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“Medics” reaching out to the community

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FRONT COVER: Capt (SAN) Prince Tshabalala, the SSO Media Liaison, with Owen Reek and Meghan Mclean filling up the hole for the yellow-wood tree named “Mandela”. Read on page 29 how the Defence Corporate Communication (DCC) members spent their 67 Minutes at Klein Wikings Kleuterskool (pre-primary school) in Valhalla. (Photo: Ms Nozipho Zondo)
With this edition we want to spread the Madiba Magic to all our readers by bringing you the 67 Minutes of neighbourly love shown by our members in the DOD/SANDF.

Our 67 Minutes for Madiba on International Mandela Day does not have to be restricted only to former President Nelson Mandela’s birthday; we can also sow 67 Minutes of good deeds all year around.

Look for opportunities today to encourage someone else by saying something special to that person or even sending a special message via SMS, email or WhatsApp or say a little silent prayer for someone.

It is possible for each one of us to inspire at least one other person on a daily basis. Tell that person that you believe in him or her and know that he or she has the potential to grow and flourish. Think what a wonderful world this would be.

There are more than enough pessimists and critics in this world – let each one of us rather be the encouragers who help others to believe in themselves and to develop and build on their God-given talents.

Everyone likes a person who inspires and motivates others. No one likes a person who belittles others.

Former US President Ronald Reagan once said: “A human being cannot help everyone, but everyone can help someone” – let this become our motto in life.

Let us continue to honour the legacy of Tata Madiba and uphold the ideals he lived for.

I feel blessed to be a member of this Rainbow Nation that was once led by such a humble man, my beloved former President Nelson Mandela.

I salute you - our first Commander-in-Chief.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

*Translation into Luvenda done by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe.*
The Defence Force Service Commission visited the SA Naval College in Gordon’s Bay last month. R Adm (JG) James Matshimane, Director Fleet Human Resources, welcomed the Commission on behalf of Flag Officer Fleet. The Commission led by its Chairperson, Prof Edna van Harte, consisted of four Commissioners and three members of the Defence Secretariat.

The Commission was established in October 2009 to make recommendations to the Minister on improvements in service benefits (including remunerations) of SANDF members and promote measures and set standards to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of policies on conditions of service within the SA National Defence Force. The Commission reports directly to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans.

The Defence Force Service Commission was briefed by the Commanding Officer SA Naval College, Capt (SAN) Kevin Packer, on the core business of the SA Naval College. After the briefing Prof Van Harte addressed the ship’s company in the chapel where she highlighted the roles and functions of the Commission. The Commission later held consultations with each respective rank group separately ending with the Midshipmen Class of 2014. The Commission’s purpose was to meet all members of receiving comments/inputs regarding the improvements and shortcomings of their conditions of service.

On completion of the consultations, the Commission held a debriefing session attended by R Adm (JG) Matshimane, Capt (SAN) Packer and his Command Team. Prof Van Harte and her Commissioners highlighted certain common areas of concern which were raised by the ship’s company and concluded by expressing the view that they were very pleased to report that the SA Naval College was well organised and maintained. The tour of the unit, especially the midshipmen’s accommodation brought back a lot of memories for the Commissioners, as some of them are retired officers.

In conclusion gifts were exchanged between Prof Van Harte and Capt (SAN) Packer to mark the Defence Force Service Commission’s visit to the SA Naval College.
JOURNEY TO THE FUTURE

I may be too young to remember
Yet I have inherited this
I played no part as an innocent child
But the consequences, I must face
Because the wounds have not healed
We try to make it better
But the hurt, the bitterness and pain run deep

Sometimes it feels like we are fighting a losing battle
It’s an undeserved role that we play
In trying to undo the injustice done unto you and me
It’s a burden, a sorrowful load
That we carry on our shoulders

As the youth of the new generation
We do not have the experience
The memories to guide or hinder us on our journey
For we see the world through untainted eyes
And yet, there is no hope
A light that shines that cannot be put out
It has burned throughout the dark night of yesterday
And continues to give courage today

How do you may ask
Because to those who know that they must
Stand up and fight
The future has been given to you and me

They are the inheritors of the rainbow nation
The journey will not be an easy one, I guarantee
Its nature is such that it will not be over quickly
But as soldiers we accept the challenge
Together we stand victorious we can be

We accept the past as our history
And we decide not to live by it

Forming new links and relationships everyday
We find strength in our shared humanity

As children of Africa, united
All shall be treated fairly
Respect individual rights and dignity at all times
Regardless of race, ethnicity, religion
Gender, disability, culture, language or sexual orientation

The burden becomes lighter
The future has been handed to us
And from my perspective it’s a bright one

How do you view it?
Spr Isaac Maruma, email

BRINGING SMILES TO FACES OF THE ELDERLY

Members of the SANDF College of Educational Technology (COLET) used their 67 minutes effectively by making the burden lighter for the residents of the Greenhouse Old-age Home by cleaning part of the roadside of the Old Johannesburg Road on Mandela Day. The staff of SANDF COLET divided themselves into two groups. One group visited the Greenhouse Old-age Home situated in Clubview in Centurion. This old-age home is run by two women, Ms Sharon Grace and Ms Linda Groenewald. It accommodates ten persons, one of whom is a diabetic. The other group cleaned a stretch of the Old Johannesburg Road along Golf Avenue up to the Shell garage, about 500 metres from COLET. Clad in their camouflage uniforms, blue overalls and jeans defence civilians and uniformed members worked together to pick up the litter defiling this area of the beautiful suburb of Clubview. Delighted passing motorists hooted and shouted words of support to encourage the selfless volunteers. On the other side of COLET the second group cleaned the Greenhouse Old-age Home to a virtually spotless state. The charity work was divided among the volunteers. One group decided to do house chores by assisting the women responsible for cleaning, while the other group decided to work in the garden. One of the owners, Ms Groenewald, said that they had been planning to clean the windows for a long time, but did not get a chance. She said: “We would appreciate it if you could help by washing the windows; we do not get the time to do it since we are almost always busy with our patients.” Everyone had something to do and it felt good to bring smiles to faces. MWO Frederick Jansen, Regimental Sergeant Major of COLET, said: “I understand that this day is important because it gives us a chance to reach out and help our fellow South Africans, and make them smile with our small contributions.” SANDF COLET also donated gift parcels to the elderly. The staff and patients of Greenhouse could not hide their happiness and surprise when COLET initiated the 67 minutes’ intervention. One of the patients said that they were thrilled because it was not every day they received a visit, and they were not used to seeing so many different faces. Ms Margarita Heuer, a patient, said: “I am grateful that you chose to visit us and glad as well to see that Mr Mandela’s wish to make others happy is being respected.” Ms Heuer added that she loved Mr Nelson Mandela because he shared the same birth month with her late mother. The two women in charge of Greenhouse could not hold back their tears while explaining how grateful they were to COLET. They said that it was the first time their home got a visit, and for volunteers to help them. Ms Grace emphasised: “I am happy to realise that there are still people who are willing to offer their precious time and assist the elderly of our country with the hope of making them feel appreciated and loved.” On this day, SANDF COLET staff members went out on a mission to bring smiles to the elderly of our nation and they came back with smiles on their own faces. Whoever said “love is infectious” told the truth. Ms Dieketseng Mothutse, SANDF COLET
KEEPING KROONSTAD CLEAN

On Mandela Day the members of the School of Engineers Military Base Kroonstad devoted their 67 Minutes by getting their hands dirty and cleaning the city of Kroonstad. The members swept the streets and deposited all the rubbish from the dustbins around the city and on the streets into black bags.

Capt Mokgadi Nkgapele, School of Engineers

AFB MAKHADO ASSISTS THE NEEDY FOR MADIBA

Members of the SA Air Force in particular Air Force Base (AFB) Makhado, under the leadership of Brig Gen Schalk van Heerden, donated toiletries to the value of R1 500.00 to the Polokwane Hospitium on International Mandela Day. More than 40 patients, including mothers and children in the Oncology Ward were the main beneficiaries of this donation. The staff at the Hospitium received the donation on behalf of the Manager, Ms Mary Legodi.

Apart from donating toiletries, the AFB Makhado Singing Group spent the day entertaining the elderly at the “Ons Tuiste” Old Age Home in Makhado town, while other Base members were cleaning, painting and revamping the gardens of the Braambos area at SAMI, the mess, the living-in area of members, the day care centre and the Braambos Primary School grounds.

According to the Compassionate Hands Project Manager, Chaplain Rebecca Simons, the donation formed part of the 67 minutes project in honour of Madiba. Chaplain Simons added that the visit was a follow-up on the one made on 20 June 2014 when personnel made an assessment which led them to donate teddy bears and provide financial assistance amounting to R2 100.00. A previous donation by the base consisted of clothes to the same institution.

Sgt Thomas Mulaudzi, email

CLEANING SOUTH AFRICA FOR MADIBA

WOI Johan du Preez, Air Wing Warrant Officer Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof, came up with the idea of doing something for the base as well as the community on Mandela Day.

He requested permission from Col Innocent Buthelezi, Air Wing Coordinator AFB Waterkloof, to make use of a military bus to transport members to the area next to the Pierre van Ryneveld Road adjacent to the military base which was being used as an illegal dumping site so that the members could clean up the place.

SPirit of cohesion

10 SA Infantry Battalion recently organised and held its very first Winter Sports Tournament at the unit in Mahikeng.

The aim of this tournament was to bring together other government departments to continue building good working relationships with them.

The teams that took part in the tournament were: 10 SA Infantry Battalion, 2 SA Infantry Battalion, Durban Light Infantry, the Intelligence Academy of National Intelligence Agency and the Nursing College of the Department of Health. They all participated in different sporting codes, such as soccer, netball and volleyball.

10 SA Infantry Battalion hopes that this event marks the first of many more to come and to be hosted annually, hopefully with bigger numbers than currently. CO Sibusiso Jiyane, Mahikeng

Capt Sheena du Toit, 28 Squadron
67 MINUTES? WE CAN DO BETTER!

This year the Department of Defence Mobilisation Centre personnel were determined to make the most of Mandela Day by committing to serve the unit’s neighbouring community over several days. The learners of the Lockshoek Primary School were identified as the beneficiaries. The school is situated on the N8, 10km from the DOD Mobilisation Centre. The learners are all from the De Brug farming community. On Mandela Day the unit members cleaned the school grounds and prepared vegetable patches for the coming spring when the members will assist the learners with planting and taking care of their vegetable garden. Technical Service Corps S Sgt Johan van Niekerk handed 36 chairs that he had repaired and upholstered during the school holidays to the school. When the school opened for the third term of the year, the learners were delighted to receive packets of homemade sweets from the unit ladies. With Mr Mandela’s iconic words: “We do not want bread without freedom, nor freedom without bread”, in mind the unit ladies again visited the school to treat the learners to a lunch of vegetable soup and sandwiches. Ms Nicky de Ru, DOD Mobilisation Centre

MILITARY ACADEMY DONATES 67 MINUTES

Students and staff of the Military Academy donated 67 minutes of their time towards making a change in the Saldanha Bay community on Mandela Day. The members were divided into groups to work in places where a need had been identified. Members took up spades and forks and cleaned a corner in Diazville, where a “Rest Park” is being created for the elderly on their way home from town. This project was started by a youth group as a holiday project and members of the Military Academy joined the group in clearing weeds and placing stones to mark a border around the area. A second group visited Hopland Day Care Centre where members cut the grass, cleaned the premises and painted the jungle gym for the children. A third group lent their support to the Anglican Church in Saldanha. Walls were scrubbed, gutters cleaned and shrubs and rubbish removed. The trees and plants around the church bell were trimmed so that the bell is clearly visible again. The members also saw to the unit members’ needs by cleaning the play park of the children of the military members. The lawn was mowed and the fence and play equipment were fixed. Members also cleaned the historical graveyard of the Sadie family inside the base and whitewashed all the headstones. The Military Academy members also assisted at five soup kitchens in the Vredenburg area, while another group lent their assistance to Huis Wittekruijn by washing the windows and assisting with laundry. The activities were concluded when a delegation from the Mayor of Saldanha thanked the Military Academy members for their efforts. The message, which was highly appreciated, was that the Military Academy’s 67 minutes were spent doing something that showed a level of commitment worthy of the aim of the day. Maj Engela Meintjes, Military Academy

JUNE 16

Driven by vision and passion, stand for what they believe
Those were the models, indeed the greatest of all leaders
Held their vision of future at the centre of themselves
Who believed that their action would create the future
A bright future for you and I
Those were the young people who were Hungry for success and chance
Although the rally was intended to be a peace Soon riots were all over the place
The blood spilt in the streets of Soweto,
The domestic single mother crying for her children
Atmosphere was full of carbon dioxide
Due to amazing courage and determination, today we know young Hector Peterson and great Tsietsi Mashinini
Great leaders were dead before
Strong greatest leaders were born
Dead dreams and missions were born
New South Africa was born, the land of hope and fantasy
A light shines in our future determination.
Spr Phindasiphe Xwazi, School of Engineers

Letters to the Editor

ABOVE: Members of the Military Academy cleaning the Sadie graveyard.

