle managers

By Mr Kevin Ntozinkulu, Senior Personnel Practitioner: PSAP ETD
Photo: WO1 Linda Moore

Twenty-four DOD employees successfully completed the Advanced Management Development Programme for Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) on salary levels 9 to 12 at the end of August 2012. The programme was presented at the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) in Pretoria.

The objectives of this programme are to provide middle managers with cutting-edge competencies and to prepare them for future challenges in the Senior Management Service.

The AMDP was presented in a highly interactive style over 15 working days and consisted of three blocks of five days each. Training involved activities that maximised learning. A lively interactive mix of new thinking, individual and group learning achieved this.

On completion of the AMDP, learners were requested to evaluate the programme, which they rated excellent. They indicated that the programme re-energised them with knowledge and the competencies required at an advanced management level.

Comments by some learners are reflected below:

Mr Ralph Imrith, Assistant Director: Finance Division, said: “The programme was very well experienced by all learners. The discussions among learners after each block was presented indicated that the course content was relevant to the job environment of the learners and that it was of such a quality that each learner was empowered with the requisite knowledge base. The programme venue was excellent in terms of the learning environment, while the programme was well prepared in terms of the specialist subject matter presented. Constructive criticism was welcomed by all learners who presented on specific subject matter, while presentation skills were being indirectly developed at the same time. Overall the programme was experienced as a success, as learners were very enthusiastic about the presentations.”

Lt Col Johannes Adams, SO1 Data Integrity: Human Resource Systems, said: “The Strategic Management module stands out for me because it has broadened my knowledge and understanding of how an organisation operates on that level. In the DOD it makes more sense that mandates are linked with the Constitution and government regulations in order to meet constitutional obligations. In the Department PSAP sometimes find it difficult to understand their role and how they can assist the uniformed members to meet their constitutional mandate and the organisation's strategic objectives. The module on Batho Pele Principles reminded me again of the importance of service delivery in the public sector, which includes all South African citizens and all foreigners who require specific services by the different government departments. Most of us fail to understand the importance of the services that we are supposed to render to our clients and how these services are able to contribute significantly to the enhancement of living conditions. It is important to realise that as employees our duty is to serve the people rather than ourselves. My involvement is to transform my thoughts to alter the character of the organisation.”

The determination, eagerness and commitment of learners throughout the AMDP constituted evidence of the success of the programme. Learners shared their past experiences and their interests with the aim of enhancing and maximising the learning process. This programme has transformed many thoughts and changed the perception that most people have of PSAP.

Chief Directorate Human Resources Development acknowledges the need for the development of PSAP at middle management level. It is envisaged that one AMDP will be presented annually.
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