FREE ... But pass it on when you are done

SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIER

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Fittest soldier championship

defence
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FRONT COVER: Soldiering on, a female tenacious competitor in show of her agility and fitness during the water obstacle course of the 2014 fittest soldier competition. (Photo: Pte Jonathan Mogano)
This time of the year is makes way for opportunities to expressing greetings for the festive season. With only a month left to conclude 2014, it has been a long year of hard work. I certainly hope you have achieved all the goals you set for yourself this year.

We (the Editorial Team) would like to express our sincerest condolences to the families who lost their loved ones this year. We know that losing one life is simply one too many. Each loss was not only a family loss but a lost for South Africa as a collective. May their souls rest in peace.

In recent years we have seen a rise in diabetics, one of the silent killers that not so well known or understood. People do not take this condition (referred by some as the sugar sickness) as seriously as they should, yet it is one of the biggest threats to the health and well-being of people across the continent. The majority of sufferers unfortunately are unaware that they even have this life threatening disease and only seek medical help when complications start appearing.

In South Africa 90% of the country’s 3.5 million diabetics have type 2, which is preventable. It is estimated that the prevalence of diabetes in SA in Caucasian communities around 4%, in the urbanised black population it is around 8%, while it is highest among Asians at 13%.

Communicable diseases such as TB and HIV and Aids which, in departmental context, places a heavy burden on the DoD/SANDF as well as the South African economy in general.

November 14 is annual World Diabetes Day. For your insight, read about this “silent killer” on page 36. Being foretold is being forewarned, so the best way to prevent yourself from becoming part of the future statics of the disease is to empower yourselves by reading all about it.

On a lighter note, as we approach the time of festivities, read on page 30 about the Mexican fiesta at Turfontein in day at the races…

Adiós colegas y amigos, tienen una temporada festiva increíblemente bendecido (goodbye colleagues and friends, have an awesomely blessed festive season).

*Translation into IsiXhosa by Cpl Mzontsundu Mdolomba, member detached to DCC.
South to south dialogue

By Pte Phillip Pitso
Photos by Pte Jonathan Mogano

The Commander of the Brazilian land forces, General Eduardo Dias da Costa Villas Boas, visited South Africa over the period 06 to 11 October. The purpose of the visit was primarily to benchmark on how the SANDF administers, commands and controls the various Services, Divisions and centres, and secondary purpose was to cement the relations between the two Defence forces.

Gen Villas Boas conducted a number of courtesy calls on, amongst others, the Chief of Joint Operations Division (J Ops Division), Gen Derrick Mgwebi, the Centre for Conflict Management, the Chief of the SA Army, Gen Vusi Masondo, Chief of the SA Air Force, Gen Zimpande Msimang, the Air Force Command Council, and various other private organisations, such as Denel and CSIR.

He mentioned that both defence forces were playing an important role in socio-economic and technological development in their countries. He went on to say they had similar views on development, science and technology: “We believe there are a lot of corporations we can engage with, so I plead with the leaders for more areas of cooperation, exercises, exchange programmes and diplomatic initiatives”.

After reading the Defence Review, he said he had found it to be interesting and was impressed by the doctrine. He said he marvelled at the Rooivalk fighter helicopter that he saw at Denel Aviation in Kempton Park as a unique South African creation.

As a first-time visitor to South Africa Gen Villas Boas also went sightseeing in and around Pretoria. He visited places such as the Voortrekker Monument and Sun City in the North West Province.

The Chief of Joint Operations Division, Gen Mgwebi, on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, accompanied the Brazilian delegates during the visit.
DOES SOUTH AFRICA NEED SOLDIERS?

The role of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is often misunderstood by many people, especially those who are not part of the SANDF. The most frequently asked questions people are: Do we need the SANDF? What is the role of the soldiers? In reality every country needs a defence force. When there is no war, soldiers prepare for war. When there is war, soldiers prepare for peace. It is easy to misunderstand the role of the SANDF and its capabilities. The constant exercises, training and continual deployments to other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Sudan, have led to the SANDF and its capabilities being successful. The aim of the SANDF is to preserve life, health and property and to maintain essential services, something that it has done well for the past 20 years. As we speak, the borders of Lesotho, Mpumalanga and Limpopo are being manned by the SANDF. “On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind”.

(D. Lipinski).

Pte David Tshivhula, 44 Parachute Regiment

PERSONNEL SERVICE SCHOOL MAKING IT HAPPEN

Personnel Service School (PSS) is making transformation visibly happen at this year’s Personnel Clerk Course. With limited resources, especially for members with disabilities, PSS was able for the first time to accommodate three members who are wheelchair bound.

Any Human Resources (HR) functionary knows how important the Personnel Clerk Course is, as it is one of the first courses to advance HR members. PSS hosts various HR courses each year and never before have members with disabilities been accepted on course due to a lack of resources.

At the outset of the course the Commandant of PSS, Col Petra van der Merwe, welcomed the learners from different units around South Africa to the Protea Hall at PSS. She encouraged them to support each other as they were from different backgrounds and environments. She highlighted the fact that having learners in wheelchairs was not going to be easy but if the learners worked together, the course would go smoothly.

Although unable to provide sleeping quarters at the school, military transport and assistance were provided for the three members with disabilities to and from the school every day for 13 weeks. With dedicated drivers, the members with disabilities were transported in the mornings and afternoons, even when there were extra lessons after-hours or over weekends.

At the end of the course a function was held where the Commandant of PSS encouraged learners to support people with disabilities and said the fact that the three members with disabilities on course had outdone themselves and were not really disabled as they had started the course and finished it. Col Van der Merwe said: “The ability to put resolution into action earns praise.”

She also encouraged education among all students and said they should implement what they had learned back at their units. A visibly emotional course coordinator, Cpl Lawrence Radali, thanked the Commandant for affording him the opportunity to run a “first of its kind” course as there had never before been a course at PSS attended by learners with disabilities.

A course representative, Pte Sibulelo Ntushelo, previously an armourer, thanked the Commandant on behalf of the learners and staff for managing the different facets of education, resolving issues and encouraging facilitators to keep going, as learners were bound to flourish as a result.

He said that they had learnt a lot by interacting with the people with disabilities.

The acceptance of people with disabilities on such programmes will assist them in the workplace and improve their chances of being promoted. In the Support Corps one must complete courses such as Personnel Clerk in order to advance in one’s career. It is indeed evident that one does not have to have it all to be successful. Transformation is everyone’s responsibility and we can all contribute towards it.

One of the learners in a wheelchair, Cpl Sicelo Matu (46), felt positive and happy about how the school had treated him. He said he was amazed that his classmates were kind and had assisted him when he needed to get around the school.

Cpl Matu from 44 Parachute Regiment was unable to attend courses before owing to the budget and lack of resources for people with disabilities. He said: “In the past the SA Army was not really designed for people with disabilities, which is the reason most units are not yet ready to accommodate such people.” He said people were amazed to see a soldier in uniform in a wheelchair, until the matter was explained. Cpl Matu is looking forward to completing other courses at PSS once it has been renovated, and he praised the school for accepting him on course and for the respect shown by facilitators to people with disabilities.

Another student, Cpl Benius Mbilani (55), said he never thought he could complete the course at his age. He thanked the school for accepting him and the course members for assisting him. Cpl Arthur Krisjan (48) said the school had gone out of its way

R200 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 concerning the Department of Defence. Regrettably, anonymous letters cannot be published - Editor.
The Main Ordnance Unit Sub-depot (MOSD) at Wallmannsthal near Pretoria recently hosted a flag hoisting parade to introduce its new unit flag. The Officer Commanding MOSD, Col Mlamleli Mbuwqa, led representatives of different rank groups during a toast to the new Unit Flag.

The symbolic meaning of the new Unit Flag is as follows: the chair represents the 19 Regular Force Units that are linked to each other in the SA Army Support Formation. The grey to accept learners with disabilities on course.

Posters of Chief Directorate Transformation Management encouraged members of the DOD to unite in diversity, gender, language, youth, race, belief, culture and disability. An organisation that encourages and supports the career development of their people with disabilities is indeed a winning organisation.

With limited resources PSS has gone out of its way to accommodate learners with disabilities and it is evident that the school supports transformation, is making it happen and is serious about the development of all SANDF members. This success story should encourage other units and departments to do their best with the little they have and encourage people with disabilities, irrespective of age or gender, to see that it is possible to complete courses. With everybody’s support the process of transformation continues and, through the PSS, the DOD has conveyed a positive message that the organisation takes care of its members.

For the next eight months PSS will be renovated. Accommodation, and especially ramps for people with disabilities, will be renovated in order to make it easier for them.

During the Personnel Clerk Course the school presents accredited modules such as Labour Relations, Customer Service, the new Conventions of Service Writing (CSW) and Persol. PSS plays a very important role in training members to qualify as Human Resources (HR) functionaries. Furthermore, the school does not only accommodates uniformed members but also Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP).

Pte David Mabusha Tshivhula, Personnel Clerk: 1 Parachute Battalion and black represent the road between different vehicle parks. The green represents the different vehicle parks in the unit.

Flag hoisting ceremonies may take the form of a formal parade with a guard of honour and band. Modified forms of flag hoisting ceremony are performed in unit lines. Formal flag hoisting ceremonies may be held in public.

The mission of the MOSD is to ensure a deeper level of warehousing support of military actions and other specified tasks assigned to the Department of Defence. Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela, Pretoria

**GRADUATE OF HIGHER LEARNING**

Everyone who comes to 44 Parachute Regiment personnel offices are welcomed by these words “I am the graduate of higher learning” from the ever friendly and lively Sgt Kabelo Mokolojwane (48) affectionately known as “Matekie” or “Makhaya” by his colleagues. Sgt Kabelo Mokolojwane recently acquired a National Diploma in Human Resources Management. The learned sergeant started studying four years ago at the Central University of Technology.

When the SANDF offered DOD members an opportunity to further their studies through different institutions in South Africa the 48 year old Sergeant grabbed the opportunity with both hands and soldiered on. The journey was not easy for this father of two girls and a widower and he admits that it is tough to study when you are old. Matekie joined the Defence force 26 years ago and did not let the disability hinder him from furthering his education. He explained that he never thought he would one day have a National Diploma and he is amazed that he now possesses a certificate of higher learning. He has now taken a break from the books and is planning to start with his S-Tech in 2015.

He hopes to inspire other “madalas” and the disabled in the Defence force and South Africa is proof that disability and age cannot stop one from furthering one’s studies; he explains that if an “oldie” like he can complete a diploma, there is nothing to stop young stars in the Defence force from grabbing such opportunities. Currently the DOD offers both the PSAP and DAP members opportunities to further their studies in different institutions across South Africa. Applications are welcome every year, not only for higher education in universities and colleges, but also with ABET for older people who never had a chance in the past to obtain or improve on their matric certificate. Sgt Kabelo Mokolojwane “the graduate of higher learning” is an inspiration and his achievement is a statement that nothing can stop the determined.

Pte David Tshivhula, 1 Parachute Battalion

ABOVE: The new unit flag (right) hoisted with the National Flag (middle) and the SA Army Support Formation flag at the Main Ordnance Sub-depot Headquarters. (Photo: Lt Valencia Ndou)
DEFENCE LEGAL MEDAL PARADE

Defence Legal Services Division recently held a medal parade at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town. A medal parade is a reflection of our diligent and professional traits which are in line with the SANDF Code of Conduct. This medal parade was for members of the SANDF who served with loyalty, dignity and discipline in the SANDF. Among the 65 medal recipients were members of the Defence Reserves.

The Acting Chief Defence Legal Services, Maj Gen Bailey Mmono, congratulated and encouraged the recipients of the medals for their good work and urged them to continue by maintaining discipline, safeguarding property, developing skills and knowledge, and performing their duties diligently and professionally. Addressing the members attending the parade, Maj Gen Mmono said: "Each medal and certificate handed over today is in recognition of your loyalty, discipline and professionalism in the service of the people of the country and the Republic. We in the SANDF pride ourselves on the recipients today as they epitomise the true image of the members of the SANDF: competent, committed, with unquestionable patriotism, a member whose goal it is to serve with pride beyond the call of duty". He thanked the families and friends for their support and thanked the members on parade.

Prudence Reneilwe Mokoka, email

SA ENGINEER FORMATION RECREATIONAL WEEK

The SA Engineer Corps recently hosted its annual Recreational Week at the School of Engineers in Kroonstad. The SA Army Engineer Formation, Engineer Terrain Intelligence Regiment, 35 Engineer Support Regiment, 1 Construction Regiment, 2 Field Engineer Regiment and the School of Engineers took part in the Recreational Week.

The Recreational Week was held to enhance esprit de corps in the SA Army Engineer Formation and to select a team to participate in the SA Army Fittest Soldier Competition. The recreational activities included netball, soccer, volleyball, road running, walking, angling and golf.