A day from an era that ought not to be forgotten
Youth with no chance and privileges
Youth in poverty, uneducated, discriminated
Had to push boundaries in order to create opportunities
Afrikaans was a compulsory language in schools or I may say South Africa
The resentment grows in the teachers and students

Thousands of black students were gathered in Orlando Stadium for protest rally
Youth with dream and mission

Spr Phindasiphe Xwazi, School of Engineers

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BRINGING AVIATION TO THE YOUTH

The aviation team of Air Force Base Makhado recently visited Raluombe Secondary School in Mashamba village, some 40km from Makhado town. The team was led by Capt Michael Vilakazi of 2 Squadron.

The aim of the visit was to promote aviation awareness and to disseminate information relevant to careers in the SANDF to the science and maths class, and in particular the Grade 11 and 12 learners.

The management and teachers of the school welcomed the guests. The School Principal, Ms Triphosa Mbedzi, thanked the SANDF for visiting the school. She said she felt honoured and privileged to be visited by the SA Air Force, which to the school meant.

The students bought different school uniforms willingly and voluntarily for those who wanted to pursue careers in the aviation industry or the SANDF. Cpl Siyavuya Nobula opened the proceedings by elaborating on the role and history of the SANDF. He spoke at length about the processes that one has to follow before joining the SANDF and one’s expectations in that regard.

Thereafter Capt Kgauelo Malope gave a presentation on the role of an air traffic controller in the SA Air Force and the requirements of joining the SA Air Force. For those who wanted to join the aviation world Capt Malope said that one must pass at least maths and science history since it was the first time the school had been visited by the SANDF since its establishment in 1974. She added that the visit was an eye-opener for those who wanted to pursue careers in the aviation industry or the SANDF.

The programme was structured in such a manner that three different schools were gathered together at one school, namely Diazville Primary School. Upon the arrival there the Military Academy students immediately started to interact with the learners, who were at first amazed and intimidated by the uniforms. They did, however, open up to the students and the fun and laughter started. This event was also attended by parents who accompanied their children.

As students of the Military Academy, we stand united in acknowledging the fact that one person cannot help everyone, but everyone can help someone. As such we do not plan to change the world, but we hope that the little that we have to offer makes a difference.

Lt Kulani Chauke, email: sandfedutrust@gmail.com.

MILITARY ACADEMY OUTREACH

The Military Academy, as a Faculty of the University of Stellenbosch, is doing its best to help the community each year by means of community interaction. The student body of the Military Academy is committed to doing something to better the lives of the less fortunate. This is done through a committee called “Masiza”.

“Masiza” is derived from a Zulu word, which means “to help”. The aim of this project is to develop the social responsibility of the Military Academy towards society at large. It also helps the students display their significant leadership abilities, to enhance their command and control as military personnel and to show society that they are capable of performing their primary task, which is to defend the country and its citizens in whatever way possible. Another important aspect is that by interacting with the community as soldiers we are actually erasing the mistakes of the past, where soldiers were only seen as cruel killing machines. We are saying to the community that we are not here to harm but to protect you, that we stand for what is best for you and that besides protecting you from external forces we acknowledge the hardships that you go through; thus we will also try and help in that regard.

The first project for 2014 was the outreach programme in which school uniforms were donated. This was arranged under the leadership of Lt Kulani Chauke, the “Masiza” representative of the student body. The students bought different school uniforms, specifically focusing on shoes and jerseys, in view of the cold winter. Students bought these uniforms willingly and voluntarily with their own money to make a difference in the lives of the children who are not so fortunate. Some of the students at the Military Academy come from poor backgrounds and therefore they are able to identify with and understand the situation of the underprivileged children. However, sometimes you do not have to come from a previously disadvantaged community to know and understand how people struggle; it just takes a little observance, a warm heart and some selflessness.

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Lt Kulani Chauke, email: sandfedutrust@gmail.com.

THE SANDF EDUCATION TRUST WAITS BURSARY APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2015 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Board of Trustees of the SANDF Education Trust has announced that the Trust will in 2015 – as in 2014 – award educational bursaries to beneficiaries of the Trust.

The dependants of SANDF members who were killed or severely injured while on official duty subsequent to 27 April 1994, are considered as beneficiaries and may apply for a bursary to cover education expenses.

Bursaries will be awarded to
• Primary School Learners;
• Secondary School Learners; and
• Tertiary Learners

Criteria for the Award of Bursaries: Criteria applied by the Trustees for the award of bursaries are indicated on the application form.

Closing Date: The closing date for applications is 15 October 2014.

Application Forms: Application forms are available on the websites mil.za and www.rfdiv.mil.za or can be obtained from the SANDF Education Trust Nodal Point as follows:
• Facsimile: (012) 355 5882.
• Telephone: (012) 355 5107.
• Email: sandfedutrust@gmail.com.
• Postal Address: Board of Trustees, SANDF Education Trust, Private Bag X161, Pretoria, 0001.

*Enquiries may be directed to Col Monica Muller at any of the above contact numbers/addresses.
SOLDIERS COMMEMORATE MANDELA DAY IN THE SUDAN

Being a South African citizen engaged with diplomatic roles and the duty of bringing peace and stability to the African continent is possible, but not easy.

Although the RSA contingent deployed in the Darfur region of the Sudan in Operation CORDITE commemorated International Mandela Day away from home, they were inspired to do so.

President Jacob Zuma announced earlier this year the theme of Mandela Day for 2014: “Clean South Africa”. Although we had limited resources the Medical Task Group Commander, Lt Col Azwihangwisi Edith Mukwevho, the Battalion Social Worker, Capt Faseka Annah Mogobe, and WO1 Zipho Zulu, the Battalion Fire Master, decided that the commemoration of Mandela Day was to be held at the Kutum Rural Hospital.

It was decided that the focus would be on the maternity and paediatric wards of the hospital and that the 67 Minutes would be spent cleaning, painting and doing the chicken parade in these wards.

The Engineering Commander, Lt Graeme John Solomons, and the Engineering Warrant Officer, WO2 Frederik Johannes Henzen, made a plaque to symbolise the contribution made by RSA Battalion 13 towards the rejuvenation of the maternity and paediatric wards. The Engineers provided a water bunker for the day.

Members of the Battalion Headquarters made monetary donations towards the purchase of paint and paint brushes. Delta Company, under the command of Capt David Jacobus Swan, provided an escort and protection, while Capt Mshuduz Alfred Mukwevho, the Transport Commander, ensured that transport was made available for the event. Cleaning material was obtained from the stores with the assistance of S Sgt Themba Doctor Chabalala, L Cpl Martin Jackson and L Cpl Tebogo Jeffrey Mothetho. Lt Col Mukwevho donated refreshments, while Capt Mogobe, with limited resources, managed to arrange goodie bags for the patients with the assistance of S Sgt Thandokwakhe Mantu Khoza. S Sgt Linda Ndlouv and Cpl Thobeka Hazel Thikane baked a cake for the staff members at the hospital.

On Mandela Day the RSA Battalion HQ team with the Officer Commanding RSA Battalion 13, Lt Col Vusi David Maseko, Lt Col Mukwevho, the Civilian Police and Military Observers left for Kutum Rural Hospital.

Maj Gilbert Ncube, the Military Observer from Zimbabwe, encouraged the other military observers and Civilian Police members to join and commemorate the day with us, “siyabonga Mfovetheu”.

On our arrival we were welcomed by the hospital staff: Dr Nour Adam Abdulshabea (Coordinator), Dr Najmeldein Eisa Mohammein, Mohamed Zakia Eldooma (Nurse) and Alhasam Adam Edrees (Sister).

The team split into three groups.

The first team, led by WO2 Thabo Joseph Mosoeu, painted the paediatric ward. The second team under the leadership of WO1 Zipho Sanenhle Zulu cleaned and painted the maternity ward. The third team, led by WO2 John Hlupheka Ngobeni, did the chicken parade.

As South African ambassadors and custodians of the activities we had to lead by example, taking into consideration that the eyes of the entire world were on us. Indeed we are “the warriors who serve the brave”, and SA Military Health Service members will concur with me that “every soldier made his mark” at the hospital. We are few in the Sudan, but the contribution we made will forever be remembered by the people of Darfur, Sudan, the United Nations, and Africa as a whole.

Maj Vincent Kgaditse and Capt Letolo Morris Mashabela, RSA Battalion 13, Sudan

TASK FORCE aka 500 SQUADRON

The essence of this letter is to encourage our soldiers to face the danger and fear of the unknown.

I saw the appointed vanguard of our squadron (Task Force) retiring to their respective fancy employments. Our soldiers entered the Task Force with conflicts unresolved: “To wake up and confront the demons of the following day”.

The state of 500 Squadron remained unchanged. However, I and those still standing will conquer to demonstrate solidarity in the quest to uphold the Defence oath, vision and mission. We resolve to stand firm in the quest for answers.

As soldiers we need to open doors to realise our vision. This will assist us all to share the spoils of the liberation envisaged.

Let us rest assured that we will be wiser in future. Soldiering is a calling to serve the nation and is not just for employment. We have to take seriously the Task Force Oath and Defence vision and mission. Ms Helen Suzman once said: “There is one thing which a minister cannot do: He cannot ban ideas from men’s
OUR SOLDIERS IN DARFUR FEARLESS IN SEARCH OF PEACE

On 9 August 2014, while the rest of South Africa celebrated Woman’s Day, RSA Battalion 13 in Darfur, Sudan, under the command of Lt Col Vusi David Maseko, did what many contingents had never dreamt of doing, some even considered it impossible. This day a small elite unit called the Reconnaissance Platoon, under the command of Capt Carl Lewis, prepared for what most will refer to as “the most dangerous course of action”.

That day we met Sheikh Musa Hilal, the Overall Commander of the Arab Militia in Darfur, Sudan, after which we moved into the valley of the shadow of death as the Pride of Lions. Sheikh Musa Hilal is not only considered the most dangerous man in the Sudan, but is accused of orchestrating some of the most heinous atrocities in Darfur since 2003, and as such has been listed as the most wanted man besides President Omar Al Bashir by the International Criminal Court.

Sheikh Musa Hilal’s Headquarters is situated in Kabkabiya town in Darfur, about 90km south of our base in Kutum. He rarely leaves his comfort zone. When news came of his impending arrival in our area of responsibility, we thought that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to engage in dialogue with the Commander of the Arab Militia. We would endeavour to advise peace and reiterate the importance of the role of the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and South Africa. The patrol fearlessly travelled into the lion’s den with the pride of our nation, the National Flag, on our left shoulder and the United Nations Flag on the right one.

When we arrived in the village called Amou, 30km north west of our base, we were welcomed by short bursts of 12.7mm automatic fire, and a deafening sound like thunder and lightning from no fewer than 50 heavily armed land cruisers armed with 14.5mm machine guns, 12.7mm machine guns, 82mm mortars, AK47 assault rifles and a force in excess of 500 armed personnel. Even though we were outnumbered in terms of personnel and firepower we remembered the outspoken voice of our General Officer Commanding SA Army Infantry Formation Maj Gen Lindile Yam: “South African soldiers are patriotic; we are willing to stop the bullet with the chest in service of our proud nation”.

Lt Col Maseko led by example and courageously alighted from the Mamba armoured personnel carrier and entered a secluded room with Capt K. Mbhele, the Intelligence Officer, closely protected by the elite Reconnaissance Team. Finally we met the man that only a few dared to meet, Sheikh Musa Hilal. At first glance he appears as a man who carries himself well; he is confident and commands a lot of respect from his followers. The situation remained tense as issues pertaining to peace and stability were discussed between him and the team with each giving their own perspective on the best way to achieve both the former and the latter.

Automatic bursts of fire continued outside while we were in the meeting. Approximately an hour later the meeting came to a successful end when both parties shook hands and took some photographs. These scenes will forever be etched in the memories of all parties involved in this landmark, once in a lifetime, occasion.

The outcome remained unpredictable and the mood around the camp was still tense as we departed, the Sheikh having indicated that he had a lot of commitments still to meet in the area.

We left with a parting gift from the Arab Militia in the form of a camel leg, a gesture of thanks as the mission proved to have been very fruitful and a success. Capt Carl Lewis, Kutum Base, Sudan

ABOVE: After a successful meeting, Sheikh Musa Hilal, Commander of the Arab Militia, and Lt Col Vusi David Maseko, Officer Commanding RSA Battalion 13 for Operation CORDITE XVIII in the Sudan, shake hands.

minds.” I therefore urge our soldiers always to focus on the bigger picture concerning the organisation - its ideology.

“Martin Luther King Jr said: “If a man is not prepared to die for something, then he is not ready to live.”

I hear people saying history repeats itself, but I say history will rotate.

Task Force (500 Squadron) is a calling, not merely employment. It demands your courage, determination and focus, but most of all “Your love”. Excellency is all we do. Task Force aka 500 Squadron.

Sgt King Khoza, email
The SANDF will continue pursuing its constitutional mandate

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photos: Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, tabled the 2014 Defence Budget Vote under new administration in the National Assembly in Parliament in Cape Town last month.

The 2014 Defence Budget Vote was especially important because it coincided with the tabling of the 2014 Defence Review due to be finalised by Parliament, and following a few months after the department gazetted the Military Veterans Regulations. The finalising of these two policy matters constitutes a crucial part of the strategic process for the Department of Defence and the Department Military Veterans’ work in the next five years.

While acknowledging the sterling job that her Department and the SANDF has done since the advent of democracy, the Minister mentioned the challenges and tasks that lay ahead for the SANDF. She pointed out that the SANDF needed to continue executing its four main constitutional requirements, namely to defend and protect South Africa, to safeguard its borders and infrastructure, to promote peace and security in Africa and to perform developmental and other tasks assigned to it.

Based on these four pillars of the constitutional mandate the Defence Review recommends that the Government assist the Department of Defence and Military Veterans to achieve five “milestones”, namely to curb the decline of the SANDF equipment and technology, to rebalance the force by reprioritising, ensure capacity meets current needs, develop capacity to meet future challenges and build the strength to engage in war should the need arise.

Pleading with the parliamentarians, the Minister said that if the Assembly accepted the Defence Review recommendations, then its prescripts must be implemented expeditiously within a set time frame.

Accordingly over the next five years, as part of the first milestone, the Department will have to focus on the following strategic areas:

- Ensuring strategic leadership and succession planning for the Defence Programme over the next 20 years.
- Developing the funding mechanism and ensure adequate resourcing of the Defence function.
- Directing the renewal of defence personnel to ensure that the personnel profile is able to meet future defence obligations.
- Directing the renewal of the defence organisation to achieve greater competence and effectiveness.
- Reviewing the defence capability strategy and directing defence acquisition.
- Directing the development of the Defence Industry Strategy and the technology agenda and innovation plans in support of the defence development programme, as well as the integration of the Defence Industry into mainstream industrial policy.

ABOVE: The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, delivering her departmental budget speech under new government administration in the National Assembly in Parliament.
The Minister mentioned that the Department would engage the Department of Treasury to obtain the necessary funding that the SANDF needs to execute its mandate. “The Defence Review recognises and states unambiguously that the SANDF is in a state of decline characterised by force imbalance between capabilities, ageing technology and the unaffordability of many of its main operating systems. We do not have a choice but to respond with urgency to put plans in place to arrest the decline within the current five years, starting immediately during this financial year. Five years is the average amount of time it will take us to develop a limited and sustainable defence capability. The longer the neglect is perpetuated, the greater the effort, time and cost it will take to arrest the decline”, said Minister Mapisa-Nqakula.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula emphasised the urgency with which the Government had to prioritise the SANDF budget increment: “Although the SANDF is still able to maintain an operational presence, if we do not start now, the decline will get worse. Our mandate in the next five years is to act fast to restore the minimum capabilities required to safeguard South Africa, protect its maritime resources and trade routes, conduct peace missions and humanitarian interventions”.

The Minister took the opportunity to inform Parliament about current SANDF deployments. Owing to the deteriorating security status in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) it necessitated the deployment of the first Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). The FIB was instrumental in the reduction and elimination of negative forces (including M23) activities in the DRC. The FIB will be present in the DRC until June 2015. SANDF members were still deployed in the Sudan as part of the United Nations African Union Mission (UNAMID) and were doing well despite the harsh conditions. The SANDF has been committed to continue there for another year from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. She indicated that South Africa has pledged certain elements towards the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC). This interim capability was established by the African leaders due to the absence of a fully-fledged African standby Force. ACIRIC allows the continent to deal directly with its continued instability as a result of intra-state conflict. She mentioned that regardless of current budget constraints the SANDF was responsible for border safeguarding and maritime security.

The Minister cautioned that the SANDF was losing much needed scarce skills to the private sector and that an urgent need therefore existed for the recruitment of younger soldiers, career management, a succession plan; and an exit management system.
The 98th Commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood

Article and photos by Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

Fallen World War I heroes were remembered during the 98th Commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood in Somme, France, on 6 July 2014. The commemoration followed the wreath-laying ceremony that was held at the Arques-la-Bataille in Dieppe a few days earlier.

Located on the slopes of a hilly area outside Dieppe, the cemetery is a Commonwealth graveyard where members of the South African Contingent who were killed at Delville Wood in World War I were laid to rest. There are 264 graves, mostly South Africans.

The Delville Wood and Arques-la-Bataille commemorations are occasions to remember all those who fell in the battle. During World War I, South African soldiers participated in the Allied campaign in the Battle of the Somme against the Germans.

The orders were carried out with great bravery, although with great losses. A war memorial to all South Africans, in all theatres of war, was erected on the battlefield at Delville Wood and unveiled in 1926.

Speaking at Arques-la-Bataille, the Sub Prefect of Dieppe, Ms Martine Laquieze, said that they honoured the men lying in the cemetery as they had died for freedom. She also mentioned that they honoured former President Nelson Mandela not only as a great freedom fighter but as a great soul because he was able to forgive those who humiliated him.

The South African Ambassador to France, Ms Dolana Msimang, said the commemorations are taken seriously by South Africa as senior officials from government were part of the delegation. She extended her gratitude to the people of Longueval who continue to support the commemorations.

She said: “They respected us by sending their high-ranking officials. It is their presence on this occasion that makes the event even more worthwhile.”

The Surgeon General of the SANDF, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, said that during the battle the wounded were estimated to be over 1 700 men, but only 151 bodies were found and certified dead.

Lt Gen Sedibe said: “The remains of the most lie here in the woods around us as we remember these gallant fighters. The remembrance of these soldiers resonates in so many ways with the world today.” He indicated that when the civilised world at the time called for Africa’s hand during strife, the sons of the soil responded to a call to restore world peace.

The Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said the
commemoration would always remind South Africans as a nation of the past and be a way towards building a better life for all.

Mr Ramaphosa added: “This commemoration also represents the strong ties our countries enjoy, such as shared interest in world peace as well as economic development. As we confront the challenges of the world today, we must draw lessons from these experiences so that never again should we allow war to bring suffering and death.”

Deputy President Ramaphosa said they constantly engaged with France to continue its commitment to Africa through collaboration with the African Union, in particular conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts on the continent.

He said: “We are here today to honour the memories of the gallant men who through their sacrifice and determination remain an inspiration to all of us.”

The South African National Memorial was inaugurated in 1926 to the memory of the South Africans that fell during the Great War. On the morning of 15 July 1916, the First South African Infantry Brigade, consisting of 121 officers and 3 032 men received an order to capture the wood at all costs. The wood was a tactically important salient protruding into the German second line.

The brigade was subjected to an onslaught of unrelenting and unmitigated violence. On 20 July only 142 men walked out of the wood after the fierce fighting that lasted six days and five nights.
Remains of Pte Beleza Myengwa laid to rest at the Delville Wood Memorial

Article and photos by Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

Commemorations to mark the 98th anniversary of the Battle of Delville Wood in France were expanded to include the re-interment ceremony of Pte Beleza Myengwa, a member of the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) who was buried in a civilian cemetery at Seine-Maritime near Le Havre.

The reinterment of Pte Myengwa at the Delville Wood Memorial on 6 June 2014 was an attempt to honour and restore the dignity of all South Africans, Black and White, who fought in the First and Second World Wars.

The President of the South African Military History Commission (SAMHC), Maj Gen Solly Mollo (Ret), said the story of the Battle of Delville Wood was personified by the interment of Pte Myengwa. Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) said: "He was a member of the SA Native Labour Corps who died in France on 27 November 1916. He was part of the First Battalion of the SA Native Labour Corps to arrive in France on 20 November 1916 and he died seven days later, only to be buried in a civilian cemetery. Many like him perished, including those in the sinking of SS Mendi."

He said that when Pte Myengwa’s remains were discovered attempts to contact his family were all in vain. Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) mentioned that they would continue with the search to find his relatives.

Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) said: "As President of the SAMHC under the auspices of UNESCO, we confirm that our stories from the past that inform our military experiences must be told." He added: "The two world wars epitomise the role of South Africans in the international discourse."

He indicated that the black majority after the war were not given proper recognition and a process of healing the wounds of the past must begin as the country starts building its future. Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) said: “We can never forget, because if we lose our memories, we are as good as dead.”

The retired general repeated his plea that war stories from the past must be told so that justice is done to South Africa’s military history. He said that the country’s military veterans associations must integrate to enable survivors to be healed from the past war experiences.

Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) narrated the story of his late grandfather: “I stand here before you today as a great-grandson of a person that participated in the Anglo-Boer War, also called the South African War. He was compensated by being forcefully removed from the land he owned.”

He added: “I am also a direct grandson of a member of the South
African Native Labour Corps who was captured during World War II by the Germans. He was made a prisoner of war and sent to Italy, and when the war ended he never came home.”

As he was presumed dead, the family decided to divide his assets among themselves. However, in 1946 when he reappeared; he came to learn that he had nothing left. Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) said he was disheartened when he was only given a bicycle for his contribution in the war and never got any pension whatsoever.

“I am saying, this is the story of my grandfather, Pte Justice Mollo, who died a bitter man, but how many are like him?” he lamented. Maj Gen Mollo (Ret) said that his grandfather wrote a book which was an account of World War II from his perspective as an SA Native Labour Corps member. The book will soon be published.

The Surgeon General of the SANDF, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, said the laying to rest of Pte Myengwa’s remains at the Delville Wood Memorial represented thousands of members of the South African Native Labour Corps who suffered the same fate. He said: “Pte Myengwa, like many others were never mentioned in the annals of history as heroes of World War I because of the colour of their skin. You are the turning point in history; transforming the long-standing history of silence.”

Lt Gen Sedibe added: “Your exclusive place of rest at the Delville Wood Memorial must symbolise the initial transformation of history for generations to come. It is the revelation of the truth of black people’s contribution to the liberation of mankind in the two world wars.”

The Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said Pte Beleza Myengwa represented more than 90,000 members of the SANLC who volunteered for service in France during the First World War. In the foggy early morning of 21 February 1917, the SS Mendi was making its way to France when suddenly, another vessel, the Darro, rammed it and it sank in about 25 minutes. Over 600 men of the 5th battalion of the SANLC lost their lives. Only a few survived to tell the story of their experience.

Delville Wood Memorial was purchased in 1920 by the South African Government as the site for a National Memorial. In its hallowed ground repose more than 600 South Africans with no known graves. The wood is also the grave of thousands of British and German soldiers. The wood remained the scene of bitter fighting for more than a month before it was finally captured by the allies. The wood was completely destroyed in the battle and only one tree survived. It is still standing today to tell the story of Delville Wood. Saying that it is the turning point in history; transforming the long-standing history of silence.”