At the end of the sporting activities the Chief of Staff Engineer Formation, Col Gerrit Janse van Vuuren, awarded tokens of appreciation to the teams and units. The Best Unit Trophy was awarded to the School of Engineers. The runners-up were 2 Field Engineer Regiment, while 1 Construction Regiment came third. This was followed by trials to select the team to participate in the SA Army Fittest Soldier Competition. The participants started the fitness test which comprised a 2.4km run, push-ups, shuttle-run and a 4km walk. The sandbag run, agility test and bleep test also formed part of the activities. Two days later the participants took part in a 21km walk from the Bossiespruit Training Area to the Military Base Kroonstad. Members had to carry big bags during the exercise. At the end of the event the General Officer Commanding SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen Willys Nkosi, presented tokens of appreciation to the participants and units that excelled. The best unit certificate was issued to 35 Engineer Support Regiment, with 2 Field Engineer Regiment in second place and the School of Engineers third. Spr Nomaphelo Ngomana was awarded the Fittest Female Trophy and Spr Ronald de Vasch was awarded the Fittest Male Trophy.

Speaking to the members, Brig Gen Nkosi said that participation in recreational activities portrayed the good discipline of a soldier, and soldiers should engage more in extramural activities. He also thanked all members who participated and the School of Engineers for hosting such a successful event.

Capt Mokgadi Nkgapele, School of Engineers

OFFICER ACHIEVES ANOTHER MILESTONE AT THE INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES

Lt Col D.W. van Wyk obtained the Master of Arts (MA) degree in Managing Peace and Security in Africa (MPSA) at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. The graduation ceremony recently took place there.

The challenge in the field of peace and security lies in its ability to prepare professionals who can think out of the proverbial box. Therefore, the MPSA Executive Master’s meets that challenge by preparing critical, reflective practitioners with the skills to provide new cost-effective and creative solutions for complex and dynamic problems. Lt Col Van Wyk said: “I have enjoyed the interaction of the participants from different countries on the African continent regarding the subject matter and also learned the importance of information sharing and different viewpoints presented by fellow students.”

The officer was afforded the opportunity to study at IPSS during his tenure at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Gaborone, Botswana, from 2009 to 2012. He gained extensive knowledge in the field of conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building. He was also elected as the Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Directorate of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs at the SADC Secretariat due to his vision, perseverance and good leadership.

Lt Col Van Wyk furthermore completed the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme (JSCSP) successfully at the SA National War

ABOVE: Lt Col D.W. van Wyk obtained the Master of Arts (MA) degree in Managing Peace and Security in Africa at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia.

(Photo: Mr Frank Owusu)
PATH WITH MISTAKES MADE

When you find your path, you MUST not be afraid
You need to have a sufficient courage to make mistakes
Every mistake made is a lesson learnt.
Disappointment, defeat and despair are the tools
God uses to show us the way
The past has no power over the present
The present moment of time is a birth of a new day,
We bear a new positive thought.
Let’s be God conscious in every path taken.
PO A. Goolam, Military Academy, Saldanha

DELAY IS NOT DENIAL

God will never mislead you. Don’t let mystery demoralise you. You got the job in the SANDF and nobody promised you anything more than that… You think ahead and carefully work out your career plan. You try to nominate yourself for courses but are never accepted. It is good to plan dream and think ahead. You picture in your mind with great detail how your future is going to unfold in the DOD. But things don’t go as planned. Some doors close, while others open. If this happens to you, it might be that God has something completely different in mind for you. Be happy and never worry or stress about things that you cannot change. Pte Victoria Mathibela, 7 SAI Bn Phalaborwa

College in November 2013. He made valuable contributions from a SADC perspective on the JSCSP, especially during the module of Military Operations other than War, due to his vast knowledge and experience of the African Union and SADC. The member also holds a Bachelor of Military Science (B Mil) degree in Organisation and Resource Management from the University of Stellenbosch and a Baccalaureus Technologiae (B Tech) degree in Transportation Management from the University of Johannesburg.
Lt Col Van Wyk is currently working at the Logistics Division at Directorate Asset Management in Lyttelton, Pretoria. Col Owen Witbooi, officer Commanding Army Support Base Johannesburg

DOG-TAG YOUR IDENTITY

Wise people always wear their dog tags. Let us learn from the wise. I’m impressed by civilians who also wear their dog tags. Dog tag is not just a string of jewels or beads worn around your neck. It is a tag that contains essential information about you. In this busy life we know that our survival is not guaranteed. Most of us only wear our dog tags on deployment. Wear your dog tag daily so that it could be easy to identity you even after you have been badly burned, severely injured, trapped in a collapsed building, etc. Pte Victoria Mathibela, 7SAI Bn Phalaborwa

EVERYONE WANTS TO SUCCEED

A successful life do not just happen, it is built on sacrifice and hard work. In order to tap into the successful life one must make right choices, the same choices we make today determines are tomorrow. The successful life is not a mere wishful thinking but the right focus. Everyone wants true joy, and the same true joy comes from doing what one loves, folding hands does not bring success, only action brings success. Successful life can often be defined as material things like clothes, cars, and etc; a happy heart is a successful life. The fact that you are woke up today it means you succeeded and have the opportunity to be what you want or do what you want in life. Sometimes working hard does not determine success as we do not determine the outcomes of our day or life. Pte David Tshivhula, 44 Parachute Regiment

END OF CONTRACT

The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) is a two-year voluntary service with the long term goal of enhancing the SANDF deployment capability. Recruits are required to sign up for a period of two years during which they receive military training and further functional training in their first year of service. During the second year of service they are deployed where needed and given the opportunity to apply their knowledge and develop their skills. Two years might seem like a long time but it passes very quickly. At the end of contract recruits are given an opportunity to join the Reserve force and organisations like SARS the Correctional Services and other departments and other companies have

WE LOVE OUR SOLDIERS

We love our soldiers, we are proud to have them in South Africa. Hala hala … hala hala … Thank you for your work … hala hala. Sana, email

SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLIMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to the SA Soldier magazine team for the sterling work they have provided over the years. It has been very professional and inspiring. I read the interview with Lt Gen J. Nkonoyane in the April edition of SA Soldier with admiration. It was interesting to get to know the former Chief of Logistics and it made me realise the painful truth that I only found out more about him when he was gone (retired).
It was nice to know that he was passionate about leadership and strategic management.
I therefore wish to propose that SA Soldier interview the Chief of the SANDF, the Secretary for Defence, the Service and Divisional Chiefs, Chief Directors and Deputy Directors General for different editions (within the next year). It would be motivating to know where they come from, what inspires them, what goals they have in general other than military work, what goals they have in life, what their wishes are for the future and more. This will build young leaders. Maj Zamokuhle Shabane, email
GOC JOINT OPS BIDS 4 SAI FAREWELL

General Officer Commanding Joint Operations, General Jabulani Nkabinde bade, farewell to 4 South African Infantry Battalion and other elements in a parade held at the DOD Mobilisation Centre at the De Brug Military Base near Bloemfontein on 22 August 2014. The South African contingent was off to the Sudan to conduct peace keeping mission under the auspices of the United Nations in an operation code-named UNAMID.

The General reassured the members on parade that the South African Government was committed to the creation of a better Africa and a better world. It was in this regard that the SANDF needed to honour the stipulations of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide forces for the UNAMID (United Nations Mission in Darfur) in the Sudan. For this mission to be a success, you must portray unrivalled standards of discipline as this will yield good results for the contingent and the SANDF. Do exactly what you are told to do and comply at all times with orders given to you by the authorities. Remember, in order to be safe in the mission area, play this game according to its rules” said General Nkabinde. He asked the contingent to the promote the image of the organisation and the country at large citing consciousness, tolerance, living for one another and vigilance as some of the traits that members should live by. The task ahead looked a mammoth one but the training that was provided was of a high standard to match all the challenges that the contingent might be faced with.

General Nkabinde also took time to explain the rationale behind SA conducting external missions, citing the maintenance of peace and stability as drivers of economic growth for the entire continent. “We must ensure that the government’s path for Africa remains intact and your contribution towards this goal is of the utmost importance. Only your professional conduct will ensure this outcome”, emphasised the General. He ended off by wishing all members on parade a successful deployment and urged them not to lose contact with their families and loved ones. After the General had withdrawn from the parade, the Warrant Officer of the SANDF, Master Chief Warrant Officer Victor Kgaladi, offered words of encouragement to the contingent. He admitted though that the main reason for standing in front of the contingent was to introduce and announce the goodwill parcel project sponsors who were present. He detailed the process as well as the challenges they experienced in running the project, such as wrong addresses provided by members, members with multiple spouses and houses, post-box as addresses and other logistical challenges that could have been avoided if attention was given to the instructions on what details to provide. He closed by thanking the sponsors and giving the assurance that their efforts were invaluable. Maj Ntsikelelo Mantshongo, Sudan, email

INFANTRY FORMATION WARNS THE SUDAN BOUND 4 SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY BATTALION

At the DOD Mobilisation Centre near Bloemfontein on 11 August 2014, Maj Gen Lindile Yam, General Officer Commanding Infantry Formation of the SA Army, made a plea to the RSA contingent en route to the Sudan as part of Op Cordite to be both vigilant and flexible in all its activities in order to succeed. This contingent that comprised members of 4 SAI and other support elements.

He began his address by clarifying to members on the national strategic framework of operations and the utilisation of the military to pursue government objectives domestically, continentally and internationally. He detailed the content of what was contained in the White Paper on Defence and compared it to the current Defence Review. The SANDF previously got involved in missions that were not sanctioned by the United Nations, the African Union or the now defunct Organisation of African Unity. Moreover, another factor that contributed to the RSA’s involvement was the refugee problem. The General emphasised the need to employ a more Afrocentric approach in dealing with African matters, which might provide a platform for shared economic growth and interests. These were the same sentiments expressed by the former Secretary General to the Commonwealth of Nations Chief Emeka Enyaoku, when the latter suggested that ‘African solutions are required for African problems.’ (Provide African answers to African questions)

According to the General, a stable continent is good for the RSA as there could be a positive spin-off in terms of trade between African Nations. A positive approach was required by each and every individual, unit, supporter, soldier and other members involved in the mission. The General issued a stern warning that projection of force implied the ability by the contingent to employ strict security measures and stability (Pedagogue of Hope). He urged all members to exercise the South African spirit of Ubuntu but in the same vein warned against the inability to gauge a hostile environment that requires one to exercise full military operational drills. He highlighted that ignoring or properly not exercising the military drills can be detrimental to the success or could adversely contribute to the failure of any mission, hence the general cautioned that vigilance and flexibility was vital. The Ubuntu, concept that South Africa is known for should not be misconstrued as cowardice or inability to deal decisively with the enemy in the best possible manner.

Gen Yam told the contingent that there were many potential threats that our forces should be ready to deal with. As SANDF members, this contingent must pursue stability in Africa, which was the priority. This could be achieved by ensuring that peace was maintained said the Infantry Formation GOC.

“I am proud of your predecessors, 21 and 7 SA Infantry Battalions who against all odds, stood up decisively to their adversaries. No weapons will be handed over. We are not in the business of donating weapons. No dirty hands will touch our uniforms and confidence should be projected”, emphasised the General.

In an answer to questions and concerns of the members to be deployed the GOC said that a fund to assist the families of members who died on deployment would be established to help them. The General emphasised the fact that South Africa
SUDAN BOUND LADIES CELEBRATES WOMEN’S DAY IN STYLE

The day that started normally like any other turned out to be one of the most enjoyable for women who were to a certain extent unwittingly laying down their lives for the good cause of representing South Africa and the SANDF in the Sudan as part of OPS CORDITE. On 12 August 2014, it was uncertain if the planned Women’s Day celebrations would continue or not, due to some unforeseen circumstances. However, a swiftly arranged committee took the bold initiative to convince Major Tisetse Segkobela (aka Boss Lady) to hold the celebrations at 1 SAI Battalion. Though there was hesitancy on her part as they were not informed in time, she finally agreed to host the party and, as they say, ‘the rest is history.’

The programme director for the evening, Maj Windvogel, in her opening remarks encouraged women to take care of themselves in the Sudan. Private Mongwadi read a poem whose special message was: “Women are special beings who need to be loved and not kicked.” Unfortunately for her there were no men to listen to it and practise her message. The audience to seemed to be in agreement that men were causing most of the trouble in many households. A few men who were part of the proceedings felt unease, as they were obviously outnumbered.

Maj Ntsikelelo Mantshongo, Sudan, email

would never again find itself in the same situation as was the case in the CAR: “These members were sacrificial lambs who should be afforded the heroic status they rightfully deserved.” He also emphasised the fact that the media had fabricated their stories at that time in order to sensationalise the matter. He urged the members to follow in the footsteps of historic heroes like King Shaka and Chief Maqoma who led their victorious warriors amid trying and difficult times.

General Yam concluded by requesting the contingent to mix kindness with gallantry. He remarked, show love and caring, and remember, we are not a country of failures, make us proud. Maj Ntsikelelo Mantshongo, Sudan, email

On Friday 19 Sep 14, the General Officer Commanding of the Joint Operational Headquarters, Major General Jabulani Nkabinde took time off from his demanding schedule and paid a visit to members deployed in OP CORONA (RSA/Mozambique) borderline in the J Tac HQ MP AOR.

He was accompanied by the OC J Tac HQ MP, Colonel Monwabisi Dyakopu, the second in command of the J Tac HQ MP, Lt Col Elaine van Staden and the Chaplain deployed at Sandriver Operational Base, Chaplain Rametse Ncube.

A few men who were causing most of the trouble in many households. A few men who were part of the proceedings felt unease, as they were obviously outnumbered.