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The SA Native Labour Contingent served in France from November 1916 until January 1918. The main headquarters for the SANDLC was established at Rouen, with a records office at Dieppe. The South African units were concentrated at Le Havre, Dieppe, Rouen, Abbeville, Dannes, Abancourt, Saingyville, Bethune, Montauber, Fricourt and Meault.

Many of them were deployed in the forward areas where they were exposed to the bleakest scenes of the battlefield. Many, however, served at the great French ports, Le Havre, Rouen, Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirk, where they were engaged in offloading millions of tons of weaponry and supplies needed to continue the war on the Western Front.

Though disappointed that they were not allowed to bear arms because of their skin colour, more than 25,000 members of the SANLC volunteered for service in France during the Great War.

One of South Africa’s greatest disasters was the tragic sinking of the troopship SS Mendi carrying black South African troop members of the South African Native Labour Corps.

The wood remained the scene of bitter fighting for more than a month before it was finally captured by the allies. The wood was completely destroyed in the battle and only one tree survived. It is still standing today to tell the Story of Delville Wood.
Delville Wood Commemoration at Burgers Park

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos: Mr Themba Mntyali

Following the 98th commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood, the Pretoria Memorial Services Council (PMSC) held its annual Delville Wood memorial service at Burgers Park in Pretoria last month.

The memorial service was held in honour of all who gave their lives during the Battle of Delville Wood in 1916.

The PMSC is a voluntary organisation which is part of the Military Veterans Association. It was established after World War II with an office in Pretoria. The PMSC organised and coordinated certain activities to ensure that South African memorial services are properly observed and commemorated in the capital. This it did by means of memorial services and wreath-laying ceremonies supported by the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

During World War I, South African soldiers participated in the Battle of the Somme in France, which was a major counter-offensive partly undertaken to relieve German pressure on Verdun.

On the morning of 15 July 1916, the First South African Infantry Brigade, consisting of 121 officers and 3 032 men, received an order to capture the wood at all costs, as it was a tactically important salient protruding into the German second line.

The brigade was subjected to an onslaught of such unrelenting and unmitigated violence. On 20 July 1916, only 142 men walked out of the wood after fierce fighting that lasted six days and five nights.

ABOVE: Col Jan Malan, representing the South African Defence Force Association, planting a cross at the annual Deville Wood memorial service.

LEFT: Dignitaries and members of military veterans’ organisations observe proceedings at the annual Delville Wood memorial service at Burgers Park.
Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans hosted his counterpart from Japan

By S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole
Photos: Pte Jonathan Mogano

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, recently hosted his counterpart from Japan, Mr Minoru Kihara, and his delegation during an official working visit to South Africa.

The visit happened in the context of further strengthening the ties of friendship and cooperation that exist between the two countries and was aimed at consolidating the existing diplomatic and military relations currently enjoyed by South Africa and Japan.

Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans hosted his counterpart from Japan

ABOVE: The Deputy Minister of Defence of Japan, Mr Minoru Kihara (left), accompanied by the RSA Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, were welcomed by a silent National Ceremonial Guard at Defence Headquarters.

The visit will further strengthen the strategic partnership to develop, safeguard and incorporate the political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural relations between the two countries.

The visit also sought to explore areas of military and defence cooperation for the two armed forces concerning South African arms production and the procurement industry as well as a possible exchange of information on defence related matters, in particular the technology, research and development sector.

In welcoming the delegation from Japan, Deputy Minister Maphatsoe said that he was very grateful for the visit of Deputy Minister Kihara: “Your visit to our country is of significance, as it is the first of such visit between our two countries to discuss defence matters”.

During the visit, Deputy Minister Kihara officially handed over military vehicles that were donated by the Japanese Government to the Peace Mission Training Centre for use in training for peacekeeping.
SA Army honours good service
in its 20th year of defence in democracy

By CO Marumo Machete, SO3
External Communication SA Army
Corporate Communication
Photo: Mr Frans Setlau

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, conferred over 66 medals on members who have distinguished themselves through selfless service at a medal parade held at the SA Army Headquarters in Pretoria last month. Lt Gen Masondo highlighted the need for discipline and commitment by all those who serve in the country’s landward forces. He commended all 61 recipients present on parade for the grand milestone they had achieved in their careers that coincided with the celebration by SA Army of 20 years in defence of the country’s democracy.

“There could not have been a more fitting period for these patriots on parade to receive honours and decorations than this one”, Lt Gen Masondo said praising the recipients’ accomplishments in being awarded loyal service medals as the Army marches towards its landmark 30th decade since the inception of democracy.

The Chief of the SA Army thanked the men and women in uniform and said that it was through their selfless service to the country that the SA Army had witnessed the installation of the State’s fifth democratic Parliament and had come a long way in executing its constitutional mandate, namely being the defender of the country’s hard-earned democracy.

Lt Gen Masondo said: “All these have been possible because the country has sons and daughters like you; sons and daughters we can always rely on to rise to the occasion and perform their constitutional duty of safeguarding our country’s borders and its people.”

He urged all those in uniform to emulate the dedication shown by those who served with distinction and determination in service of their country regardless of challenges they faced in their careers. Lt Gen Masondo said: “Let us therefore celebrate them as they receive their well-deserved medals. Let it be an inspiration to others in uniform that all the hard work and dedication to one’s country will and shall never go unnoticed.”

The Chief of the SA Army added that medals did not equate with the value that most people put on money, but had an immense and special sentimental value and significance in the life of a soldier, which no amount of cash or remuneration could replace.

Medals conferred were General Service Medals, Maluti Clasp, Tshumelo Ikatelaho with peace support clasp, Unitas Medal, Bar to the Medalje vir Troue Diens (20 years), Bronze Service Medal: Azanian People’s Liberation Army, Good Service Medal (Bronze) and the Medalje vir Troue Diens (Bronze).

The parade took place two days before International Mandela Day. In recognition of this day the Chief of the SA Army in closing urged members to do their bit in making our country a better place for all by participating in the Mandela Day by giving much needed help to those who are less fortunate.

Lt Gen Masondo borrowed from former President Nelson Mandela’s clarion call made on his 90th birthday celebration in Hyde Park, London, when he declared: “It is time for new hands to lift the burden. It is now in your hands.”
Denel’s diverse range of defence and aerospace products provides you with comprehensive solutions for all your defence and security requirements, whether air, sea or landwards defence. Driving skills development is also a vital part of Denel’s business. As a strategic national asset, Denel has invested in growing and developing talent and expertise to keep the company at the forefront of the industry both locally and globally.

He welcomed all the selected candidates from the SANDF, the SA Police Service, the Department of Correctional Service, State Security Agency, parastatals from Armscor, the CSIR and international fellows from the Armed Forces of Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Speaking to the participants, Lt Gen Sedibe reminded them that national security cannot be viewed in isolation because it is the concern of everyone and not only the military. He said that the value of the programme was directly proportional to the degree to which they all participated and contributed.

He said: “In this continuously globalising world, interaction and collaboration between countries is of the utmost importance in addressing mutual security challenges.”

In conclusion, Lt Gen Sedibe announced that the current ENSP is to be changed from six months to a one year programme as from 2015, as guided by the Defence Review and will be presented in cooperation with the Military Academy, so therefore the ENSP 30/14 will probably be the last to be presented in its current format. He added that planning between the SA National Defence College and the Military Academy was in the final stages.

The ENSP prepares officers and officials at the national strategic level to plan, manage and ensure national security in an ever changing world which places a high premium on human security and increasingly addresses national security issues on a multinational basis.

It is currently presented over a period of 21 weeks and addresses national security issues in a domestic, regional and continental context on a multilateral basis and promotes a better understanding of national security priorities and a broad range of geostrategic human security issues important to the continent and the world.

Another objective of the ENSP is to build trust among states, military and non-military personnel towards resolution of conflicts, establish democracy and work together to achieve economic development, peace and stability across our national borders.
Postmasburg honoured
a distinguished unit
of the SA Army

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The community of Postmasburg reaffirmed their appreciation and commitment and showed their confidence in the SA Army Combat Training Centre by conferring on it the right and privilege of bearing arms as it marched through the City of Postmasburg to exercise their Right to Freedom of Entry into Postmasburg.

Freedom of entry is mostly ceremonial and gives the right of general entry to a unit to parade through the streets on ceremonial occasions and to be present at official functions. In accordance with military law and tradition this gives the unit the right to march through the streets with swords drawn, bayonets fixed, drums beating, bands playing and ensign flying.

Granting the freedom of entry to the town enabled Postmasburg to honour a distinguished unit of the SA Army, and so strengthened the ties between citizens and servicemen and women.

The parade exposed the community of Postmasburg and surrounding areas to the military environment and created an opportunity for the SA Army Combat Training Centre to interact with all its stakeholders and to contribute to a better understanding of the SA Army’s internal and external roles.

The Freedom of Entry into Postmasburg showcased the SA Army’s expertise and hardware, and the combat readiness and capabilities of the SA Army through a significant and impressive exhibition of military hardware. It was also an attempt to show the community that the SANDF cared and to maintain a healthy relationship with the communities and to promote the image of the DOD.

The Freedom of Entry gave the unit the opportunity to show that it was mindful of the fact that it is their duty to serve and protect the citizens of our country and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

It also showed that they were mindful of the supreme sacrifice paid by many soldiers as well as those who gave their lives in many battles and that it was their sacrifice that has brought us our freedom.

Speaking to the members on parade, the Mayor of Tsantsabane, Councillor Elroy Phete, said that the community was heartened by the selfless contribution by a number of people and organisations, and particularly by the people of Postmasburg. He said that they have always maintained that together we can always do more as a collective. He mentioned that the parade was worth attending simply to witness history in the making.
On Mandela Day the Department of Military Veterans helped those less fortunate at the Dube SA Legion Memorial Chapel and Social Club (popularly known as the Chapel) in Soweto.

The Chapel was built after World War II for returning soldiers. Its popularity grew during the apartheid era when the then Non-statutory Force members used the Chapel as their sanctuary to hide from the police. In view of this, the chapel was chosen as a place worthy to perform acts of UBUNTU for 67 minutes, although the state of the building was hardly in a satisfactory state.

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, a military veteran and former Member of Parliament, Mr Andrew Mlangeni, and the Secretary General of the SA National Military Veterans Association (SANMVA), Mr Tshidiso Phaka, handed out blankets to the World War II veterans in appreciation and acknowledgement of their role in that war. The Chapel was given a new interior look when it was freshly painted. Deputy Minister Maphatsoe and Mr Mlangeni gave hands-on assistance in leading the painting group.

Later, Deputy Minister Maphatsoe and Mr Mlangeni, accompanied by the entire team, walked approximately 8 km to what was the first Mandela family home, now a museum, to lay a wreath in honour of the late former President and Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Mandela, at 8115 Vilakazi Street in Orlando West, Soweto.

The day ended with the planting of trees at the Chapel.
Defence Corporate Communication relives the journey of an icon

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

One man’s vision and journey provided the SANDF men and women with an opportunity to exercise a positive impact on the community, supported by the belief that we live to serve every day. Indeed, Mr Nelson Mandela’s willingness to give up everything for freedom, equality, democracy and justice embodies the values of the United Nations (UN), namely those of peace, freedom and human rights. This inspired the formal adoption of the Mandela Day campaign by the UN General Assembly in 2009.

Defence Corporate Communication (DCC) relived the journey travelled by the icon, the late Mr Nelson Mandela’s lifetime commitment to freedom and service to his fellow man by celebrating Mandela Day with the Ditsepu Secondary School based at Ga Maja in Polokwane.

The Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, adopted the school in 2009. Gen Shoke realised the school’s great potential regardless of the meagre resources at its disposal.

He identified the school as one needing resources and improvements to its facilities. Members from DCC and Regional Works Unit Limpopo refurbished Ditsepu Secondary School by repairing its windows.

The occasion marked another significant milestone in the SANDF’s resolve to work with the communities to improve the lives of the people.

To this end DCC devoted the day’s activity to community service in honour of the legacy of Mr Nelson Mandela and his values.

This project is in appreciation of the great work that the school does in shaping the lives of the learners. The SANDF considers the development of a child as an important contribution to the building of the future of our country.

The project is an example of public partnership between the SANDF and the community. It also serves as a gesture by the Chief of the SANDF reaffirming his appreciation for community development.