OP CORONA Anti-Rhino Poaching in the Kruger National Park. She unfortunately succumbed to her injuries and passed away on 21 Sep 14. We would like to express our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends of the dear departed. Article and photo by Lt Col Elaine van Staden

GOC J OP HQ VISITS OP CORONA MEMBERS AT 1 MIL HOSPITAL

Above: FltR: Col Dyakopu, Cpl Ncube, Cpl Molefe, Maj Gen Nkabinde.
The Chief of Human Resources, Lt Gen Norman Yengeni facilitated a discussion on the best HR strategies and management practices during a four-day HR Indaba held at the Council for Scientific and Industrial International Convention Centre (CSIR) from 20 to 23 October 2014.

The discussion took place against the backdrop of the publication of the Defence Review in its initial approval stages. Lt Gen Yengeni said that one key issue in the Defence Review is that commanders must have authority and the administrative delegation to execute their assigned mandate.

“The purpose is to build consensus on how to restore good HR management practices at unit level because, as you may recall, the 1998 DOD structural engineering resulted in the dilution of power in the command structures and this affected adversely our turnaround time in pursuit of any task at hand,” Lt Gen Yengeni said.

He said consensus had also been reached on the need to provide education and training that would produce officers with agile minds and in possession of substantial reserves of moral courage that have the ability to execute missions directed by government in all spectrums of conflict.

“It is important to note that we have set April 2015 as our target date for HR recruitment and marketing to be devolved to services to ensure the correct fit between persons and post profiles. The developments of these post profiles are key because they will also enable the Defence Force not to discriminate blindly,” He said.

Lt Gen Yengeni said the development of an integrated IT System is on the verge of being established and will serve as a data warehouse. This system will drive both defence administration and command and control in order to optimize all other defence information subsystem. He said that the division will introduce a new electronic roll-call, leave and performance management development system.

The resolution of the HR Indaba will be presented for consideration and endorsement in the form of an Action Plan to the Plenary Defence Staff Council which is the highest decision-making structure of the Department of Defence.

“After all, the Directive given by the DOD leadership in this regard is that, services and divisions must synchronize their implementation plans with the Medium-Term
Dr Gulube also mentioned that the execution of HR functions should be based upon standards which meet Commanders’ and Managers’ needs. He said the HR function and practices will be at the cutting edge of fair HR practices that are professionally executed.

“Thus appeal to the HR practitioners present today to foster a work ethic and a culture of professionalism. Commanders and Managers should lead by example and encourage innovation amongst the HR practitioners,” he said.

The Deputy Chief of Human Resources, Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, presented the resolutions of the HR Indaba. She indicated that commanders need to have career development discussions with their subordinates. She added that the HR Division needs to explore the possibility of instituting a best unit award ceremony for HR functionaries. The awards are meant to acknowledge the best performing HR unit and encourage others to do the same.

Commanding Officer and HR functionaries must be trained to follow policies. New HR structures must be set up on level 4 and 2. She said the need to establish a career path for HR functionaries requires the redesigning of HR processes so that they are effective and efficient.

Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and be aligned with the current planning cycles of government and existing planning activities,” Lt Gen Yengeni said.

Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube said the Department of Defence is working closely with the Auditor General South Africa to ensure improvement in the DOD’s internal controls and compliance through the Internal Audit Division.

“The HR component is working very hard to ensure that the DOD obtains a clean audit in so far as our HR practices are concerned. Although there is room for improvement, HR has made some strides in ensuring that the DOD does receive a qualified audit opinion,” said Dr Gulube.

He added: “The HR Indaba therefore must focus on what has transpired within the HR environment as more legislative imperatives and regulations are being introduced demanding more reporting and compliance mechanisms.”

Dr Gulube said the DOD HR Division can only function effectively if the HR structures are in place and geared towards the latest requirements. He said Commanders and Managers at all levels should be well resourced and empowered with relevant delegations in order to instil a culture of responsibility and accountability at all levels.

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Chaplains call for discipline

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Pte Jonathan Mogano

Chaplains of all faith groups in the SANDF convened for the Annual Chaplains Symposium to engage in discussions on the theme: "reading into the signs of time in pursuit of discipline". Guest speakers were invited to contribute to the symposium at AFB Ysterplaat from 14 – 17 October 2014 in Cape Town.

The Chaplains Service represents a cross-section of the religious communities in South Africa and provides spiritual leadership for DOD members at home and on deployment in order to build human capacity that enhances spiritual, ethical and human wholeness.

The Chaplain General of the SANDF, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile said that Chaplain Service has a duty assignment to support the commanders in the SANDF to run a disciplined force and that they are duty bound to uphold discipline in the organisation.

"Most of the time we talk about people who are undisciplined but we overlook the people who do well and are disciplined. We want to be exemplary in our conduct and to support our commanders to maintain discipline in the SANDF." Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile said.

He indicated that the Chaplain Service had taken action against chaplains who were not prepared to live up to their task. Brig Gen (rev) Jamangile said he wanted to encourage all chaplains to be committed and disciplined and constantly strive for excellence in whatever they do.

Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile mentioned that at one point, the Chief of the SANDF had tasked him to visit family members of the soldiers who had died in the battle of Bangui in an attempt to establish if there were unresolved administrative issues since their deaths.

He had sent chaplains to the families to resolve their problems with the assistance of Human Resource and Legal personnel in the SANDF. He said the Chief of the SANDF was impressed with the efficient manner in which the chaplains conducted themselves when helping people.

The Deputy Chief of Corporate Staff,
Maj Gen Lungile Dlulane said that the Chaplain Service plays an important role in the SANDF. He commended them for carrying out their tasks in a professional and diligent manner. He said that they serve as moral, ethical and spiritual leaders who ensure a free exercise of religion.

Bishop Michel Hansrod of the Methodist Church in Cape Town gave a thought provoking sermon when he argued that there is a need to view the signs of times in a positive and a negative light. He mentioned that the signs are important in the way they change the world.

He indicated that the sign of time talks a lot of things in line with discipline. He also acknowledged that people understands discipline as the cornerstone of any military organisation.

Bishop Hansrod said that spiritual leaders in organisations carry on as if God had died and put them in charge. He reflected on an incident that had brought his church into disrepute as result of ill-discipline.

He said that people become arrogant because of their level of qualifications in theology and making things all about them and whatever they want and in the process were losing their purpose.

“"We have lost our calling. It all becomes about money and status. You want good teacher? Have a bible in one hand and a newspaper on the other.” Remarked Bishop Hansrod.

He stressed that negative reading of time have become prominent that spiritual leaders need to regain the sacredness and the holiness of their call to the priesthood. “As ministers we are fighting a spiritual battle against evil. We can overcome.” He said.

Bishop Michel Hansrod said that there are good and bad stories to tell of the DOD over the past 20 years of democracy when reading into the signs of the times.

The Chaplain Service provides a professional presence in the DOD through a holistic religious ministry for members of the DOD. They also specialise in religious and ethical counsel to all DOD members and their families for Deployment readiness and resilience.
Many Defence Reserves members are unemployed, and to create jobs for them they need to be presented with alternative job opportunities. This topic was discussed at the 4th 2014 Reserve Force Symposium at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Midrand. The aim of the symposium was to suggest ideas on how to assist Defence Reserves members to be seen as desirable employees by the private sector.

The theme of the symposium: “Employer Support: Indispensable for Voluntary Reserve Force Service,” led to discussions on ways to create alternative employment for Reserve Force members.

Discussions were held by members of the SANDF under the guidance of Chief of Defence Reserves. Major General Roy Andersen pointed out the effects of transformation on the reserves: “There has been a decline in the white component from one hundred per cent pre-1994 to an increased number of Africans after 1994”. He added that the business core of the SANDF reserves has proved to be a cost-effective mechanism for the Chief of the SANDF.

He said: “The reserve service is a voluntary system and should therefore not be seen as an employment opportunity in the SANDF.” The symposium also addressed the need to revitalise the reserves by recruiting the youth as well as presenting meaningful ways to appeal to employers to support reserves. One way was for employers to be willing to release reserves for deployment once they are called up. Maj Gen Andersen indicated that there were approximately 21 500 active reserves, 15 000 of whom are called up for about six months.

Some international guests participated in the symposium. From the United States came Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Fein of the New York National Guard who gave a presentation on the function of the reserves from a legal point of view. He referred to the legislation in America that constitutionally supports the employer-reserve relationship.

Lt Col Fein mentioned that the USA was more patriotic about joining their defence force. He said many people joined in order to defend their country as a result of the 9/11 attacks. For this reason they had drafted legislation to oblige employers to release reserves for deployment and reinstate them when they returned.

Lt Col Fein said: “We have an ombudsman that supports soldiers and their rights. It encourages reserves to be familiar with their rights.” He added that employers were patriotic about hiring reserves and in turn reserves were encouraged to be appreciative of their employers. Even schools and universities permit learners to take up soldiering. He admitted that when reserves leave for
deployment it does hurt businesses. So to boost this effort the US defence force rewards employers for their efforts.

Other international guests included reserve force delegates from the United Kingdom, Norway, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The following day presentations were made by state owned enterprises such as Transnet and SAMSA (South African Maritime Safety Authority). Overall the presentations tried to bridge the gap between businesses and the defence force reserves. They were also aimed at enhancing civil-military relations between the Department of Defence and private institutions.

A viable solution was presented through a project that will create job opportunities for Reserves through the Department of Agriculture.

One successful project in particular was the National Youth Service (NYS). This initiative provides the youth with skills training to curb the high rate of youth unemployment.

During the conference the SANDF admitted to having adopted the NYS programme based on the Tanzanian model. Brigadier General Gerhard Kamffer, Director SA Army Reserves, engaged the members at the Reserve symposium on the strategies in place to increase co-operation between the defence force and farmers in Limpopo. He commended the success of the NYS, and suggested ways to improve the programme.

He said: “Ordinary citizens would first be recruited into the NYS and the Young Lions programme and later be automatically injected into a two-year MSDS programme.” He added that once the trainees had become Reserves they could be reskilled and utilised in the North West province. He suggested that, after the symposium they should sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Premier of North West.

Other suggestions were made by Norway, for example to recruit qualified and specialist reserves, as this would make reserves attractive to businesses even after deployment. The symposium participants admitted that the problem of high unemployment among reserves was exacerbated by the lack of specialist reserves. This meant that reserves rarely returned home after deployment but preferred to be in units waiting to be deployed as a means of earning extra money.
By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Pte Jonathan Mogano

The story of the sinking of SS Mendi inspired those present at a rededication memorial at the University of Cape Town (UCT) on 19 October 2014. It is a story of the 616 South African soldiers who died on the morning of 21 February 1917 during World War One when their vessel sank; 607 of these were black troops and nine were white officers.

The Fifth Battalion of the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) spent their last night in South Africa quartered where UCT's Lower Campus now stands, previously known as the Rosebank Show Grounds. They had sailed from Cape Town to assist in the war effort. On the morning of 21 February 1917, just south of the Isle of Wight, on the way to Le Havre, France, the 4,000 ton steamship SS Mendi was rammed and almost cut in half by an 11,000 ton liner, the SS Darro. The SS Mendi sank in 20 minutes.

The rededication coincided with the centenary year of the beginning of World War One. This ceremony is the precursor to a memorial service to take place in 2017, marking the centenary of the sinking of the SS Mendi.

Only white and coloured troops were awarded the standard Victory and Service Medals at the conclusion of the war. The Department of Military Veterans is seeking surviving relatives of the men who died on the SS Mendi, to include them in the service that will mark the 100th anniversary of the tragedy.

The memorial to the SS Mendi was installed in 2006 at the southeast corner of Cecil Road Extension, where the ceremony took place. Department of Military Veterans sponsored an upgrade of the memorial, including a roll of honour and interpretive material. The rededication was required in order to proceed with normal annual services in honour of the men that had died.

About 21,000 black South Africans, all of whom were volunteers, served in France with the SANLC between 1916 and 1918. They dug quarries, laid and repaired roads and railway lines, and cut tons of timber. Most of the men were employed in Le Havre, Rouen and Dieppe, where they unloaded supply ships and loaded trains with supplies for the battlefront. Of these men, 333 died in France during the war. The wreckage of the SS Mendi lies in the English Channel, approximately 11 miles south of the Isle of Wight.

LEFT: The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr Max Price declared that UCT students and staff members also participated in WW1 and WW2.
Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr Max Price said the ceremony acknowledged the upgrade of the memorial with the roll of honour and interpretive material. “The presence of a memorial to a military troopship on UCT’s Lower Campus may seem unusual to some people. The men we are remembering today did not attend the university. In fact, this property belonged to the Rosebank Show Ground in 1917 when the troops of the South African Native Labour Corps were billeted here before they were shipped to France to aid the war effort.” He said.

He said that apart from 146,000 white soldiers who volunteered for service in World War One (WW1), over 83,000 black South African also enlisted. Most of them were recruited by the Department of Native Affairs from the Eastern Cape, Natal, the Transvaal and Basutoland. He said many were attracted by promises of lucrative benefits and adventure.

Dr Price declared that UCT students and staff members also participated in WW1 and WW2: “In WW1, 929 UCT students, ex-students and staff members volunteered for active military service. UCT students also joined the UCT Training Corps, where they did military training while continuing their studies.”