This year’s Mandela Day was particularly symbolic in that it offered South Africans, and the world, an occasion to honour the ethos of the late Mr Mandela in the year that marks South Africa’s 20th year of democracy.

This is a day that inspires all of humanity and reminds us of our public service to each other. Mandela Day is not only about doing well, it is about service. It is an opportunity to build upon Mr Mandela’s lifelong belief that we must live to serve every day, in whatever we do.

Mr Mandela is recognised as an international icon and a symbol of hope for people around the world. The SANDF recognises Mr Mandela’s principles, values and dedication to the service of mankind, as well as his contribution to the struggle for democracy and the promotion of a culture of peace.

The SANDF hailed our former President as somebody with extraordinary vision, leadership and spirit. The SANDF strives to build upon his example of tolerance, compassion and reconciliation.

Moreover it endeavoured to follow his example of what it means to truly give back to our communities and our nation. One of the lessons to draw is that we must work together to entrench unity and solidarity in the country.
Celebrating Mandela Day

SA Army Generals do it for Madiba

By CO Marumo Machete, SO3
External Communication SA
Corporate Communication

Photo: Sapper Simphiwe Cele

As part of the SA Army’s contribution on Mandela Day this year, three Army Generals took to Huis Quanessa in Gezina, Pretoria, not as warlords but as Samaritans of peace and hope in honour of South Africa’s greatest stalwart and former President Nelson Mandela.

This year’s International Mandela Day was the fifth since its unanimous adoption in 2009 by the United Nations General Assembly and the first since the passing on of the South African icon in December 2013 at age 95.

The SA Army Headquarters complex took its 67 minutes global movement for good to Huis Quanessa, which employs 12 care-givers and caters for 30 adults and children with disabilities.

Led by Directorate Force Structure headed by Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, accompanied by Brig Gen Alan Luck and Brig Gen André Lukes, Army Headquarters members descended on Huis Quanessa to deliver groceries, toiletries, blankets and towels, tube feeding syringes and other basic necessities that the Centre uses on a day-to-day basis to make the lives of the residents easier. (The items were bought following a wish-list that the Centre gave to Lt Col Baliwinile Kwankwa who was the event’s chief coordinator.)

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, was away on official business in Ethiopia, but had urged members to go out on International Mandela Day and help make a difference during a medal parade at the SA Army HQ complex on the Wednesday before his departure.

The three Generals brought along over 50 uniformed members to Huis Quanessa who also rolled up their sleeves tidied up the yard and cleaned the windows of the Centre, while the rest kept the children busy on the playground. The kitchen staff at Huis Quanessa was taken by surprise when some of the soldiers volunteered their cooking tips and assisted them to prepare the meals for the residents.

Most of the adults and children at the Centre could not hide their excitement when they realised that the soldiers had volunteered to spend a day, especially with them, on Mandela Day.

When thanking the soldiers for their efforts, Maj Gen Nobanda said: “As able-bodied people, healthy and fit, we sometimes take for granted what other people are going through. It is touching to see the appreciation these adults and children with disabilities show for our being here - just by the smiles on their faces.

“I would like to thank the rest of my staff that made this day a success. Our appreciation also goes to the staff at this Centre, for their effort, time and patience in taking care of these adults and children.

“If you did not have patience and love, you would not be doing this great work you are doing.”

Maj Gen Nobanda encouraged those present to continue extending a helping hand to the less fortunate and follow in the selfless footsteps of the late Mr Nelson Mandela.

It has always been the case that a little goes a long way when it comes to charity. Even a contribution that appears meaningless to some has the potential to make a huge difference to others.

“I am not promising that we will do everything for you. All I am ready to say is that you will always have a friend in the SA Army and we will always help whenever we can,” Maj Gen Nobanda said, directing words of support to the Centre’s Manager.

Mr Jan Nieuwoudt, Chairperson at Huis Quanessa, and the Centre’s Manager, Ms Donettee de Waal, expressed their heartfelt appreciation to the SA Army for volunteering to lend a helping hand to the residents at their Centre.

Mr Nieuwoudt heartily said: “In our line of work, it is not always that we get a vote of thanks from anyone. So we are amazed by the SA Army and want to say thank you to the military men and women who visited the Centre today.”

A delighted Ms De Waal added: “I think the children enjoyed the day. It was nice and something different. Our children really appreciated seeing the Army: they love the Army.”
Celebrating Mandela Day

LEGSAETO Bloemfontein embraced the legacy of Madiba

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

Mandela Day is an ideal time to express love and good wishes for those who are less fortunate. Legal Satellite Office (LEGSATO) Bloemfontein recently embraced the legacy of the late Mr Mandela by organising a golf day to raise funds for the Engo Child and Youth Care Centre at Tempe Golf Club in Bloemfontein. (LEGSATO Bloemfontein adopted the centre in 2013.)

On 10 November 2009 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted 18 July, the birthday of Mr Nelson Mandela, as International Mandela Day to celebrate the legacy of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former President of South Africa. The adoption of this resolution was truly historic as it was the first time that the UN had designated an international day in honour of a person.

On the day of activism on 18 July, Mandela’s birthday, individuals are called upon to live his legacy by doing 67 minutes of community work in honour of Madiba’s 67 years of uninterrupted and selfless service to the people of South Africa.

The significance of Mandela Day is known to all. Though it is true that it is celebrated as the day of the birth of the late Mr Mandela into this world, yet it also symbolises a very deeply significant truth about the life of Mr Mandela.

The world recognises Nelson Mandela as an international icon and a symbol of hope for oppressed and marginalised people around the world. Moreover it recognises Mandela’s principles, value and dedication to the service of mankind, as well as his contribution to the struggle for international democracy and the promotion of a culture of peace.

The occasion provided the LEGSATO Bloemfontein with an opportunity to interact and strengthen relations with its most valued stakeholders. The Office took the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made by its stakeholders in their endeavours to raise funds for the centre.

The event was not only used to socialise and network, but to reflect on the plight of the less fortunate and to spearhead the message of goodwill and giving.

A shot was fired to mark the beginning of the charity golf day activities which took place on the 18th of July. The LEGSATO Bloemfontein did not only simply raise awareness about Mandela Day but too a decisive stance to help those less fortunate.

The purpose of the Egno Child and Youth Care Centre is to provide protection and care, and educational, development and treatment programmes from a Christian perspective to as many children as possible in the Free State who are in need of safety and protection on a cost-effective and financially sound basis.

The Egno Child and Youth Care Centre forms an integral part of the Dutch Reformed Church in Bloemfontein. The church provides a specialist religious support service for members of the Centre, one which promotes spiritual growth, sustains an ethos of high morality and ethical credibility and spiritually cares for all its members. The collateral value of religious support and other activities by the Church is of value and must be taken into account.

Speaking to the participants, Lt Col Shirelle Mathee encouraged those in attendance to be grateful for what they had and to learn to share with those less fortunate. “Whatever is done is done through you and by you” said Lt Col Mathee as she motivated them to believe in themselves. She also reminded the guests of how fortunate they are to be South African citizens.

She pointed out that through this project, members of LEGSATO Bloemfontein were able to spread their wings to cultivate, maintain and enhance partnerships with community based structures and old-age homes that have benefited from such partnerships. She thanked the sponsors and participants who helped the LEGSATO Bloemfontein to raise these most needed funds for the Egno Child and Youth Care Centre.
Celebrating Mandela Day

Logistics Division inspired by Mandela legacy

By Pte Thabo Tukula, Defence Corporate Communication Assistant Specialist Writer
Photo: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The United Nations declared in 2009 that 18 July would be celebrated as International Mandela Day. On this day, people all over the world do community service and make time to help those less fortunate or in dire need.

Members of Logistics Division led by the Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Bongani Mbatha, joined hands with members of the SA Police Service (SAPS) and North West Star Bus Company to answer the call and devoted their 67 minutes in community service by celebrating International Mandela Day with Rhirhandzo Home for the Aged and People with Disabilities at Klipgat village.

Logistics Division donated mattresses, blankets, sheets, plastic cutlery, a 50 inch plasma TV, tiles, paint, a geyser, and installed DSTv. The Regional Works Unit Gauteng also built a concrete wall around the house.

Addressing the inhabitants and members, Lt Gen Mbatha said: “This is a national commitment, hence we need to extend our hands to make South Africa a better place, and I believe we as the SANDF (Logistics Division) are here to help and put a smile on someone else’s face. Love and gratitude must accompany material things as they do not last forever: this is not only 67 minutes, we must also maintain the relationship and members will come quarterly to help.”

Lt Gen Mbatha added: “The families hide the elderly and people with disabilities from the world, which is wrong. When you open the door do not close it, but keep it open for someone else to enter also and let us make the world a better place to live in.”

The owner of Rhirhandzo, Ms Naomi Maluleke, could not keep back the tears when she thanked everybody who supported her project. Ms Maluleke said: “I am very happy and excited; it is the second time we have the SANDF in our presence to celebrate this important day with us. I feel chosen from among so many to serve the people and make a difference. I thank God for sending the SANDF to help us, and their love must not stop.”

The SAPS from Human Resource Division in Pretoria Headquarters also came to the celebration to donate toiletries, nappies, towels, etc. Col Dineo Raphahlela from the SAPS said: “We will continue with the work we are doing and adopt Rhirhandzo”. North West Star Bus Company donated 27 blankets, two stoves and linen. Ms Gloria Bokaba, Project Coordinator in Mabopane, said: “These are our commuters and we are gathered here to show that we also care, and this is our way of giving back.”

Councillor Issac Raseroke from Madibeng Municipality, Brits Ward 36, blessed the event with his presence and thanked everyone for contributing to the celebration of Mandela Day.

Rhirhandzo, meaning love in Tsonga, was founded in 2007 by Ms Naomi Maluleke who noticed the common problem of Klipgat village and other townships in the area were neglecting their senior citizens and leaving them with no proper care.

Ms Maluleke took it upon herself through a door-to-door campaign to spread the message about her new project to take care of the elderly. She started looking after one woman with disabilities and one granny, with her helper. She was working the day shift while the other helper worked the night shift. Rome was not built in a day, and so too the home grew slowly at first, later by leaps and bounds. Faith, prayer and hard work paid off in 2008 when they started caring for 18 people. She employed two more workers to assist her and, with no donations of any kind, they continued with the campaign.

God answered their prayers in 2009 when they got assistance from Shoprite, in 2012 from Woolworths, Pick n Pay and Tama Milling Company. The success of the old-age home attracted more people to join and commit to help, such as local doctors, businesses in the area and churches.
Defence Corporate Communication plants a tree for Madiba

By Ms Thuli Ntuli, Intern at SA Soldier
Photos: Ms Nozipho Zondo

Former President Nelson Mandela spent 67 years making the world a better place. On his birthday, 18 July, everyone is encouraged to give 67 Minutes of their time to serve humanity in order to fast-track a culture of peace throughout the world.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) did not forget to play its part to realise the vision of its former Commander-in-Chief. Members from Defence Corporate Communication (DCC) spent their 67 Minutes at Klein Wikings Kleuterskool (pre-primary school) in Valhalla.

At the gate the members of DCC were welcomed by children aged 3 to 5 with their best military salute. The children were lined up in two rows facing the entrance; they then presented the soldiers with a stand at ease and salute.

Ms Blanche Boonzaaier, the owner of Klein Wikings Kleuterskool, was surprised when she noticed a large number of SANDF members: “I did not expect so many people; I thought only three SANDF members were coming. This is great!”

Among the DCC members were Pte Monica Thipe from Human Resources, Lt Col Frans Pale, the specialist writer, Sgt Bethuel Ntholeng, a staff support assistant, and others all led by Capt (SAN) Prince Tshabalala, the SSO Media Liaison.

DCC offered their services to the children based on what they knew best, namely their knowledge of books. Capt (SAN) Tshabalala presented a selection of books and, in a great attempt at Afrikaans, he read the children a book about a rabbit hero. In return for his Afrikaans effort the children sang a Sesotho song: “Bana ba sekolo”, which means schoolchildren come to school.