UCT student today continue to serve their country in the SANDF. Dr Price said 24 UCT student from various disciplines have completed their basic training and officer formative course through the University Reserve Training Programme.

Director General of the Department of Military Veterans, Mr Tsepe Motumi said that what made the victims of this disaster different from the millions of others who died in the Great War was simply that they were black and not considered proper combatants.

“Nearly 25,000 black men left their homes to travel thousands of miles to the killing fields of France and Belgium- but not to fight. They were members of the native labour corps, sent halfway across the world to dig quarries, build and repair roads and railway lines, load and unload ships, and cut timber. They worked alongside Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Egyptian labourers and German prisoners of war,” he said.

He said that they were housed in closed compounds and isolated from social contact with Europeans, not unlike the camps which were used to hold the German prisoners-of-wars in France.

Mr Motumi indicated that the fame of the victims of the SS MENDI disaster had grown since this history has been rediscovered. “South Africa’s highest award for courage is now the order of the Mendi decoration for bravery. Old eyewitness stories of the bravery exhibited by the doomed men have become legendary,” he said.

He added: “As part of the process of reconciliation in South Africa we have begun to take steps at last to recognise properly those who gave their lives at home and on foreign soil and, in the case of the SS Mendi, at the same time bring all South Africans involved in the SS Mendi still closer together.”

LEFT: The Chaplain General of the SANDF, Brig Gen (rev) Andrew Jamangile and the University Of Cape Town Chair Of Council, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane led the divine procession.
The Department of Defence (DOD) is a dynamic organisation in which a continuous demand for change is evident. In 2007 Chief Directorate Human Resources Development (CD HRD) and Defence Civilian Education, Training and Development (Def Civ ETD) developed a compulsory departmental induction and reorientation seminar, which is presented annually. This initiative communicates basic knowledge and understanding of the core business of the DOD to defence civilians at salary levels 8 to 12. Lecturers with expertise in approximately 42 subject fields from the Services and Divisions are invited annually to present this compulsory Induction and Reorientation Seminar for defence civilians.

The 12th Compulsory Departmental Induction and Reorientation Seminar for defence civilians from diverse backgrounds was recently held at the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) Training Formation for 31 learners. The first presentation on the Defence Review Update 2014 set the tone of the seminar by putting the DOD’s business plan into perspective. As the day progressed, learners participated in discussions during the presentations, such as the DOD Macro organisational Structure, Strategic Planning Framework, Planning Instruments and Timelines. Presentations on Human Resources issues in the DOD gave momentum to the seminar as learners’ knowledge was broadened to include the DOD Overarching HR Strategy, Service Systems and Labour Relations. The presentation on Transformational Leadership further emphasised that leaders need to motivate their subordinates to work for goals in order to perform beyond their expectations.

The Finance in the DOD presentation got the learners into the swing of things regarding financial matters. It was very interactive and based on real-life scenarios that impact on the Department’s adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). The presentation emphasised the fact that South Africa needs a government that insists on best practices in the public service and where sound and orderly financial management forms the cornerstone of an environment of trust and accountability.

Asked about the value of the programme Ms Phumi Dlomo, an Assistant Director from the Directorate Collective Mechanisms Labour Relations and Ms Belina Cuinica, a Senior Personnel Practitioner from Human Resource Division, responded as follows:

“As a new employee in this Department, the seminar afforded me a great opportunity to better understand the DOD’s role on the continent and in the global world. It has further given me an understanding and insight into how the DOD’s processes and reporting structures function. Attending this seminar has assisted me in my role as a civilian in the Department of Defence and has assisted me in performing my duties effectively and efficiently”, said Ms Dlomo.

“The DOD’s involvement in peacekeeping missions on the continent really made me proud to be part of this organisation. This resonates with what was indicated by the President in his State of the Nation Address in June 2014, when he said “The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been a source of pride through its participation in peacekeeping missions on the continent”, said Ms Cuinica.

The sterling effort put in by presenters from Defence Headquarters, Services and Divisions reflected commendable professional ethics. Having subject matter experts presenting strategic views and topics was essential to the success of the seminar. Induction and reorientation contribute to the role of defence civilians in providing professional, specialist, managerial and functional support for the Defence Force, Defence Secretariat and the Ministry of Defence, which contributes to qualified and competent defence civilians for effective Defence. This was further reiterated by Mr Padmanathan Madurai, a Chief Personnel Clerk from Human Resources (HR) when he said: “The Compulsory Departmental Induction seminar is an ideal seminar for Defence Civilians”.

ABOVE: The participants in the Compulsory Departmental Induction and Reorientation Seminar for Defence Civilians on salary levels 8 to 12.
SA and USA Mid-Term Review Conference

Article and Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

South Africa hosted the mid-term review conference between South Africa and the United States, part of the bilateral defence cooperation committee at Southern Sun in Pretoria. The conference was aimed at gauging progress and identifying gaps and shortcomings in bilateral cooperation activities and refining areas of cooperation in order to maximise the value of engagements.

The mid-term conference also provided the delegates with an opportunity to assess progress made in implementing the commitments made in the Defence Committee meeting and exploring avenues and solutions in the quest for security and economic stability thereby giving effect to the vision of the principals as reflected in the bilateral agreements that were signed as far back as 1994.

During the conference a few significant events of the past year were highlighted, such as the passing of former President Nelson Mandela, the official visit by President Barack Obama to South Africa, the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in the US and South Africa as well as a number of high-ranking visits by both countries. Specific reference was made to Exercise SHARED ACCORD and the recent Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition. Another success was the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on Geospatial Intelligence of 2013.

Speaking at the opening ceremony the two chairpersons indicated that South Africa and the US were indeed honoured to be members of these prestigious economic groupings that were taking ownership of future economic growth and the social development of their people.

They hoped that the deliberations would be frank, open, dynamic and robust to achieve the common objectives of both countries and to pave the way for closer cooperation by all four working groups over the short to medium term.

Learning other languages is vital in the DOD

By Sgt Chester Lenonyane, facilitator at D Lang (Chief Directorate Human Resources Development)

The increased involvement of the SANDF in external deployments at SADC and regional level on the continent requires that our soldiers be competent in languages, other than one’s own.

The interesting part of working in the DOD is that one often has to work with people speaking different languages. This situation therefore should be an encouragement and motivator to everyone to learn other languages. The DOD will always be required to send members on foreign learning opportunities, deployments or other engagements where a lack of foreign language competency could be a hindrance. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said: “Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.”

In Aug-Sep 14, the Directorate Language Services presented a foreign language course – French Beginners Module 1. The course was presented by experienced ETD Language facilitators who are experts in their field. D Lang is bridging the communication gap in the DOD, by presenting official and foreign language courses to both uniformed and civilian members. One can proudly say that having been part of this course D Lang is succeeding in its objectives. Almost all of us arrived there without any previous exposure to French, but on the last day of the course we made presentations – about our family situations, place of work, place of residence and so on. It is indeed remarkable that we could write and speak out during our presentations in French.

We would like to thank D Lang and the facilitators for presenting not only an interesting but also an exciting course which had everybody participating. It was just one boisterous course in which we debated and experimented with our newly acquired skill which will be a valuable asset in our various workplaces and will come in handy during our operational duties elsewhere on the continent. Though this was just a foundation course in French, it laid a solid foundation. In the end, it is up to each individual to make sure that the skill and knowledge acquired from the learning programme are preserved. The presentations we made were good and it shows that, as the French would say: “quand on veut, on peut!” , when one wants, one can!

It has been said, elsewhere, that our best chance of bridging barriers of language in the DOD lies in our action as a collective rather than as individuals. A Defence Force that speaks foreign languages, and in considerable numbers, is far more ahead of its peers. In that respect, we would want to transform the above statement and say: “si nous voulons, nous pouvons”, if we want, we can.
Junior Command and Staff Duties course learners awarded

It was yet another Junior Command and Staff Duties (JCSD) course certificate ceremony for the year 2014 at the SA Army College on 30 October 2014. The officers who attended the second JCSD course were spoiled at the auspicious awards ceremony, having successfully completed the course. Major General Les Rudman, Deputy Chief of the SA Army, gave an address on behalf of the Chief of the SA Army. He said: “The development of officers does not come to an end on completion of this course. It is imperative that tactical level commanders and staff officers continue to develop themselves, therefore you should all optimise your potential for the sake of the security of the country.” He said that during the course the SA Army College used an adult approach and a credible assessment to support the philosophy of self-regulated learning, this proved to be successful, as shown by the 61 officers who took to the stage to accept their certificates. To top it off three officers more than met the JCSD course criteria when they managed to accomplish high aggregate results. The best students with the highest favourable aggregate scores were Major Joseph Tshabalala from Artillery Corps, Major Mimy Matimbe, also from Artillery Corps, was close second with 89.2 per cent, and Major Leslie Wylie from Defence Intelligence Division came first with 89.3 per cent. In his congratulatory note, Maj Gen Les Rudman said: “The results compare favourably with international institutions at this level.”

Amongst the students were three international students. They were honoured for excelling throughout the course despite being separated from their family and friends. They were: Major Jonghoon Joung from the Republic of Korea, Major Luo Weizhong and Major Wan Xing from the People’s Republic of China. Maj Gen Rudman did not mince his words as he prepared the learners to enter the real world. He said: “You should remain ready. You should not just frame your achievements and forget about them, because according to the Chief of the Army you are the best in your field and so can be called up at any time.” He added that their kits should be fully prepared and close at hand.

Maj Gen Rudman underlined the core challenge that the SA Army College faces when the learners first arrive, namely that they are inexperienced in the core functions of the course. For that reason the graduates were encouraged to continue studying in their field of expertise so that they write about it and pass on their knowledge and experience.
Logistic Division Medal Parade

By Cpl Mzontsundu Mdolombam
Photo by Sgt Elias Mahuma

Major General Monde Mbiza, General Officer Commanding DOD Logistics Support Formation, conferred medals on deserving members of the division during a medal parade held at the Thaba Tshwane Sports Ground in Pretoria on 24 October 2014.

Maj Gen Mbiza officiated at the parade on behalf of Lt Gen Bongani Mbatha, Chief of Logistics (C Log). Amongst the medals conferred were the Tshumelo Ikateloho, Unitas, Bars for 20 Years Medal, 20 Years Good Service Medal, 10 Years Good Service Medal MK, 10 Years Good Service Medal and 30 years’ Service Certificates.

The prestigious ceremony was preceded by the SA Military Health Services pipes and drums band, under the command of Drum Major, S Sgt Daniel Marcel Lemus.

After Scripture reading by Chaplain Pieter Roos medals were conferred, starting with the Tshumelo Ikateloho which was conferred on three members. Two members were recipients of the Twenty Years Medal, forty members were recipients of the Twenty Years Good Service Medal, the Ten Years Good Service Medal MK was conferred on one member, the Ten Years Good Service Medals were received by two members and the last category was 30 Years’ Service Certificates for five Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) members. Of note was that Brig Gen Vusi Ngobese, the General Manager of the South African Forces Institute (SAFI) received three medals.

In his speech at the parade Gen Mbiza started by apologising for the absence of C Log, Lt Gen Mbatha and his Deputy, Brig Gen Molthamme Moadira who on account of other official commitments with the Minister of Defence could not be present.

“Medal parades of this magnitude have proven to be quite instrumental in motivating and raising the morale of soldiers and PSAP alike. Medals are a reward that one will keep and wear as a sign of pride in what one has achieved in his or her life”, said Gen Mbiza.

He emphasized the importance of this parade as it was the first of its kind in the Logistic Division. Because of its importance recipients came from as far afield as Cape Town, De Aar and Naboomspruit to receive medals and witness the ceremony. “Wear these medals proudly, you have earned them. It is not just a piece of bronze, silver or gold, but is a sign of appreciation of your hard work as government employees. Medals are instituted by the highest authority, namely President. Today we honour you for your contribution towards the primary functions of the SANDF and the DoD”, said the GOC.

In conclusion, he thanked the families of the recipients for their support of the recipients. He expressed his gratitude to all the individuals who contributed towards the success of the Logistic Division Medal Parade. He emphasized the importance of co-operation in achieving organisational goals.

Members awarded medals at AFB Durban

By Capt Romeo Mabote

SANDF members with enviable leadership traits and have the responsibility of ensuring that the people of South Africa are and feel safe, were bestowed with medals of various categories by distinguishing themselves in different capacities in their arduous quest of positioning South Africa in the global map for her role in SADC and Africa broadly.

In his speech on the occasion of the Medal Parade held at Air Force Base Durban, Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusimuzi Masondo, alluded to this when he remarked “we are called to serve and not to be served”.

Lt Gen Masondo, who was officiating on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF who could not attend the event due to ill-health, heaped praise on the recipients and reminded them that medals are an embodiment of discipline because a soldier serves the country with honour, dignity and courage. When asked what the occasion signified to her, a visibly jubilant 30 year medal recipient, Staff Sergeant Nosipho Mahola, who is based at Regional Works Unit in KwaZulu-Natal, said: “The SANDF needs the presence of women in leadership positions, a soldier must always have discipline and I’m proud to wear this medal that was conferred on me today”.

Shedding light on the Defence Review 2014, Lt Gen Masondo asserted: “The country is engaged in a useful but long overdue public discussion about the mandate and scope, the design and resourcing of the Defence Force, going into the future, based on the Defence Review 2014, which is now in Parliament”.