After reading to the children the DCC members, together with the children, planted a yellow-wood tree. With a spade in hand ready to fill in the hole, Capt (SAN) Tshabalala asked the children: “What do we call this tree?” The children were only too happy to name it “Mandela tree” before also helping to fill the hole. At the end of the 67 minutes the members of DCC showered the children with treats and the school gave the Directorate a gift to take along.
Training Command brings joy to frail patients at Nazareth House on Mandela Day

By Lt Col Gerda Tredoux, SO1 Support Training Command

The members of Training Command showed their baking skills, Biblical knowledge and compassion for frail patients when they baked an assortment of muffins and selected appropriate Biblical verses of encouragement for frail patients at Nazareth House in Waterkloof Ridge on Mandela Day.

The excellent, professional staff present, namely Sisters Sylvia Ndimande, Catherine Khoza, Precious Magagula, Zanele Msibi and Dorothy Ranato, welcomed the members of Training Command with open arms. The appreciation, surprise and joy displayed by the frail patients of Nazareth House were overwhelming.

It was with awe that the members of Training Command saw what an impact a short visit and a few kind words, a muffin and a Bible verse, made on the frail patients. Many of them do not see their families often and depend on the wonderful staff members at the frail-care unit of Nazareth House for care and a friendly word. The compassion with which these professional staff members treat their fragile patients is obvious.

The neatness and order of this unit set an excellent example for other institutions for the frail.

Some of the frail patients are bedridden, though all patients need medical care and support, but the need for contact with their families and loved ones or outside visitors is heartbreaking.

For a few moments the members of Training Command could fulfil this need.

More than a few members of Training Command left Nazareth House on Mandela Day with a tear in the eye and a new understanding of the loneliness and pain of the frail and elderly, often abandoned by their loved ones.
Pretoria West Hospital receives SA Army messengers of hope

By Lt Col Tsumbedzo Ishmael Nelushi, SO1 Communication
SA Army Training Formation
Photo: S Sgt Mphiriseni Ephraim Libago

The SA Army Training Formation and Chief Directorate Army Force Preparation in partnership with Pretoria West Hospital celebrated International Mandela Day.

The partnership joined hands to provide much needed humanitarian aid and assistance as part of the 67 minutes campaign at the Pretoria West Hospital on the birthday of the former Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), the late Mr Nelson Mandela.

The aim of Mandela Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help make South Africa and the world a better place for all and to build a global movement for good.

The military and hospital staff worked together in support of this year’s theme: “Clean South Africa”, as alluded to by President Jacob Zuma during his State of the Nation Address.

This event contributed to the ethical framework of “service to one’s fellow man”.

The event commenced with a briefing on the history and work of the hospital by the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Dr Mpho Mosone.

After the briefing the SO1 Communication SA Army Training Formation, Lt Col Tsumbedzo Ishmael Nelushi, presented 50 bags with stationery intended for the Atteridgeville Orphanage adopted by the Heart Beat Foundation of Pretoria West Hospital.

This was followed by a well-planned tour of the hospital, which included visiting different wards and interacting with the patients and cleaning selected areas inside and outside the hospital.

Military Police officials doing their 67 Minutes

Article and photo by Maj Sam Bapela, SO2 Corporate Communication Military Police Division

As the world marked what would have been Nelson Mandela’s 96th birthday, members of Military Police (MP) Division HQ left the comfort of their offices to render their 67 minutes to serve those in need. They visited the Tshwaraganang Orphanage in Sekampaneng, Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria. The orphanage was adopted by the MP Division HQ on the initiative of the late Provost Marshal General, Brig Gen Reginald Rabotapi, in 2009.

This year Brig Gen Tsepo Buhali, the Provost Marshal General, gave his blessing to the staff of the MP Division HQ to visit the orphanage. The members bathed the children, washed their clothes, washed the dishes, cleaned the windows and worked in the centre’s garden and watered it. Clothes and groceries were donated to the centre by the MP Division members, and an undisclosed amount of money was also donated by Northern Military Police Region staff members to the centre.

The Headquarters members contributed to the purchase of cleaning equipment (mops, brooms, gloves, cloths, floor polish, soap and other materials) to the value of more than R2 000, which was really a good gesture by the MP Division members. The members also interacted with the children. Capt (SAN) Alpheus Maphoto, SSO Provost Services, encouraged the members to do this as often as possible, because the children also need parental love. The Deputy Provost Marshal General, Col Justice Macanda, echoed his sentiments.

Brig Gen Buhali said: “A good heart, with a clear mind, is a formidable combination; go there with your good hearts and clear minds to render your part on this day.” We went there equipped in this way and we were all fulfilled at the end of the day, even though one might have felt that it was not enough.

Lending a hand to one person makes a huge difference in their lives; we are created in the image of God, which makes us all the same. Let us not only talk UBUNTU but live it as well, as the world icon himself, Mr Nelson Mandela, said: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead”. Keep up the good work, Military Police.
Celebrating Mandela Day

Chief Directorate Human Resource Management advocating Tata’s legacy

In heeding the call to contribute 67 Minutes for Mandela Day, the members of Chief Directorate Human Resource Management (CD HRM) visited Kwanele Orphanage Home in Soshanguve.

The first democratically elected President of South Africa and the first Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Mr Nelson Mandela, was a staunch advocate of children’s rights and it was befitting that the Directorate spent 67 minutes giving a helping hand to the children of Kwanele Orphanage.

Kwanele Orphanage is home to 30 orphans and destitute children between the ages of 9 months and 13 years. To alleviate poverty in the area the orphanage has also extended a helping hand to other children in the Soshanguve (Extension 5) area by providing meals during the day whenever they have sufficient food stocks. The orphanage also depends on donors for their everyday needs and on women in the area who volunteer their services.

When Chief Director Human Resources Management, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, made a plea to members of the CD HRM to support efforts to help the orphanage, the response was overwhelming. Members were requested to donate or buy clothes, toys, curtains, non-perishable foods or money to purchase necessities that were identified by the mother of the orphanage, Ms Portia Ngoma. Members heeded the call.

When members of CD HR M arrived at Kwanele Orphanage on Mandela Day there was excitement. They received a warm welcome from the mother of the orphanage, staff members, children and the general public in the area.

Members of CD HR M got straight down to the business of the day by painting the inside of the orphanage, replacing the old curtains with new ones, working in the garden and cleaning the premises.

They also prepared lunch for the children. One could see the excitement of CD HR M members as they were working and it was clear that they were doing it from the bottom of their hearts.

At the end of the day R Adm (JG) Gladys Mbulaheni, Director Human Resources Maintenance, handed over all the donations collected from the members of her Directorate. Ms Ngoma expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the members and the SANDF at large for the positive contribution they were making in the lives of others.

The members made it clear that it was indeed a great pleasure and experience to be part of that wonderful day and to witness the impact that one could make in the lives of the less privileged. One of the members said they were encouraged by Mr Nelson Mandela who once said: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead”.

ABOVE: Members of Chief Directorate Human Resource Management working in the garden at Kwanele Orphanage Home in Soshanguve.
Celebrating Mandela Day

Soldiers play with children with disabilities for 67 Minutes

Children love to play. This is something adults sometimes forget, especially where children with disabilities are concerned. Members of the SANDF Technical Service Unit did not forget that and dedicated their 67 Minutes to play with the children of the Jacobs’s Well Ministries Centre for children with disabilities in Centurion.

Chaplain Brenda Siqaza, the Chaplain of the Technical Service Unit, organised the visit. With her she brought a big team of over 150 soldiers.

For some of the children talking, walking and remembering is about as hard as solving a maths problem. It took great effort to get it right, but they cared enough to try and impress the soldiers. The children drew themselves into a circle; some tugged the soldiers to get them also to form the ring. They sang and cheered each other after every successful dance move that they did. The children grew so robust looking at them; one could forget that they even had any disabilities except for the ones who had to be carried. “It is exciting, I am touched,” said Cpl Lerato Moloisane, a personnel clerk at Technical Service Unit who played along.

SANDF members got the children to sing and dance for what seemed to be like hours. They later handed out gifts which included blankets, writing boards and stationery for the school-going children and nappies for the younger ones.

The members brought more than gifts; they also brought their expertise. They fixed what needed repairing at the centre. S Sgt Louis Makhubela and WO2 Teboho Ma-Africa, who work as refrigeration mechanics, fixed the centre’s fridge. While S Sgt Christiaan Booysen from small arms and WO2 Philippus Roos from auto electrical managed to fix the geyser. They also constructed a wheelchair ramp to allow the children on wheelchairs to move easily to and from their classes. The day ended with a big meal prepared by some of the SANDF members.

The Jacobs’s Well Ministries Centre for children with disabilities is a non-government organisation (NGO) that started five years back. It facilitates care and education for poor children and those with special needs. Mr Pierre du Toit, the founder of the centre, said: “We are busy registering the centre with the Department of Basic Education. We have 43 children with disabilities who are cared for by six care workers.” He added that the organisation was a safe haven for abused children. They also offered qualified legal and social care for the children.

“The children are usually isolated, so having this many people come visit is a blessing from God,” said Mr Du Toit, who is also a preacher at the centre. His wife, Ms Anke du Toit, an art teacher by profession and a potter helped break the ice between the SANDF members and the children. Ms Du Toit got the soldiers and children to mould clay into birds. The pottery amused the soldiers and children due to the sloppy art work.

2Lt Debra Moothair, a planning officer at Technical Service Unit, said: “I enjoyed playing with the children. I was touched by this whole experience. I am more than willing to do this again in future.”
Celebrating Mandela Day

Celebrating a day of humanitarian action at Kiddy College

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo: Mr Themba Mntyali

On Mandela Day members of Defence Foreign Relations with the SANDF Spouses Forum and spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps joined the global call to action to do good and pledged 67 minutes of their time towards a good cause by taking part in a charitable initiative by donating toys, stationery, clothing and non-perishable products to children at Kiddy College in Tek Base in Pretoria.

Mandela Day is a global call to action that celebrates and commemorates our late former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, and provides an opportunity for all to emulate his role of humanitarian action and goodwill.

The children were cheered by the goodwill and generosity of their visitors. The late Mr Nelson Mandela cherished the “little ones” and

Ms Sobia Kamran, wife of Brig Gen Ali Kamran, the Defence Adviser Pakistan, on behalf of the spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps, said that it was a privilege for them to join hands with the SANDF Spouses Forum and Defence Foreign Relations to reach out to the children to offer whatever assistance they could.

Ms Charlotte Shoke, the Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum, encouraged members to be change makers within communities and collectively join hands to serve the less fortunate. She urged them to promote the well-being of mankind and make every day a Mandela Day.

One of the children, Ndalamo Dinala (4), expressed her joy and said: “I am thankful for the gifts we received”.

Warrant Officers’ spouses visit the elderly on Mandela Day

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo: Sgt Elias Mahuma

It has been some months since one of the most loved statesman, the late former President Nelson Mandela, passed on. However, his compassionate and caring spirit seems to have rubbed off on many South Africans. The Warrant Officers Council Spouses Forum offered their helping hand to the Soweto Home for the Aged during their 67 minutes for Mandela Day. The Warrant Officers Council Forum is an approved organisation that operates under the chairmanship of Ms Julia Kgaladi, the spouse to the Master Chief Warrant Officer of the SANDF, MCWO Mothusi Kgaladi. Its main purpose is to care for the families of soldiers who died on deployment and to reach out to the communities. Ms Kgaladi indicated that their visit and their Mandela Day contributions were meant to bring joy and hope to the residents of the home. She said: “We are here to offer our helping hands for the 67 minutes for Mandela Day.” Ms Suzan Mothibe, Centre Manager of the Soweto Home for the Aged, mentioned that after it became apparent that senior citizens were generally neglected by the communities where they lived, it was realised that there was a need to have a home where these elderly people could be taken care of, so in 1988 the Soweto Home for the Aged was established. She confirmed: “The home accommodates approximately 122 elderly people from the age of 60 years.” Ms Mothibe said that since her appointment at the centre in 2010 she had witnessed and appreciated how members of the SANDF from different units had come to offer their services. She said: “People from the SANDF always give their support whenever they can. They always come to do a lot of community service by gardening, cleaning, painting and bringing donations.” She added: “Their efforts mean a lot because the facility is big. They are a real help in terms of cleaning. To us, it shows that they care for the elderly.” Ms Kgaladi thanked Fruit Lover’s Market in Montana and the Little Lab Kids (Ceres) and other sponsors for assisting the Warrant Officers Council Spouses Forum in making their Mandela Day such a success. Ms Kgaladi said they were delighted to have left a smile on the faces of the elderly people.
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Celebrating Mandela Day

The SA Army Support Formation HQ honours Madiba

Article and photo by S Sgt Thabisa Macana-Shologu, Corporate Communication Clerk SA Army Support Formation

International Mandela Day 2014 was no ordinary day; it was not just the birthday of the icon, well known throughout the world; or the birthday of the former President of South Africa. It also marked the first Mandela Day in honour of the late Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, affectionately known as Madiba.

The SA Army Support Formation joined in celebrating the day. They visited the Daniel Comboni Day and Night Care Centre, which takes care of orphaned and abandoned children from the ages of three months to eighteen years, east of Mamelodi in Pretoria.

The excitement of this day started when the soldiers entered through the gates of the Daniel Comboni Day and Night Care Centre. We were welcomed by birthday messages that the children themselves had written to their special grandfather - Madiba. We went to the sports ground to demonstrate Army drills, instructed by Cpl Madumetja Matjila. You could see the excitement in the eyes of the children as they clapped.

Welcoming the members, Mr Joseph Masiteng, the Chairperson of the Centre, said: “Keep on doing the good that you are doing; keep on protecting us.” This reminded us of the respect and trust that the citizens of this country have bestowed on us: it was indeed a proud moment.

Ms Dimakatso Vezi, the owner of the Centre, told us about the Day Care Centre, her miracles, and thanked us for thinking of them on this day and making uTata (as he was known) proud. She shared a story about the miracle baby, Anele, who was born with leukemia, and is now healed owing to a saint who came forward and offered her his bone marrow. After the transplant someone else came in and offered her medical aid to help with the medication and treatment of the child, and the child was totally healed. That was only one of the many stories that kept us hooked and hungry for more. Our emotions were stirred by stories that the children were telling us and while we were all teary she got everybody laughing by telling us that Anele takes everybody’s headaddresses, wear them and when asked why, she tells them it is to imitate her “daddy”.

The HQ Unit Commander, Lt Col Mahlomola Motsitsi, who was standing in for the General Officer Commanding Army Support Formation, Maj Gen Stephen Marumo, conveyed the message that was the theme of this day: “Make every day count, make every day a Mandela Day”. The emphasis was not on the 18th of July, but that every day we should give a little time to those who need it.

CO Nomthandazo Ramncwana recited a poem that she wrote about Mandela Day and reminded us that Madiba loved education; he believed that the only way to fight poverty was through education. In her poem she allowed us to take a walk down memory lane by painting different pictures in our minds of the whole 20 years that our democracy had journeyed through, till this day, which not only sparked emotions but also added a bitter-sweet moment.

Lt Col Motsitsi kept us on our feet when he stood up for a song. Thereafter, entertainment was the order of the day. He assured us that this was not the last time that this family would see us, and emphasised the continued assistance of Army Support Formation through developing programmes that would help the children at the centre. Lt Col Motsitsi said: “We are here to assist; we shall carry the burden when you cannot take it further.” He pleaded with the parents to buy toys that would benefit their children, toys to educate and help build educated and responsible South African citizens.

We thank those who came and donated their time, money and clothes, and would like to make special mention of NEDBANK for donating cash boxes, and SASEGO TRADING for donating polar fleece blankets.

Mr Nelson Mandela once said: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived, it is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we have lived. Indeed, Tata must be proud that his efforts did not go to waste, that South Africans will always keep his legacy and memory alive through what he loved the most - being a humanitarian.

Long live the spirit of Madiba!"

ABOVE: Sgt Abram Nel with children at the Daniel Comboni Day and Night Care Centre.
“Medics” reaching out to the community

By Lt Col Virginia Vardhan, Military Health Manager AMHU KZN
Photos: S Sgt Menzi Cele

As part of the “67 Minutes for Mandela Day” Officer Commanding Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal (AMHU KZN), Col Trevor Pillay, and his staff undertook a successful community outreach programme in the community of Malukazi, just outside Isipingo, south of Durban.

There was an overwhelmingly good response to the unit programme. Approximately 700 community members attended. The Malukazi community is lacking in basic services. It experiences much poverty and there is limited access to water, which is provided at communal taps. The “pit” system is still being used and sanitation, including general hygiene standards, is lacking. There appears to be some intervention by the local municipality towards implementing improvement projects in the community, eg providing mobile clinics. Prior to the programme, the AMHU KZN planning committee consulted with various institutions, such as the Child Welfare Durban and District, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Station Commander at the local SA Police Service (Isipingo branch) and leaders in the community with regard to entry into the community to do their 67 minutes for Madiba.

On Mandela Day health education talks were given by our Health Care Practitioners, and health posters and educational pamphlets were handed out. The health education talks focused on a range of health issues, such as a healthy diet, oral health, as well as child protection.

The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) members gave a drill display which was very well received by the community members that attended the programme. These young men and women in uniform gave the youth in the community a visual display of their military drill skills.

This elicited much excitement enquiry and discussions from the youth in the community, some of whom wanted to join the SA National Defence Force.

Members of the SA Army Band also provided a musical display that gave hope to aspiring young musicians in the community that they too might be able to pursue their passion for music by choosing a career in the SA National Defence Force.

KwaZulu-Natal Signal Unit provided a generator and sound system. Food for Life, an NGO, provided meals for community members attending the programme. A huge birthday cake in honour of the late Mr Nelson Mandela was cut by the Officer Commanding and the elderly of the community which was enjoyed by all. 

ABOVE: Col Trevor Pillay, Officer Commanding Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal, and senior citizens of Malukazi cut the birthday cake in celebration of former President Nelson Mandela’s birthday.

ABOVE: Dr Ishmail Solwa doing oral screening for one of the children.

ABOVE: “Medics” reaching out to the community.
The idea behind Mandela Day is that each individual realises the power to transform the world and his or her ability to make an impact on it. Every small contribution adds ultimately towards making a large impact.

After establishing the needs of the residents of Huis Silversig, an old age home in Pretoria, the members of Directorate Information Warfare from the Command and Management Information Systems (CMIS) Division contributed funds to purchase some toiletries and biscuits. Other items such as books and magazines for the library of Huis Silversig and material for crafts were also collected for the home.

On Mandela Day the members visited Huis Silversig and handed over the items donated and spent their 67 minutes with the residents. The latter enjoyed and appreciated the interaction, which was evident from their reluctance to see us go.

Our abo gogo and abo mkhulu (grandmother and grandfathers) ask but a little of our time to be spent with them, to drink some tea and have a few biscuits. We were privileged to spend some time with these special people and share in their legacy of stories that they will one day leave behind.

What was initially an outreach to these frail human beings soon became much more rewarding for the members of Directorate Information Warfare themselves. May we never forget our abo gogo and abo mkhulu – they play such a big role in who we are, where we are and what we are today.

Directorate Information Warfare would like to thank the personnel of Huis Silversig who allowed us this opportunity to reach out to their residents. We acknowledge the vital role they play in caring for these special people and commend them for their work.
Celebrating Mandela Day

Doing 67 Minutes of charitable work on Mandela Day

There were 67 members of the Human Resources Divisional Staff members and the Chief Human Resources Office who celebrated Mandela Day by offering a helping hand to the Children on the Move Centre at Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria.

The Child on the Move Centre is a non-profit organisation that provides an invaluable and essential service for orphans, vulnerable children and abused children and children who have dropped out of school. The centre has 230 children, but the Department of Social Development provides for 130 children. Not only does the centre provide the children with meals and assist with their school work, but offers home visits, psycho-social and spiritual support.

The members volunteered to contribute financially as individuals to change the lives of these less fortunate children. They bought food parcels, curtains, carpets and paint among others. They painted the interior of both the library and the kitchen. Burglar bars, door and window frames were painted as well. They dusted and repacked the books.

The Manager of the centre, Ms Petunia Maile, said that their aspiration was to turn the centre into a children and youth care centre with branches in other townships, but funding was a big challenge in speedily realising this dream.

Ms Maile said: “Most of the children that we are dealing with are orphans, so we are encouraging members of the communities to come forward and adopt or assist them with school uniforms.” She further indicated that the centre needed computers, stationery and furniture and to have the vegetable garden fenced.

The founder of the centre, Dr (Rev) Dan Lephoko, said: “I am very grateful for the love you have shown these children. This centre also helps people who are living with HIV and AIDS and abused women. Indeed you have made a difference to their lives. I wish as a nation we could make every day a Mandela Day.”

After the painting and cleaning Dr (Rev) Lephoko said that he was impressed with the new appearance of the library and kitchen.
Celebrating Mandela Day

Soldiers improving the living conditions of children at Clau-Clau

Article and photos by Lt Col David Baloyi, Regional Works Unit Mpumalanga Facility Maintenance Manager

Siyathuthuka Home Based Care Centre, an orphanage at Clau-Clau in the Mpumalanga Province, was identified by the unit to carry out certain minor maintenance tasks and in this way render a helping hand to develop the centre to cater for the needs of the children in its care.

During the planning process the unit requested sponsorship from suppliers in and Nelspruit to donate building material, office furniture and other essential items. The Second-in-Command of the unit, Lt Col Ditaba Sekade, was responsible for the arrangements with regard to suppliers’ donations.

The unit members were each asked to donate R50-00 for the purchase of material that would not be covered by the sponsors. It was also agreed that unit members should donate clothes to the orphanage as an act of kindness in honour of Mandela Day.

The members of Regional Works Unit Mpumalanga plastered and painted the main building, fitted a tap in the kitchen, repaired the garden fence, cleaned the surroundings and painted the water tank stand.

Suppliers that donated building material and stationery for the event included MICA Nelspruit (15 bags of cement), My Office (tables and chairs), Mogwaba Build It (80 litres of paint), Waltons (stationery) and Best Buys Building Material (four bags of cement and two doors).

Soldiers spread UBUNTU in a maternity ward

By Lt Knowledge Chililo, SO3 Logistic Inspector

“Mandela Day is a global call to action that celebrates the idea that each individual has the power to transform the world and the ability to make an impact” Anonymous. Any action promoting this ideal, no matter how big or small, contributes towards Mandela Day campaign objectives such as education and literature, shelter, food security and participating through volunteerism.

The Department of Defence Headquarters (DOD HQ) Unit Officers Forum took the opportunity to spread UBUNTU, selflessness and love by promoting health and prosperity at the Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria for Mandela Day.

Their focus was specifically on the maternity ward in which there were 35 mothers suffering from various post-natal complications and whose newborn babies were not in good health and therefore needed direct and strict medical supervision.

Some of these women came from other provinces and had been there for several months because they lacked the necessary support of their families, most of whose family members lived from hand to mouth.

Col Mveleli Christopher Ngcama, the Officer Commanding of DOD HQ Unit, granted members the authority to reach out and continue the legacy of Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. The Officers Forum under the leadership of Lt Knowledge Chililo, SO3 Logistic Inspector and Vice-Chairperson of the Officers Forum at DOD HQ Unit, agreed to contribute funds. The Forum then bought essential items and presented gift hampers to each one of the patients in the maternity ward.

This project was made possible with the assistance of Ms Lovey Mogapi, Communication Manager at Steve Biko Academic Hospital, and Ms Seipato Lydia Molefi-Bodikologa, the SO2 Promotions at Defence Corporate Communication, who also contributed promotional items from the SA National Defence Force.
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The Defence Review 2014 clearly states that the development of defence civilians remains critical to the functionality of the Defence organisation and attention should be given to the development of a competent civilian component at all levels of Defence. Defence civilians must attend education, training and development programmes to acquire the required competencies and outcomes in order to comply with the required competencies for their specific post and post level.

The Department of Defence (DOD) offers its personnel (both uniformed members and defence civilians) learning opportunities to improve their competence to ensure a return on investment both to the benefit of the organisation and the individual. The DOD recognises that it requires skilled and trained personnel, especially in areas where the necessary skills are lacking. In support of this endeavour, Chief Directorate Human Resource Development (CD HRD) Defence Civilian Education Training and Development (Def Civ ETD) coordinated four Integrated Management Development Programmes for the DOD through the National School of Government.

The Integrated Management Development Programmes (IMDPs) were presented in blocks over the period May to August 2014 with the goal of contributing qualified competent defence civilians in support of effective defence. Learners were selected from a pool of 268 applications. Seventy-nine employees were privileged to attend.