The Defence Review 2014 lays bare the current position of the SANDF and the challenges it is facing with and what needs to be done in order to match it with current military forces globally. The goals enshrined in the Defence Review 2014 include the defence and protection of South Africa, its people and the national interest, the safeguarding of the country and its people, and supporting the police and civil authority in times of crisis.

Lt Gen Masondo said that the SANDF had conducted preliminary planning for the establishment of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) capability. ACIRC acts as a precursor to the eagerly waited African Standby Force which seeks to find African solutions to African
20 years of democracy moving the women’s agenda forward

By Cpl Kate Phalatsi, signaller at Northern Cape Signal Unit deployed at Ladybrand
Photo by Capt Mogomotsi Manonyane

National Women’s day is an annual public holiday in SA on 09 August. It commemorates the national march of woman in 1956 (petition against the pass laws Urban Areas eroded for in the Act). It was in the morning when women gathered together for the march to the Union Buildings. The aim was to end the pass and permits system, also known as “Dom-Pass” which demanded that a pass book had to be carried wherever black people went in South Africa and the march indeed changed the history of the country and the world. The Federation of SA Women was led by among others Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophy Williams.

OPS CORONA Free State ladies from Ladybrand and Foursiesburg Ops Bases came together during the woman’s month at Lekgalong la Mantsopa, a guest house in LadyBrand, to commemorate Women’s Day. Gloria Steinem once said: “The story of women’s struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights”.

An extended invitation was made to their counterparts, including the SAPS, Traffic Department, Custom SA, BN TAC OC, Coy Cdrs and RSM. All the women who attended presented the role, functions and responsibilities of their working environments.

We shared and celebrated this day knowing the meaning behind it.

Tears turned into happiness as it was an honour to see that the rate of rape and abuse against woman and children decreases yearly, monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, in this country, hence we are able to say with pride and joy: “Wathint’abafazi; Wathint’imbokodo” You strike the woman; You strike a rock.

Respect is not given, its earned; and a woman’s dignity is very important. Cpl Phalatsi said: “Where success is concerned, people are not measured in inches, pounds, college degrees, or family backgrounds; they are measured by the size of their thinking By this I mean the day was a success because “we woman did a lot of thinking about it”.

Our Programme Director said “A real man never hurts a woman, be very careful when you make a woman cry, because God counts her tears”. The woman came out of the man’s ribs, not from his feet to be walked on and not from his head to be superior but from his side to be equal - under the arm to be protected and next to the heart to be loved”.

NOW AND BEYOND

The new millennium has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women’s equality, and emancipation. One could think that women have gained true equality however the unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid the same as their male counterparts, women are still not present in equal numbers in business and or politics, and globally women’s education, health and the violence against them is worse than that suffered by men. However, gradual improvement has been made. The tone and nature of Women’s Day have moved from being a reminder of negatives to a celebration of positives. Make every day a Women’s Day to ensure that the future of Women and Girls is bright, equal, safe and rewarding.
Lt Col Mmathapelo Maine became the first woman in history to take over the baton as Commandant SA Army 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment in Kimberley. She thus takes command of the only regular force ground based air defence regiment in South Africa.

Lt Col Maine accepted the reins of command during the Change of Command Parade held on 26 September 2014 at the Air Defence Artillery (ADA) School parade ground where she had previously honed her gunnery skills while training as a junior air defence commander a few years before. Present to witness her acceptance of the oath of office were General Officer Commanding ADA Formation, Brig Gen Jabu Mbuli, Formation Chief of Staff, Col Jacques Baird, Col Hlongwa of ADA School and other senior members making up the brains trust of the SA Army ADA Corps.

Now as Alpha 9, the Commander of 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment, 36-year-old Lt Col Maine, is charged with the mammoth task of steering her unit into the third decade of South Africa’s democracy.

Lt Col Maine is expected to advance the transformation agenda that was started at the ADA regiment by her predecessors namely Col Owen Dube, Col Hlongwa and Col Pule.

Asked about her approach to leadership now that she has been appointed Officer Commanding, the soft spoken Lt Col Maine started by asserting that she was first and foremost a soldier and everything else followed from that.

She says that in the military what should really matter is the military culture and not whether one is male or female. “The unit in which I am currently serving is male dominated, however we are all soldiers in uniform sharing one culture, the military culture. This culture is not gender biased, therefore my approach will be exactly that, to command soldiers without drawing parameters between males and females,” Lt Col Maine said.

Lt Col Maine completed her Basic Military Training at 3 South African Infantry Battalion in January 1999 before joining the ADA Corps in June of the same year where she underwent intensive corps training.

Due to her commitment, leadership potential and discipline, she was selected in 2003, at the time when 10 AA Regiment was led by Col Dube, to attend the junior officers training programme, which she successfully completed. She then served as a junior officer at the regiment, and continued her quest to rise to the challenges posed by the male dominated environment in which she found herself.

Lt Col Maine readily shares her philosophy that helped her attain success in life. Thus showed her innate humanity and people skills-attributes that are crucial to the effective management of people in an environment that optimises the outputs of the subordinates.

She says the most important lesson that she learnt through-out her military career and life in general was first to understand that “we are all human”.

“Our appointments as leaders in the defence force should not divorce us from our humanity. “Although we are human beings and not perfect beings, we should always strive for perfection with the aim of influencing our subordinates positively,” Lt Col Maine said.

Lt Col Maine exudes confidence as she speaks of her new role and one is able to decipher the fact that she has the necessary skills and courage to take it head-on. The challenge is in her hands to steer the 10 Anti-Aircraft ship to greater heights. She has a wealth of knowledge and support to her disposal that is readily available within the Air Defence Artillery Formation.
focus on women

SA Air Force is poised for gender balancing

Article and Photos by Sgt Moris Sekgothe (Bulk Fuel section, A.B WKLF)

In 2014, at the age of 27, L Cpl Charity Kgalaeng became the first female to qualify as a Bowser driver operator in the South African Air Force. She was born at Mokgola Village near Zeerust in the North West Province. Charity is the 4th of five children (three girls and two boys),

In 2008 she did her basic military training at Air Force Gymnasium in Pretoria and is currently based at Waterkloof Air Force Base where she works in the Bulk Fuel Section as the Bowser Driver Operator.

At the age of 21 she enlisted for training in her current job. On arrival she encountered some challenges as a woman in a field which was perceived as male dominant. Women were prejudiced if they were encroached this ‘male territory’ and indeed she was to be the first woman in the SAAF to train as a Bowser operator and thus began to break the stereotype. Naturally, it was not a smooth ride at first for the only woman, but she overcome all odds and she passed. Courageous, inspired and driven by her passion, she climbed the ladder in the so-called man’s world to achieve what other women were petrified of. “As a woman it was hard work, especially being mentored by men” said L Cpl Tlotlanang. To qualify as a Bowser Driver Operator, the individual must be over the age 26 and physically strong, as this task can take its toll on the body, especially when one is female, as part of the job demands that one must be able to load and offload drums on a truck. An individual in this field must be able to drive heavy-duty trucks, have the endurance to travel long distances and work under pressure. A Bowser Driver Operator must be medically fit and mentally stable as the work is hazardous. A qualified Bowser Driver Operator must possess an aviation fuel permit.

ABOVE: L Cpl Charity Kgalaeng operating a bowser during preparations for 2014 AAD.

LEFT: L Cpl Charity Kgalaeng operate B-Site system for defueling.
Brig Gen Yekelo to move the Defence College forward

A Soldier magazine recently interviewed the newly appointed Commandant of the SA National Defence College (SANDC), Brigadier General (Brig Gen) Gordon Yekelo, an advocate of youth development and a determined leader who is passionate about his work and the development of human capital. The role of carrying the sword and moving the College forward is a responsibility that he honours and handles with due diligence. While he is humbled by the trust shown in him by the Minister and the Chief of the SANDF, he is fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead, including the expectations that he should take the college into new areas of education.

However, he is optimistic that with the support of his directing staff, colleagues and various stakeholders he will be able to carry out his mandate as expected. Furthermore the experience he has gained over the years will carry him through. Speaking to SA Soldier, Brig Gen Yekelo said that the SANDC was the premier institution of the defence force which allowed South Africa to cater for the needs of senior leadership from various segments of the society, both domestic and international, in comprehending security issues.

“As an academic and research centre of excellence in diverse disciplines, the college provides well-thought out inputs on national security at strategic level, and influences higher education in policy and strategy formulation among various users, with the emphasis on national security and defence”, said Brig Gen Yekelo.

He mentioned that as a leader and manager, he leads by example because he believes managers and leaders should always do what they expect others to do. “Leaders set the tone and set the pace, I am a hands-on leader who puts in many hours to ensure that the SANDC meets its mandate”. “I will spend a lot of time making sure there is an understanding of the work that needs to be done and also constantly engage with various stakeholders to make sure that they understand what is expected and that they act accordingly”, said Brig Gen Yekelo.

He told SA Soldier that his immediate task during his tenure of office as Commandant of the SA National Defence College was to focus on participating in the debate aimed at professionalising, and repositioning the Defence College to ensure that the Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) was accredited.

The Commandant said that he was willing to build with the building blocks of the past and add innovative blocks to make the service at the College a continued and desired service from which others, worldwide, will seek advice and guidance.

His patriotism, commitment and dedication in serving the people gave him strength to face confidently the challenges of each day. Gen Yekelo was convinced that by working together with all his stakeholders the College would be able to meet whatever challenges it might be faced with. Their collective efforts would ensure that it delivered quality service to the people.

Since joining the defence force in 1995, Brig Gen Yekelo has served in various capacities, including that of Director Doctrine Development, Director Physical Training Support and Recreation and Project Officer on Youth Development, amongst others.

Brig Gen Yekelo is an accomplished scholar who holds a postgraduate diploma in security from the University of the Witwatersrand and is currently concluding studies for a master’s degree at Wits.

He stated that among his achievements was participating in the planning and conducting of various SANDF operations and exercises. He was seconded to the office of the South African Facilitator for the Burundian Peace Process from August 2008 to May 2009, which brought peace and stability for the Burundians. He also served as the chairperson of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM).

The well-spoken college leader said that in terms of Defence Review 2014, the DOD will go through a process of strategic realignment and restructuring and all programmes will be reviewed and stock taken of the human capital and financial needs to move the DOD forward.

During the interview it was evident that Brig Gen Yekelo was a competent, experienced, skilled leader and well suited for the job. His experience and achievements emerged throughout the interview and these demonstrated his ability and willingness to serve the people of our country.

We therefore applaud his appointment and firmly believe that the SA National Defence College will be better served by his experience, dedication and hard work.
An exciting dream of flying machines and avionics technology

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Themba Mntyali, intern at SA Soldier

The Ngobeni identical twin brothers, George and Daniel, have an exciting dream of flying machines, maintenance and avionics technology. The two brothers are Reserve Force members in the SA Army and work as guards in the Thaba Tshwane Military Area. They designed a remote-controlled cardboard replica of an Oryx helicopter.

The replica was built with recycled material, cardboard, empty cold drink plastic containers and consists of electronic components and batteries for control and power. It has an in-built self-made remote-controlled system. On 27 June 2014, the SA Soldier team was invited to the A Mess in Thaba Tshwane to see the replica of an Oryx helicopter.

The Ngobeni twin brothers were inspired by the two Wright brothers, Wilbur and his younger brother Orville, who first became interested in flying in 1878. The two brothers designed the first true aeroplane propellers and eventually built an aircraft that could fly.

Privates George and Daniel Ngobeni might not be pilots, but they love flying machines and everything about them. It took them two months from the initial design concept of the replica to its completion.

Speaking to SA Soldier, Lt Col Terence Lithole, SO1 Internal Services at SA Army HQ, said that the twins have a high degree of mechanical aptitude: “What I wish for these members is for them to be introduced to the real world of aviation, so that they can fulfill their dream. Their project can inspire the interest of our youth”, he said.

Having the courage to follow their dreams, the two brothers have no science, engineering or any technical training but they like experimenting with mechanical things. They said that with ordinary talents and extraordinary perseverance all things were possible. They claim that as a result of their inventive minds, their first project was a replica of a Cheetah aircraft but the craft flew away and could not be traced.

“What we desire is assistance from the SANDF to help us meet our aviation career goals or help us pursue careers in aircraft mechanics, avionics technology or airframe mechanics. We would really appreciate any opportunity that would empower us to be part of the aviation world and become involved in big projects”.

Explaining how their fascinating project came about, they said that they aspired to be pilots and were interested in flying machines. The thought of flying aeroplanes caught their imagination and ignited their passion to be part of world of avionics.
Launch of the UHF Digital Trunk Network in the Kruger National Park

Article and Photo by Major Lizette Lombard, SO2 Corp Com, SA Army Sig Fmn

A new era dawned during Op CORONA with the launch of the UHF Digital Trunking Network (UTN). The network was developed and implemented by SA Army Signal Formation together with industry developers, such as Reutech, Global Communications and various other role-players.

Col Leon Pretorius said that a decision was made in 2007 to look into a more affordable internal communications system for South Africa. The concept plan of the Signals support for Op CORONA was approved in 2011 which provided the mandate to investigate new communications technology at a tactical level and to develop an affordable system.

The network allows for UHF communication via a trunking network that covers the whole Kruger National Park from south of the Olifants River to the northern borders of Swaziland. This is the operational area of responsibility of the current two companies deployed at the Sand River and Macadamia Bases tasked with border safeguarding. It also enables communication between the ground and air, such as patrolling helicopters of the SAPS and SAAF in the Kruger National Park. There are 35 such communication sites along South Africa’s borders.

The system also allows for interdepartmental cooperation with the SAPS and field rangers in the Kruger National Park. For this purpose some of the capacity of the system was provided to the KNP rangers to enhance command and control in their anti-poaching campaign but, above all, to improve communication between the rangers and soldiers deployed in the park. Maj Gen Johan Jooste (Ret) expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation for the implementation of the network and the support provided by the SA Army Signal Formation.

History was also made as this system is the first of its kind in the Department of Defence. It is the deployment of the first solar powered microwave link as part of this network and is the first time a security alarm system has been deployed on a Department of Defence repeater site with an off-site monitoring and detection capability.

Brig Gen Leon Eggers, GOC SA Army Signal Formation, said the implementation of the network was a highlight of his career. The launch was also attended by Brig Gen Tanduxolo Mandela, Director Conventional Operations from Joint Operations HQ, Brig Gen Chris Delport, Command and Control from SAAF HQ, and other dignitaries from the industry.

Invited guests and members responsible for the network were taken to the various sites the following day. The network was demonstrated to them, and they were shown how the network’s microwaves are powered by solar energy. This security alarm system has been deployed on a DoD repeater site with an off-site monitoring and detection capability.

The whole network fits in with and supports command and control as the management of the system will be from a central point situated in Pretoria, Gauteng. The next priority in rolling out the system will be to implement it in the Limpopo, KwaZulu Natal, and Free State Provinces.
A decade has passed since the SA Army foundation established a tradition to have its stakeholders and patrons come together in one venue to have a relaxed day where all concerned can have fun while networking. Since its inception in 2003, this event has grown in terms of the calibre of people it invites and attracts.

For three years, from 2003 to 2006, the day at the races was hosted at Gosforth Park racecourse in Germiston. In 2007 the event was moved to Turffontein racecourse in Turffontein, south of Johannesburg. The success of this event can be attested to by the annual attendance of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, his wife Ms Charlotte Shoke, his four Lieutenant Generals/Vice Admirals as heads of Services and all Divisional heads. What makes this event special is the fact that those invited are invited with their spouses as a good family outing for all. On arrival or departure guests are handed gender oriented gifts that truly create good memories of this annual event.

The 2014 theme was Mexican fiesta, Spanish for festival or holiday. El hombre y la mujer invitó usar colores brillantes en el estado de ánimo para el evento (Spanish for invited men and women wore bright colours in the mood for the event). Men wore their sombreros and jorongos, sarape or ponchos while the women adorned themselves with bright beads and vibrant and cheerful loose fitting dresses covered with intricate embroidery. A sombrero is a broad-brimmed felt or straw hat, typically worn in Mexico (correctly pronounced Mehico) and jorongos, sarape or falsa poncho is a colourful blanket or quilt with a cuff in the centre so that the head can go through it.

Prizes are given to the best dressed individuals to reward their efforts to dress up according to the theme of this event. The 2014 winners were: Best Dressed Couple – Mr and Mrs Hendrie from metropolitan and Mr and Mrs Juan Pheiffer from Old Mutual. Best dressed Lady was Ms Lorna Mayekiso from Old Mutual. Best Dressed Man was Mr Julian Albern from Liberty Life and Most Stylish Lady was Ms Jackie Brodie. Over the years this event has been held towards the end of the year. Its timing could easily be confused as the SA Army Foundation precursor celebration to the real festive season celebration as it really puts all the attendees in a jovial mood for the festivities.

On 1 November, the Day at the Races was held and Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, Chairperson of the SA Army Foundation board of control, highlighted the successes that the Army Foundation has had in 2014. “The SA Army Foundation bursary scheme is finally going to have its first recipient graduate. The foundation has purchased a block of flats in Centurion where Army Foundation members can rent. We are building a top notch conference which will be available for hire”, said Gen Nobanda.

Mr Angel Rampele, General Manager of Army Foundation, expressed his appreciation to the guests for honouring his invitation by attending this event. He thanked the sponsors who made the event possible through their donations; and his team for their hard work.

The 2014 SA Army Foundation day at the races sponsors were ASSUPOL, AVBOB, Clinix health group, Liberty Life, Maxi Credit Solution, Metropolitan, MFS Holdings, Middle and Partners, Minute Press Centurion, Nedbank, Old Mutual, Rainbow Holiday Club, SAFI, Sanlam and Scientiaoptimate Financial Service.
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Potchefstroom Military proves to be a Community Asset

Article and photos by Capt Werner Joubert, Corporate Communication Officer School of Artillery

During the first week of September 2014 five military units from in and around Potchefstroom represented the SA Army at the annual Potchefstroom Spring Show. The Spring Show is presented annually as a community project and was hosted by the Ferdinand Postma High School this year.

The military first became involved in the event in 2009 when the School of Artillery displayed its capabilities. Since then the involvement from the military has grown to include other units in the area with combat capabilities.

The School of Artillery, School of Tactical Intelligence, South African Army Specialized Infantry Capability (SAASIC) Reserve (Specialized Infantry), 1 Regiment De la Rey (Infantry) and Regiment Mooiriver (Armour) came together to put on once again the biggest and most popular exhibit at the show.

The School of Artillery co-ordinated the military involvement and visual displays. This included a GV6, GV5, MRL, M5 Mortar with Gecko, Fire-control Post, Unmanned Aerial Observation System (UAOS), air vehicle and a Basic Artillery Observation System (BAOS) Ratel. The School of Artillery also exhibited various types of ammunition and showed various military videos.

The School was responsible for displaying the current tactical intelligence gathering and processing capabilities of the SA Army, including all the latest observation equipment and cameras, the Tactical Intelligence System and a typical observer deployment area.

SAASIC Reserves were responsible for displaying specialised infantry capabilities, including a Polaris quad bikes, motor cycles, various pieces of equipment, horses and an arena patrol dogs.

1 Regt De la Rey and the Young Lions represented the infantry combat capability. They displayed various platoon weapons, a Ratel, a Mamba and various other pieces of equipment used by the Infantry.

Regiment Mooiriver had the responsibility of displaying the local armour capability. A Rooikat Armoured vehicle and an old Eland 90 Armoured vehicle were on display. These represented both the old and the new and further decked out the equipment of the Rooikat and showed various Armour videos. The military display was a success and this was confirmed by many civilian members who said that they were fascinated by what they had seen. The professionalism displayed by the soldiers on duty at the various SANDF kiosks eliminated any negative perceptions. The military exhibition truly marketed and promoted the SA Army as a national asset.

The highlight for the 2014 military exhibition was the addition of the new Polaris quad bikes from the members of SAASIC Reserves. Live arena horses and dogs shows, the SAASIC display and the Young Lions formed part of Regt De La Rey attracted a large number of spectators. The overall impression gained was extremely positive and the show was well liked by the visitors. The fact that the soldiers were disciplined and well prepared allayed the negative perceptions portrayed in the mainstream media. From the comments and remarks that were made it was crystal clear that the public was unsure of the military and its capabilities, but saw and heard here that the SA Army was still a force to be reckoned with and was ready to defend and protect our beloved South Africa and all its citizens.

It was remarkable how many adults, especially the “ou manne”, visited the show with their children and grandchildren. They told their stories and how many of them wanted to pose for photos at some of the equipment.

The soldiers serving the SA Army during the Potchefstroom Spring Show did the organisation proud and executed their task professionally and in a disciplined manner. It is therefore appropriate to conclude with an Artillery saying:

Potchefstroom Spring Show project team, end of engagement, well shot, rounds on target, objective achieved, stand down. Until next year that is.
2 Military Hospital gets a face lift

Military Hospital in Wynberg, Cape Town, is the last of our three military hospitals to undergo refurbishment. The hospital has only received basic maintenance since it was built in 1979. It currently serves approximately 40 000 military personnel, their dependants and other approved clientele, and covers a wide referral area in the Western, Eastern and Northern Cape. From these facts and figures it is evident that our hospital is a beacon of hope and health for many patients in the Western Cape!

The refurbishment started in 2012 and is projected to be completed in 2017. It is a 54 month project which is managed by the National Department of Public Works, Cape Town Regional Office. At the head of this huge project at 2 Mil Hosp is Lt Col Sandy Bax, SO1 Force Support, assisted by the SO1 Force Prep, Lt Col Riaz Ismail. A daunting task indeed and not for the faint hearted!

A new administrative and logistical complex is being built adjacent to the main hospital. This building will have secure covered and roof parking, that would facilitate easy access to the hospital for patients and staff members. The main hospital building is also being refurbished. The fifth floor has already been finished and work on the 3rd floor is in progress. Refurbishment will gradually progress, floor by floor, until completion of the total project.

The refurbishment of the Combined Club which houses 2 Mil Hosp members also saw the completion of the 5th floor, and work will progress down to ground level in due course.

The upgraded hospital facility with its new medical technology will bring a vastly improved clinical service to the military community in the Western Cape. Clinical service delivery will not be interrupted as wards, clinics and services will be decentralised to appropriate areas while finalisation of the project is awaited. The Management of the hospital are doing their utmost to limit inconvenience to patients and staff and to minimise the impact of the building project on service delivery.

The new 2 Military Hospital will also have a functional VIP patient suite where military VIP’s and other high-profile patients will receive clinical care. When not in use, this facility will be made available for in-patients.

The new oral health department and adjacent dental lab on the ground floor have been renovated. These facilities were the first to display new colours with regards to the paint, tiles, ceilings, cupboards and counters, a shining example of what is in store for the rest of the main hospital. The refurbished 2 Military Hospital has easy access to heart facilities close by, such as Groote Schuur and Tygerberg. It will not have a Transplant Unit, but it will have a very modern vascular theatre where all bypass heart surgery will be done. A new vascular intervention suite is planned to minimise outsourcing of vascular cases.

The revamped 2 Military Hospital will be an asset to the DOD and the SAMHS. The staff and patients are looking forward to the completion of the project and the commissioning of a military health institution that will continue to provide world-class clinical services.
SANDF capable and ready to manage the spread of EBOLA

Compiled by Cpl Mzontsundu Mdolomba

In recent news the spread of the Ebola virus has been rife in Africa and is a threat to the rest of the world as well. However, the South African National Defence (SANDF) has a contingency plans to manage the spread of Ebola. In a recent official statement released by the SANDF, the organisation reassures the people of South Africa that Ebola is continuously monitored by the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) in collaboration with the National Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases.

A contingency plan is in place to manage any outbreak of the disease in South Africa as well as the areas where the SANDF is deployed, for example evacuating patients utilising sophisticated Isolator System. All the Military hospitals, especially 1 Military Hospital are prepared to receive and isolate any suspected or confirmed case of Ebola.

The SAMHS has the most sophisticated isolator system that could be moved at short notice to any facility where it may be required. A formal training programme for isolating the seriously ill patients has been running for several years and the SAMHS has a large group of trained health care professionals to implement high-level isolation.

A strategic stockpile of protective clothing has been released from SAMHS Depot and was distributed to all government hospitals identified by the Minister of Health in the country including the admission areas of military hospitals.

In collaboration with the private sector, health care information on the diagnosis of Ebola has been distributed within the SANDF, and sickbays managing members returning from external deployments have been cautioned to be alert to Ebola cases.

Within the government, private and military health sectors there is close cooperation and joint readiness to manage the outbreak in the RSA or mission areas, should it occur.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) the latest outbreak is the worst in the history of this epidemic. Because of its nature, it has been declared a public health emergency.

The origin of the disease is not yet known to the researchers but is believed to be hosted by wild animals. The latest epidemic has been confirmed in Western African states such as Guinea, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Previous cases were reported in other African countries such as the DRC, Gabon, South Sudan, Ivory Coast and Uganda. Ebola can be transmitted in various ways, for example through direct contact of the secretions of an infected person. These can range from blood, urine, semen extracta of infected person; contact with objects such as needles which have been contaminated with infected secretions.

Symptoms of Ebola can range from fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains and lack of appetite. In other cases a rash, red eyes, hiccups, coughing, sore throat, chest pains, difficulty in breathing and swallowing and internal and external bleeding can be experienced.

The symptoms of this epidemic may appear anywhere between 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus. Nevertheless in most cases the symptoms appear from 8 to 10 days after exposure.

The office of the Surgeon General of the SANDF have compiled and issued an internal information bulletin on Ebola which was distributed by means of its internal communication platforms to all SANDF members to inform and educate its members.
S A S O L D I E R
• 2014 VOL 21 NO 10

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Halala South Africa, Halala!!!
Did you know that there are more than 371 million people around the world with diabetes, and half of the people with the disease don’t even know that they have this dangerous illness? Also of great concern is the fact that the number of people developing type 2 diabetes is growing at a rapid rate and the disease is considered one of the most important healthcare problems facing South Africa today.

Government Employee Medical Scheme (GEMS) member Nokulunga Masondo often felt exhausted and was finding it difficult to concentrate at work. Her hands and feet were also sometimes numb and she decided that she should consult her doctor just to make sure these were not signs of a health problem.