The efforts made by all role-players, namely the National School of Government, ETD coordinators and the facilitators are highly appreciated, and are the building blocks of a successful organisation.

The aim of the programme that focuses on levels 3 to 5 – the Foundation Management Development Programme - is to cover basic principles of management with the objective of introducing sound management principles to first line supervisors in order to “grow” good managers for the future.

The Emerging Management Development Programme focuses on levels 6 to 8. This programme aims at assisting achievement oriented junior managers to gain skills that will empower them to spread their wings in the management arena.

The Advanced Management Development Programme (levels 9 to 12) endeavours to provide middle managers with cutting-edge competencies and to prepare them for future challenges in the Senior Management Service.

These programmes covered the following modules:

- Strategic Management
- Knowledge Management
- Policy Management and Public Accountability
- Public Finance Management
- Project Management
- People Performance Management
- Financial Management
- People Management
- Self-management
- Management Functions
- Enhancing Service Delivery
- Results Through Leadership
The learners participated in individual and group assignments to integrate the knowledge gained in a presentation. This assessment formed part of the programme assessment.

On completion of the programmes CD HRD (Def Civ ETD) received positive feedback from the Services and the Divisions. Learners displayed great enthusiasm for the programmes. They communicated their expectations at the onset of the programmes and indicated a need to learn more on management, leadership skills and people management.

Learners’ responses to the programmes

The following are quotes from learners’ feedback after completion of the programmes:

Ms Emma Matsemela, Admin Clerk at DOD HQ Unit, said: “The Foundation Management Development Programme opened one’s mind and thinking abilities, and also ensured introspection and the ability to evaluate one’s department and directorate against the key performance area of effective service delivery and how management plans could be implemented.”

Ms Marika Barnardt, Senior Operator at the SA Military Health Service, said: “With this information we will be able to lead others, understand and support our teams and hopefully motivate and mentor those in our lives.”

Mr Malibongwe Zolani, Registry Clerk at the SA Army, said: “The programme was well organised and I am very grateful and delighted to have had this opportunity to empower myself. I learnt a lot from this course about leadership skills, how to behave, and how to conduct myself at the workplace.”

Mr Padmanathan Maduray, Chief Personnel Clerk at Human Resources Divisional Staff, said that the Emerging Management Development Programme taught him that “Management is not a function of giving out instruction to complete a task; it is a process of interacting with seniors and subordinates to achieve a common goal”.

Mr Thabo Mlangeni, Senior Admin Clerk at the Office of the Secretary for Defence, said: “All DOD employees must attend the Emerging Management Development Programme as a tool to enable us to break communication barriers between colleagues, and to assist in improving service delivery to our clients.”

Lt Cdr Caroline Modiba at Defence Intelligence said: “The Advanced Management Development Programme has personally empowered and equipped me with the necessary competencies that have prepared me for the real-life public service situations and challenges. The programme also reinforced and promoted the working relationship between uniformed members and defence civilians through the sharing of experiences and knowledge.”

Mr Mphosi Rasehloka, Assistant Director Human Resources Directorate Systems Integrity, said: “We have learnt a great deal and the standard of the programme is excellent. This programme changes the thinking of an individual because we turn to hear and relate to other employees from different Services and Divisions. Knowledge is power, and that is what we obtained in the Advanced Management Development Programme.”

ABOVE: Participants in the Emerging Management Development Programme. (Photo: F Sgt Mohlomi Mokala)
Taking control of epilepsy

By Ms Anne Dolinschek, Martina Nicholson Associates Newsdesk

Epilepsy, which is a seizure disorder, is a common neurological condition that affects the nervous system. It has been estimated that around 1% of all South Africans suffer from the condition and that 5% will have a seizure at some point in their lifetime. The fact that the condition is so common means we are likely to encounter someone who is epileptic or having a seizure at some point in our lives, so we should all know something about epilepsy.

Eastern Cape teacher, Mr Peter Curtis, had never had seizures in his life until he was involved in a car accident in which he suffered a head injury one winter’s morning two years ago. After this he suddenly started having seizures every few days. These caused him to collapse and writhe on the ground with his arms and legs jerking uncontrollably.

Mr Curtis’ neurologist, a doctor that specialises in treating the brain, said that Mr Curtis had suffered damage to a part of his brain tissue during the accident. This was causing the seizures, which he likened to electrical short circuits in the brain.

He pointed out that epilepsy is not confined to any race or age group. It has many different causes and anyone could go on to develop the condition at some point in their lives. He said that everyone should keep this in mind before judging those who suffer from epilepsy.

A seizure is a surge of electrical activity in the brain that affects how a person feels or acts for a time. This surge causes a sudden change of behaviour due to a temporary change in the electrical functioning of the brain. This malfunction usually occurs in the outer part of the brain, or cortex.

Seizures can take on many different forms and can affect different people in different ways. Some seizures are mild, are not even noticed by the affected individual and may never be diagnosed by a doctor. However, other people may suffer from epilepsy that is very disabling and has a considerable impact on their lives. They may suffer from severe seizures on a regular basis, making it difficult for them to hold down a job and live a normal life.

Seizures are not in themselves a disease, but are rather a symptom of one of a number of possible different disorders that can affect the brain. In Mr Curtis’ case it was an injury to the head that brought about the condition, but it can also be caused by many other factors. Some other causes and risk factors for epilepsy include:

- Genetic factors – epilepsy may be inherited.
- Infections of the brain such as meningitis and encephalitis.
- Tumours.
- AIDS and AIDS related neurological conditions.
- Developmental neurological disorders such as cerebral palsy.
- Chemical imbalances in the brain caused by conditions such as low blood sugar.
- Withdrawals from alcohol.
- Use of certain street drugs.
- Exposure to toxins, such as lead or carbon monoxide.

Epilepsy is not usually diagnosed after just one seizure, although it can be if a person has a condition that places them at risk of having more. A doctor will first establish whether the seizure may have been caused by known medical conditions such as alcohol withdrawal or very low blood sugar, both of which can cause one-off seizures. The good news is that there are more and more excellent treatments available and it is estimated that approximately 70% of epilepsy will respond to medication.

Epilepsy is treated through the use of a class of medications known as anticonvulsants, which usually control the condition. In some cases treating the underlying medical condition that is causing the seizures may help to control the epilepsy. For example, the successful removal of a brain tumour or control of diabetes may stop an individual from suffering convulsions.

Many epileptics have certain “triggers” that may result in their having a seizure, sometimes for the first time in their lives. Some epileptics learn what triggers their seizures and learn to avoid or treat these. Any individual who suffers from epilepsy should seek to live as healthy a life as possible as this can help to control the condition. The following may help to trigger epileptic seizures in certain individuals:

- Stress.
- Lack of sleep.
- Certain medications.
- Street drugs.
- Alcohol.
- Excessive tobacco consumption.
- Flashing lights (eg strobe lights).

Full blown epileptic or grand mal seizures tend to come on very suddenly and can be quite startling to those who witness them. Many people consequently have no idea how to deal with such a situation. There are also a number of misconceptions about how a seizure patient should be handled. The following are some steps that should be followed when one responds to a person having a seizure:

- Do your best to stay calm.
- Understanding what is taking place should help you to do this.
- Try to prevent injury by ensuring that there is nothing within reach that could harm the person.
- Be sure to keep yourself out of harm's way if the individual is thrashing and writhing around vigorously. There is no need to try and restrain anyone who is having a seizure.
- Call the emergency services.
- Do not put anything in the person's mouth.
- Once the individual's seizure has stopped place him or her in the recovery position. Turn the person's head so any vomit can easily drain from the mouth and make sure breathing is normal.
- Do not give the person water, medication or food until they are fully alert.
- Stay with the person until he or she recovers, which should be within five to 20 minutes. Remember that the great majority of epileptics respond well to treatment, so anyone who is suffering from the condition should be encouraged to visit their doctor.

*Ms Anne Dolinschek is a contributor to SA Soldier."
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Conditions for successful prayer
(1 Samuel 1: 6-7, 10-11 NIV)

By Chaplain Fredolene Manganye, Chaplain at General Support Base Garrison

People very often fall into the trap of believing that God does not answer their prayers. Sometimes our prayers are not answered because we go through the motions, but no longer believe that God will answer. At other times it is because of our motives. Hannah is a woman who can teach us about a successful prayer life.

Don’t give up despite your situation

Hannah was unable to bear children. On top of that her rival, Peninnah, constantly reminded her of that fact. I can imagine how inadequate and worthless this must have made her feel. To live under the same roof with your enemy and be reminded of how useless you are year in and year out. Yet whenever they went to the Temple, she kept on praying.

She cried and she did not have much appetite because of Peninnah, and her torment, but she never gave up praying. Even when you find yourself in the most difficult of situations, do not give up. Keep on praying to the Lord. Understand that there is a reason for every season in your life.

Trust God anyway

When you read the Scripture you will learn that it was God Himself who closed Hannah’s womb to having children. Her condition was brought on by God Himself. What is interesting is that Hannah never even asked God why He caused her such pain in her life. She did not even mention her enemy, nor did she pray against her. All she asked God was to look at her misery and remember her.

Very often our prayer life is disturbed and distorted because we want to show our enemy what God can do; or we question and doubt God’s ability to save us from our situations. Hannah is teaching us to trust God anyway. You might not know why things are happening to you, but God does. Trust Him to make a way where you cannot see a way.

Be sincere

Hannah made a vow to the Lord that if He answered her prayer and gave her a son, she would dedicate him to God for the rest of his life. God searches the hearts of human beings (Jeremiah 17:10) and when He looked at Hannah’s heart, He saw that she was sincere. He knew she was going to do what she vowed to do. Very often we pray to God and make promises, yet God can see whether we are sincere or not. You need to be sincere and not be selfish in your praying. Do not do it to impress people or show off. Let your heart be in the right place.

God answered Hannah’s prayer and gave her a son and he was called Samuel - the same Samuel who anointed Saul as King and who anointed David as King. Hannah’s rival had many children, but we do not even know their names. Hannah had one child and God performed miracles through the life of that son. Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up at the right time and in the right way.
Members united in song

By Pte Phillip Pitso
Photos: Mr Themba Mntyali

The Heidelberg City Hall was the scene of choirs singing their hearts out, defying the notion that soldiers are only seen as militant, hard-core and all about protection. Last month various choirs battled it out in the Gauteng Provincial Choral Competition.

This event followed the ongoing provincial auditions for the upcoming national competition in Durban later this year. The Chairperson of Defence Choirs, S Sgt Themb Mathiwe, confirmed to SA Soldier that they had already performed in the Free State, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Limpopo. This time it was their turn to perform in Gauteng. (The top three of each province would proceed to the national competition.)

The choirs present were the SA Air Force Headquarters Choir (Pretoria), 35 Engineer Formation Choir (Dunnottar), the SA Army Gymnasium Choir (Heidelberg), and two guest choirs: Boksburg SA Correctional Service Choir and Tshwane Metro Police Choir, while the pianist was Mr John Manamela.

As part of the vision to organise the biggest security cluster choral competition the defence choral committee is well on its way to achieving that vision. As a norm, choirs were prescribed certain songs, including one choice of their own and an indigenous song. (The event was also attended by the security cluster and sponsor representatives.)

Choirs took turns on stage to display their art under the watchful eyes of two adjudicators, Mr Themba Madlopha, a school principal and conductor of the internationally acclaimed Cenestra male choir, and Mr Mmusi Morekhure, a professional opera singer. “Today I am overwhelmed with the talent displayed and the songs sang here: we really are a rainbow nation united in diversity,” said Brig Gen Marthie Visser, Director SA Air Force Corporate Communication, as she handed out the trophies to the various winners.

The overall winner of the day was the SA Army Gymnasium Choir from Heidelberg. They also won the Own Choice category. 35 Engineer Formation Choir from Dunnottar walked away with three trophies in the categories: Western, African and Indigenous.

RIGHT: The overall winners, the SA Army Gymnasium Choir, led by Mr Lefa Tsotetsi (Conductor), rendering a song.

ABOVE: The Boksburg SA Correctional Service Choir was one of the guest choirs that performed at the Gauteng Provincial Choral Competition.

LEFT: Mr Lefa Tsotetsi, the Conductor of the SA Army Gymnasium Choir, receiving the overall winning trophy from Brig Gen Marthie Visser, Director SA Air Force Corporate Communication.
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