Nokulunga had a blood test and, to her great surprise, her doctor diagnosed her with type 2 diabetes after the results of the test came back a few days later. Nokulunga was shocked, but her doctor reassured her that while type 2 diabetes could be dangerous to one’s health it could also usually be successfully managed with the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and, if necessary, medication.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce enough insulin or does not respond properly to it. Insulin is a hormone protein that you need in your body to convert sugar and other food into the energy needed for daily life, and is produced in the pancreas. Diabetes is a very serious condition that can result in a number of dangerous complications. For this reason GEMS encourages its members to learn more about diabetes and its treatment and prevention on this World Diabetes Day, 14 November 2014.

Types of diabetes

There are three main types of diabetes, namely Type 1, Type 2 and gestational diabetes, which some women experience during pregnancy.

Type 1 diabetes is usually caused by an auto-immune reaction, in which the body’s defence system attacks the cells that produce insulin. The reason this occurs is not fully understood, but the result is that people with type 1 diabetes produce very little or no insulin.

The disease may affect people of any age, but usually develops in children or young adults. People with this form of diabetes need injections of insulin every day in order to control the levels of glucose in their blood. If people with type 1 diabetes do not have access to insulin, they will die.

Type 2 diabetes is by far the most common form of the disease making up approximately 90% of all cases. The diagnosis of type 2 diabetes can occur at any age, but the risks increase as we get older.

Type 2 diabetes may remain undetected for many years and the diagnosis is often made when health complications appear, as occurred in Nokulunga’s case, or during a routine blood or urine glucose test.

Type 2 diabetes is often, but not always, associated with being overweight. Obesity itself can cause insulin resistance and lead to high glucose levels in the blood. People with type 2 diabetes can often initially manage their condition through exercise and diet. However, over time most people will eventually need oral drugs and / or insulin to help them control the disease. Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes are serious conditions and there really is no such thing as mild diabetes.

Gestational diabetes (GDM) is a form of diabetes consisting of high glucose levels in the blood during pregnancy. It develops in one out of...
The management of diabetes: All types of diabetes are treatable and manageable but there is no known cure except for a pancreas transplant. The management of diabetes involves careful self-testing of blood glucose levels, education, exercise, proper foot care (feet can easily become infected), meal planning, weight control and medication or insulin use. If you also have high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels, as is often the case with diabetics, these should also be carefully managed and controlled with the aid of your doctor.

Monitoring glucose levels

Monitoring your blood sugar is usually a critical part of managing diabetes and may vary, depending on your treatment plan. You may need to check and record your blood sugar level once a day or several times a week. Consult your doctor to find out how often your blood sugar should be checked. Careful monitoring is the only way to make sure that your blood sugar level remains within your target range.

Diabetes medication

In most cases, people who are newly diagnosed with diabetes will be prescribed metformin, a diabetes medication that improves the sensitivity of your body tissues to insulin and lowers glucose production in the liver. Certain people who have type 2 diabetes also need insulin therapy. Insulin injections are usually self-administered and involve using a fine needle and syringe or an insulin pen injector, a device that looks like an ink pen, except that the cartridge is filled with insulin.

Lifestyle adjustments

The doctor will recommend lifestyle changes, such as losing weight and becoming more active. Cutting out smoking, avoiding fatty foods and foods with high levels of sugars in them, exercising and looking after your health, can go a long way towards helping you manage diabetes and its associated complications. Fat concentrated in the stomach region is known to predispose a person to type 2 diabetes, so be sure to eat healthily and cut down on excess weight.

Healthy eating is important to those with diabetes. Centre your diet on these high-fibre, low-fat food groups:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grains

Everyone needs aerobic exercise, and people who have type 2 diabetes are no exception. It is recommended that approval be obtained from your doctor before starting an exercise programme. The exercise programme can comprise activities you enjoy most, such as walking, swimming or biking, and should be done for at least 30 minutes, more than once a week. Stretching and strength-building exercises are also important, and you can start slowly and build up gradually.

Prevention

Type 2 diabetes can even be avoidable in many cases if an individual follows a healthy lifestyle, eats healthily and exercises regularly. Good lifestyle habits should be encouraged in children as young as possible to ensure they make healthy choices throughout their lives. The following can assist in preventing type 2 diabetes:

- Stop smoking.
- Minimise your alcohol intake to at least two alcohol-free days a week and consume no more than two standard drinks a day.
- Do regular exercise.
- Have a healthy eating plan and minimise your eating of junk food.

A manageable illness

Nokulunga is today feeling very strong and healthy. She is on medication and is carefully managing her type 2 diabetes with her doctor. She says she has learnt that if you take care of yourself, diabetes can be a very manageable illness and need not stop you from living an active and fulfilled life. So be sure to adopt a healthy lifestyle and go to your doctor to be screened for diabetes if you think you are at high risk of having or developing the disease. It could well save your life.
**2014 SANDF Fittest Soldier Championship**

**By Cpl Ally Rakoma**

**Photos by Pte Jonathan Mogano**

It is very intense and gruelling. It has been called the ultimate challenge and rightfully so, as it is an event where the battle lines of fitness have been drawn, a place which is classed as the toughest testing ground of speed, strength, endurance, balance, coordination and agility.

From 20 to 24 October 2014, the Office of the Chief Human Resources (CHR) on behalf of the Directorate Physical Training Sport and Recreation (DPTSR) presented the sixth (6th) SANDF Fittest Soldier Championships at Air Force Base Hoedspruit.

In welcoming the participants to AFB Hoedspruit at the morning sports parade Col Andre Barends, the OC of AFB Hoedspruit, bolstered the participants’ morale by saying that they should challenge their limits. “You will need to make healthy decisions requiring sacrifice. You will need to push your body to its maximum. There will be temptation, but I promise you, when you reach your goal, it will be worth it”, said Col Barends.

The gruelling challenge was characterized by an atmosphere of camaraderie in which SANDF sporting heroes and heroines from the SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy, SA Military Health Service and DOD HQ Unit withstood physical challenges and contended against each other in a variety of physical fitness activities.

The main objective of the event is to encourage members of the SANDF to engage regularly in physical training activities to raise their level of fitness and the tactical battle fitness drills to be executed in the combat and operational environment. Members were evaluated in military skills activities in different types of terrain and conditions within the allocated time.

On the last day of the championships, the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, the Chief of the SA Air Force, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, the Chief of the SA Navy, and Brig Gen Stanley Khumalo, the Director Physical Training Sport and Recreation attended the event.

Addressing members, Deputy Minister Maphatsoe said that the SANDF was mandated, in accordance with the Defence Act 42 of 2002 section 63 (4), to conduct fitness evaluation throughout the SANDF as part of Force Preparation. He stressed that it was of paramount importance for each and every uniformed member of the SANDF to be physically and psychologically fit. “You have proved beyond reasonable doubt that you deserve to be a participant in this event. Remember that the main aim of this SANDF Fittest Soldier Championships is not winning, but attaining fitness at its highest level”, he said.

During the triumphal ending to an exciting week of hard work, Brig Gen Stanley Khumalo presented trophies and medals to those who performed well. He congratulated participants and said: “To those who were victorious, and to those who tried their utmost, remember we are soldiers and it was never about who won but rather about challenging yourself in completing the task at hand”.

He mentioned that the Chief
of the SANDF had instructed the Director Physical Training Sport and Recreation to develop a battle fitness performance indicator to measure and evaluate the level of fitness throughout the Defence Force.

In an interview with SA Soldier Lt Col Gae Lephalo, SO1 Physical Training, pointed out that the Fittest Soldier Championship added to the comprehensive personal development of members through active training and sport exposure.

She said there was an increased need for women to participate as they were also deployed with their male counterparts in a variety of operational settings. Her message to all members of the SANDF was that we should all support the DOD/SANDF campaigns that are geared towards promoting sport. “Powerful preparation prevents poor performance”, said Lt Col Lephalo.

Members competed in twenty different land obstacle courses, including ladder climbing, ditch crossing, leopard crawling under wire, cargo net crossing, tyre walk, assault walls, mine steps, espalier, monkey swing, tunnel, battery test, multi-run, reverse run, agility T test, surprise activity, bleep test, sideways run, obstacle cross and endurance walk.

RESULTS

Senior Female (Up to the age of 30 years)
1st place: Tpr B.P. Kelebone – 1 SSB
2nd place: Spr V.K. Mkhono – 1 Construction Regt
3rd place: Tpr K.V. Setlamo – 1 SSB

Sub Veteran (Between the ages of 31 and 39 years)
1st place: Cpl M. Moaneno – 1 SA Tank Regiment
2nd place: S Sgt N. Jonck – School of Armour
3rd place: WO2 H. Mokgatle – 1 Special Service Battalion

Veteran (between the ages of 40 and 49)
1st place: WO1 F. Kgatitswe – School of Tact Int
2nd place: Sgt D.M. Mokgatle – 4 Artillery Regiment
3rd place: Sgt M. Tlali – 1 Special Service Battalion

Masters (From the age of 50 years upwards)
1st place: Col C. Scheepers – Defence Formation

Team event: Services/Divisions
1st place: SA Army A
2nd place: SA Army B
3rd place: SAMHS B
4th place: SAAF

Team event: Units/Formations
1st place: SA Army Infantry A
2nd place: SA Army Infantry B

Floating trophies
Senior male: Pte M. Gadisi – 1 Special Service Battalion
Senior female: Cpl M. Moaneno – 1 SA Tank Regiment

Services/Divisions
SA Army B

Unit/Formation
SA Army Infantry Formation A
Chefs participate in the Chef of the Year competition

By Ms Thuli Ntuli, intern at SA Soldier
Photos by Ms Nozipho Zondo, intern at SA Soldier

Pressure mounted as 24 chefs eagerly braved the kitchen heat to prepare tantalising dishes to seduce the taste buds of guests who attended the South African National Defence Force Chef of the Year 2014 competition held at the SA Air Force School of Cookery within the Air Force Gymnasium in Valhalla and the SAMHS Training Formation Officer Club in Thaba Tswane.

The competition was hosted as runner-up to the international event in 2016. The chefs from the four services were given ample time to prepare dishes. They were also given similar ingredients to wow the guests on the day of the competition. The winners will go on to participate in the Internationale Kochkunst Ausstellung (IKA) in 2016, an international culinary arts competition held every four years. The competition introduces the world to military chefs.

On the first day of the event the participants were oriented by one of the competition sponsors, Klein Karoo International Ltd, which demonstrated different techniques of preparing a variety of ostrich dishes. The second day the military chefs were treated to another demonstration where a professional chef, Mr Willie van Zyl, the owner of Passi Décor and Deli, created three dishes. These included a starter, main course and dessert. The third day was the official day of the competition. The chefs who previously proclaimed their confidence appeared apprehensive when they gathered around their stalls to whip up aesthetically pleasing and tasteful dishes.

The winners were selected from the following categories: best starter, main course, main dessert and the new category, best kitchen management. The biggest prizes were the 1st runner-up, 2nd runner-up and the overall winner. The chefs used core ingredients from a mystery basket called the black box. It contained ostrich medallions (round pieces of meat), sweet potato, shredded tuna and an egg. They were told they could use these core ingredients anywhere in the menu.

The chefs were placed in groups of six. The pressure was piled even higher for the DOD chefs because the judges were not from the SANDF. The judges went into the finer details to evaluate the plates. One of them was Chef Kabelo Segone, from the South African Chefs Association (SACA).

“We judged this competition according to a very high standard. The chefs created colourful-thought provoking dishes.”

He said the chefs used flavours that had never been incorporated in meals before: “Some flavours worked and others not so much, maybe with more practice they could work”. The judges did not mince their words during deliberations. One of them summed it up: “The food needed to balance. We felt most of you focused on the...
competition

Mr Dawie du Plessis, HOD of Prue Leith Chefs Academy, said: “We were glad to spot obvious food ideas such as the use of tuna.” He said the desserts were much more creative compared to the starters and main meals. Later all the chefs were awarded certificates for taking part in the competition.

Sgt Francois van Eeden from the Swartkop School of Cookery collected most of the awards, having been chosen the overall winner. “I believe that cooking everyday helped me tremendously,” he said. According to the judges Sgt Van Eeden managed to balance the three-course meals where other chefs failed to do so.

He also won in the best dessert and kitchen management categories. He said: “I am blessed; God’s grace gave me skill. I urge other chefs to trust in themselves,” a statement with which the judges concurred: They said that all chefs should trust in their own work and ideas. Other winners to join Sgt Van Eeden in the IKA competition were 1st runner-up and 2nd runner-up, Pte Jaco Roux from ASB Kimberley and WO Marius Kemp from SASSIC in Potchefstroom respectively. In turn they will be joined by the winners of the best starter, Sgt Tebogo Kgoale from Waterkloof Air Force Base, and best main course, Sgt Koos Letebele from Air Force Bloemspruit. The winners will go on to represent the South African Defence Force at the 2016 International Culinary Arts Competition.
The 9th SANDF MILCOMP military skills competition ended with a prestigious award ceremony on 25 October 2014. This was held to celebrate the excellence of soldiers who had successfully participated in the competition. It was the conclusion of the military skills competition that ran for a week at Shamrock Mess in Potchefstroom.

The competition was aimed at testing the combat readiness of the soldiers. There were rigorous tests to prove that the soldiers were able to shoot well with pistols and rifles, to throw grenades, successfully complete land and water obstacle courses and do the 8km combat run.

Generals were greeted by a guard of honour from the South African Army Specialised Infantry Capability (SAASIC) lined up at the gate on horseback and on motorbikes.

Several Generals attended the function hosted by the infantry formation. Major General Lindile Yame, Office Commanding of the Infantry Formation, said: “It was the first time so many generals were involved in the military skills competition.”

Among the generals that attended were Major General Roy Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves, Brigadier General Doyby Coetzee, SA Army Prep and Dr (Col) John Job, chairperson of the Reserve Force Council. SA Army Corps members that competed were from Infantry, Armour, Artillery, Engineers, Support Formation and Special Forces. They were joined by three foreign countries, namely Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

The awards were presented to the top overall winners of the military skills competition and consisted of medals, trophies and certificates.

The best formation team went to the Infantry Formation. The Netherlands were honoured with the Special Achievement award, while Germany presented the SANDF with an appreciation award.

Major General Roy Andersen, thanked Mrs Margita Lalic-Terzic, Deputy Head of Mission from Serbia, for coming and urged her to bring along her country’s team when she returned.

In his address, Dr (col) John Job, chairperson of the Reserve Force Council, said that the skills presented in the competition were of real value and needed by all.

He highlighted the country’s successes since it started participating in the military skills competition, for example the national team that brought back gold from Germany. “They outperformed the more experienced teams,” he said.

There were 147 participants which included 109 Reserve Force members, 22 SA Regular Force members, 16 international team members and 19 women.

Upon receiving their award the Germans joked about bringing back the heat next year by bringing a different team to compete. Of course this statement was supposedly not well received as evinced by the disapproving wails from the crowd.

Dr Job said that they were preparing a new national team to compete at the 2015 military skills competition in the USA.
Paddles Up!!

Article and photo by Capt Werner Joubert, Communication Officer School of Artillery

Recently, the School of Artillery entered the 2014 Potchefstroom Dragon Boat Festival. The festival was presented as a community event by the Potchefstroom Mooi River Rotary Club to generate funds for community based charity organisations. 2014 is the second year that the School of Artillery has entered for the race, having won a silver medal in 2013. This year’s event had 16 teams competing for top honours. The School of Artillery was partnered by Rheinmetall Denel Munitions, the team’s main sponsor for the event. The only other military unit that entered was the School of Tactical Intelligence. The race was hosted at the Potchefstroom Dam Holiday resort and was contested over a distance of 180m. Two teams raced at a time, the winners advancing to the winners’ leg and the losers to a loser’s leg. The winning team would re-enter the winners’ leg for the final stage, which was a race between the winners to determine who would finish first. From the start it was clear that the 2014 race would be a nail-biter to the end, as the very first teams raced came in at a time of 1:06. The School of Artillery’s best time during the practice runs earlier that week was a 1:04. The School’s first race was against the Potchefstroom Policing Forum and a great start, winning the race. The second race had to be decided by photo finish and the third ended with less than a boat’s length, but at the end of the first phase the School of Artillery had won all their races and went through to the quarter and semi-finals. The School of Artillery was pitted against Remax, the winners of the loser’s round. It was a great start for both teams, and it was neck and neck right until the end when the School of Artillery grabbed the flag a split second after Remax, which allowed the latter to go through to the finals. At the end of the day the School of Artillery ended third overall and received the bronze medal. The School of Artillery was also awarded the spirit trophy for the team with the best spirit on the day. Well done to the Gunners that went out to obtain a place on the rostrum and achieved that goal. It is a fun day and a great opportunity for team building and boosting Esprit de corps amongst unit members. The School of Artillery will again enter in 2015 and would take to challenge other military units in the Potchefstroom area to enter the race. Until next year then, Paddles Up!!

SANDF Clash of the Choirs

By Cpl Lebogang Ramaboea Ad Astra Magazine
Photo by WO2 David Nomtshongwana

The Army Support Base (ASB) Eastern Cape choir, under the direction of choir conductor, Mr Siyabulela Mini from (ASB) Eastern Cape, was named the overall winner in the 2014 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Choral Competition. The South African Air Force (SAAF) Choir came second, while ASB Mpumalanga scooped third place, each going home with four trophies. The two-day event took place at the George Campbell School of Technology in Durban from 11 to 12 October 2014. “The responsibilities as members of the choir were ones I could handle. Winning always motivates the choir to do more and not be complacent”, said Mr Mini. The Chief of the Air Force (CAF), Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, told the audience that they were all winners for having taken their time to showcase their talent during the choral competition. He promised the competitors and audience that he valued this new musical experience and that he would inform the Military Command Council (MCC) about the SANDF choirs and the musical talent that some SANDF members had. “The MCC needs to know that they need to support you (the choir) and your talent”, said Gen Msimang. Gen Msimang commented that it was worrying that only soccer, rugby and cricket were receiving attention. “It is about time we as leaders take choral music to another level”, he said. The choral music competition was about cultural expression and the promotion of morale and esprit de corps amongst the men and women in uniform. This event rotates amongst the provinces where the SANDF has bases and units and is sponsored by AVBOB and SANLAM. The competition comprised ten choirs from around the country. They competed against each other with a variety of songs. The choral competition was divided into the following categories:

- **African Section**: SAAF Choir 72%, ASB Eastern Cape 70%, ASB Mpumalanga 69%
- **Western Section**: ASB Eastern Cape 76%, ASB Mpumalanga 71%, 121 Battalion 70%
- **Choice Song**: ASB Eastern Cape 76%, SAAF Choir 71%, 121 Battalion 70%
- **Indigenous Section**: SA Army 80%, SAAF Choir 74%, ASB Mpumalanga 72% Ms Thokozani Ndlovu one of the three adjudicators, advised the Director of music to always do research prior to a competition. The conductors also needed to have an holistic approach to this lifestyle, she said.
Since 1994 the SANDF has undergone a profound transformation process. Broadening its horizon, a decision was made to participate in the Military Pentathlon, generally recognised as one of the elite sporting codes within the International Military Sports Council (CISM).

This hard and intense sport challenges an athlete in five different disciplines, namely shooting from the 200 or 300m mark, obstacle running, obstacle swimming, hand-grenade throwing and cross-country running. The events for male and female athletes are the same except for the obstacle course and the cross-country events. In the case of the obstacle course female athletes only have to cross 16 obstacles compared to the 20 required of male athletes. In the cross-country event male athletes run 8km compared to 4km for female athletes.

SA Soldier conversed with Lt Col Johann Zietsman, the Chairperson of the SANDF Military Pentathlon. He highlighted the fact that Military Pentathlon is an internationally recognised sport governed by CISM, which sets out to challenge the participant’s mental and physical fitness. The sport was established in 1946, just after the Second World War, and has since grown into one of the biggest CISM sporting disciplines.

How beneficial is Military Pentathlon to the SANDF?

He noted that participation in international events provides an ideal opportunity for SANDF members to compare their level of military skills with that of other forces. The combination of sport and military precision offers a unique opportunity for SANDF participants not only to demonstrate their skills and abilities but also provides an opportunity to meet other soldiers from around the world.

Military Pentathlon is the ideal instrument to test a soldier’s fitness, stamina and coordination. It furthermore hones shooting skills and, although it is an individual sport, it also enhances teamwork. It is a specialised sport in the sense that participants have to excel in five disciplines, each one of them requiring great deal of concentration and dedication.

Given the fact that the SANDF members who participate in this sport are first and foremost active soldiers, they really have achieved excellent results in past World Championships and at this year’s event in Yeongcheon, South Korea. They compete against professional athletes who do nothing else but pentathlon and who have the opportunity to compete in up to five international competitions every year.

According to Lt Col Zietsman the CISM motto of “Friendship through Sport” has indeed enriched the SANDF with knowledge of a variety of traditions and customs of many different countries. The sharing of experiences and knowledge during these championships has left its mark. “You will never know how strong and good you are until you have competed against the best in the world”. Taking this into consideration it is of the utmost importance that SANDF sportmen and women from all sporting disciplines should have the opportunity to compete in CISM activities on a regular basis.

Participation of women in the 2015 CISM Military World Games.

One of the biggest challenges for SANDF Military Pentathlon has been to attract more women to the sport. It is not only the SANDF that struggles in this regard. During the World Championships this year in South Korea fewer than 10 countries had full female teams, compared with 24 male teams. However, this is a challenge that has to be met head-on and therefore an effort will be made to attract more women next year. The goal is to have a complete SANDF male and female team participating in the Military World Games next year. An invitation is therefore extended to all female athletes to participate in the SANDF Military Pentathlon championships in May 2015.

Invitation to interested men and women for participation in the 6TH Military World Games.

The next opportunity for the SANDF Military Pentathlon team to participate at international level will be at the 6th CISM World Military Games in South Korea from 02 – 11 October 2015. An open invitation is therefore extended to all SANDF members who know that they have what it takes to compete in this sport.
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“However, our God turned a curse into a blessing”

By Chaplain Willy Ndala, Chaplain at 68 Air School

Nehemiah 13:1-2. Towards the end of his ministry, Nehemiah is addressing his people, giving them a testimony of how God had provided for their needs, fought for them and delivered them from their enemies. Nehemiah and his people requested permission to pass through the country of Moab, but then their king, Balak, saw them as a threat and therefore decided to hire the prophet Balaam to curse or bewitch them so that he could defeat them.

1. Balaam’s story: Numbers 22-23 tell the full story of how Balaam tried to curse God’s people.

In the Scriptures quoted above, the prophet Balaam’s utterances are called Balaam’s oracles or blessings. However, Nehemiah gives us a different perspective. At face value it is easy for one to believe that Balaam was willingly pronouncing blessings upon Israel, but reading Nehemiah’s account we now know that actually God overruled Balaam’s intentions. The prophet actually opened his mouth to curse, but God turned every word Balaam uttered to become a blessing over God’s people. It is commonly believed that when one is cursed, nothing will go well in one’s life. However, this story teaches all of us that we serve a God who is able to turn what may seem like a curse into a blessing. He can change what was meant to harm you, to actually benefit you and propel you to your destiny.

In conclusion, the plans that God has for us are plans not to harm us but to give us future and hope, to prosper us (Jeremiah 29:11). David says “Weeping may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5) Simply put, there comes a time in our lives when God wipes away the tears from our faces. The situation may appear dark right now, but we are assured that darkness will not last forever; it will dawn again. Only God has the final say in our lives and not the gravity of the circumstances around us, for He can turn a curse into a blessing.

AMEN
11 Field Postal Unit celebrates 50 years

Article and Photo by Maj Lizette Lombard, SO2 Corp Com, SA Army Signal Formation

“An army marches on its stomach but, no matter how full a soldier’s stomach may be, the morale falls to zero when he does not regularly receive news from home” these were words from Captain Pyper, 2IC of the Army Postal Services at the 50th Anniversary Celebrations held on 4 October 2014 at Pheasant Hill Lodge.

In an attempt to put the existence of 11 Field Postal Unit into perspective Brig Gen (Dr) Kamffer gave a historical overview of how this postal unit was established. He indicated that 11 Field Postal Unit came to existence due to the need for an efficient postal service for troops in the field. It was founded by 11 voluntary postal workers on 1 October 1964. Today it is one of four fully-fledged reserve force units under the command of SA Army Signal Formation.

The impact of 11 Field Postal Unit on the Department of Defence, commanded by Lt Col Leon de Villiers, became evident during Brig Gen (Dr) Kamffer’s address when he referred to the volumes of mail handled by the unit, as reflected in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCIAL YEAR</th>
<th>OUTGOING PARCELS</th>
<th>TOTAL MASS MAIL HANDLED (KGs)</th>
<th>POSTAGE AFFIXED TO LETTERS AND PARCELS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/2008</td>
<td>6 969</td>
<td>199 744</td>
<td>R434 886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8 943</td>
<td>223 568</td>
<td>R451 454</td>
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<td>2009/2010</td>
<td>15 076</td>
<td>262 167</td>
<td>R553 457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>13 631</td>
<td>202 606</td>
<td>R487 008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/2012</td>
<td>18 269</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013/2014</td>
<td>11 472</td>
<td>165 825</td>
<td>R458 788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The South African Post Office and the South African National Defence Force have a close working relationship. 11 Field Postal Unit is governed by the Postal Services Act.

In 2002, the South African Post Office Board of Directors approved payment in full to that post office employees, without them forfeiting benefits whilst doing military service as members of 11 Field Postal Unit. The SA Post Office is the only parastatal that has embarked on this type of initiative.

Among the many accolades and milestones in the 50-year history of 11 Field Postal Unit two stand out, namely the issuing of 10 commemorative postage stamps on 9 October 2012 on World Post Day by the South African Post Office to recognise the excellent services rendered by the unit and the winning trophy for best Reserve Unit in the SA Army Signal Formation in 2013.

Brig Gen (Dr) Kamffer concluded his speech by referring to the motto of 11 Field Postal Unit… “We will deliver whatever it takes.”

The SANDF and its personnel can be proud of 11 Field Postal Unit and its 50 year history.
HOW FAR
WOULD YOU GO
TO PROTECT YOUR COUNTRY?