SA SOLDIER
The official monthly magazine of the SA Department of Defence

From the Editor’s desk
Defending our democratic gains through servant leadership styles
Let us recall the past 20 years

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1995 Civil control over the military
1996 White Paper on Defence

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2014 Armed Forces Day reflects on 20 years of patriotism

SPECIAL CENTRE PULL-OUT
SANDF Rank Insignia

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FRONT COVER: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF DEFENCE IN DEMOCRACY Front cover collage depicting previous front covers of Salut and SA Soldier published over the past 20 years.

For the latest news on defence matters in South Africa, visit our website at: www.dod.mil.za
As the Department of Defence is celebrating 20 years of defence in democracy the editorial staff of SA Soldier specially compiled this 2014 Special Edition - an edition that promises to become a collectable.

The edition is packed with précis of success stories previously published in SA Soldier over the past two decades. See for yourself how far the Department of Defence has come over the past 20 years … it should make you feel proud.

SA Soldier also decided to republish the new rank insignia of the SANDF (pull-out poster) for our readers again (see pages 24 and 25.)

The SA Soldier Team would like to thank our readers for their loyalty over the past 20 years. You will see that over this period the magazine was transformed from Salut to SA Soldier. (A Special Task Team was appointed mid-2000 to align Salut, the then official magazine of the Department of Defence. The outcome was a newly transformed official magazine of the Department of Defence – SA Soldier. The first edition of SA Soldier was published in May 2001.)

May SA Soldier continue to inform, enlighten and entertain you with military matters for many decades to come.

Enjoy going down memory lane …

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

* Translation into isiZulu by Ms Nozipho Zondo, an Intern at SA Soldier, assisted by Lt Col Ronald Maseko, SO1 SA Air Force Media Liaison.
Norman Dixon, on the psychology of military incompetence, defines good leadership as synonymous with inspiring confidence in those who follow and this confidence is born of results. He further states that in military organisations, leaders are usually of a different kind as they are appointed rather than emergent. The needs of the individual soldier play almost no role in deciding the sort of leader he or she gets.

Secondly, the military leader possesses constitutional power of a magnitude which surpasses that of leaders in other human groups. The truth of the matter is that if he cannot motivate his followers by force of character, he can at least push them by force of law. This means our processes of recruitment, selection and training across Services should produce officers with agile minds to execute missions directed by government in all spectra of conflict and they should have substantial reserves of moral courage.

As we celebrate 20 years of democracy in defence, it is important to reflect on our organisation's history in respect of achievements, and identify areas to improve going forward. Cilliers and Reichardt trace the establishment of the new SANDF in 1994, on the basis of the agreement reached through negotiation on South Africa's transition. The multi-party negotiating forum agreed on the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC), whose task was to oversee the transition, following the enactment of the TEC Act in September 1993, which led to a number of sub-councils being established to report to the Sub-Council on Defence.

The brief of the Sub-Council on Defence was to oversee the military transition at the political level. Central to this task was to plan for the integration of all armed formations represented at the negotiations. The ultimate goal was to design a defence force for South Africa which would be effective and legitimate. The details of the integration process were hammered out by the Joint Military Coordinating Committee (JMCC) consisting of representatives from Statutory and Non-Statutory Forces.

The so-called Statutory Forces consisted of those forces that had been established by the government of the time, for example the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the armed forces of the nominally independent homelands of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. The so-called Non-statutory Forces consisted of MK, the military wing of the African National Congress and APLA of the Pan Africanist Congress.

The working of the JMCC comprised a unique joint planning exercise involving previously implacable enemies. Two chairmen were elected in rotation, namely the Chief of the SADF, General Georg Meiring, and the MK Chief of Staff, General Siphiwe Nyanda. For detailed planning, the JMCC established six working groups: one for personnel, intelligence operations, logistics and finance, and another for non-cardinal issues. Each work group was staffed by persons from each of the seven military forces and made use of a facilitator to assist with the discussions.

The integration of the armed forces was hailed as a success as it was indeed drama free, and resulted in a significant number of senior black officers joining the newly established SANDF. Placement boards were instituted to rank NSF members in accordance with their academic qualifications and military experience. The British Military Advisory Team >> on page 6
have self-awareness in respect of
intently to others, to show empathy,
characterised by the ability to listen
challenges. This leadership style is
of the servant leadership paradigm
hand emphasises that the inculcation
Robert K. Greenleaf on the other
for transformation and growth.
states that shared values express the
and units. General Gordon Sullivan
must be regarded as the glue that
people first, teamwork, accountability,
ethics, openness and transparency,
our organisation’s values
ensure that there is a basis for shared
points of the SANDF’s end-state, and
ensure that there is a basis for shared
expectations.
Furthermore our organisation’s values
service rendered. The truth of the
impact, and the accountability of the
outputs but also on results, their
emphasis not only on inputs and
the greatest importance in the Zuma
evaluation mechanisms that is the
matters would serve as a barometer to
defend our democratic gains.
Leaders at all levels should be
cognisant at all times of the fact
people are assets, and like any other
assets they can be developed for
higher return or depleted to yield less
and less.
The bastion of effective human
resource management is justice,
equality, effectiveness and efficiency.
As a result, leaders are expected to
promote unity and treat subordinates
with respect, dignity and fairness
so as to unleash their potential and
boost morale. Therefore, in order to be
successful, we must have a genuine
passion for what we do, a sense of
becoming and never merely being,
accompanied by a sense of urgency
and a zest for learning from what we
do. May the 20 years of reflection on
and celebrations of our democracy
take us to great heights!
Let us recall the past 20 years

By Brig Gen Petro Mari, Director Human Resource Development

Brig Gen Petro Mari said: “I will pass this way but once; please allow me to do the good that I can for never shall I pass this way again.”

This is an era that has been marked by interesting events. Where shall I start: maybe 1994 sounds reasonable. Tight belted we came with vigour, still eager to continue with what we started in 1976. Shall we go down memory lane and reminisce? I know some will go further than others, but for me this is neither the platform nor the time to do so. Therefore I choose to discuss the past 20 years.

My feelings about this 20 year period are ambivalent: on the one hand I believe it has been a good epoch. On the other hand, however, I believe we could have done even better, at least as a collective. Professionally, about the time and space I cannot complain. The integration process which the world thought was going to fail was a remarkable experience. I am very proud, grateful and humbled that I was allowed to contribute to it and be part thereof. In short, I was a member of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) Integration Committee, which at corporate level was part of the SANDF Integration Committee chaired by the late Lt Gen Andrew Masondo, and then by General (Ret) Siphiwe Nyanda. These were the committees that interpreted the Joint Military Coordinating Committee (JMCC) agreements and derived policies on that basis. I also served on the DOD Restructuring Committees that re-engineered the DOD.

It must be said that our country, and in particular the Department of Defence, has a rich history of contributions by mainly unsung heroes. Let us not forget those who fell at their posts in the last 20 years. Let us always remember Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Bangui, and the Kruger National Park. It is important that South Africans, especially the families involved, should never question if this was a cause worth dying for. However, a comforting thought is that every individual knows his or her value within himself or herself and does not depend on songs and praise, especially when they are of a false nature. We should not begrudge the history of the past 20 years as some of us take every opportunity to do, and stand up to be counted.

One of my own passions is the development and empowerment of the youth and I think that through my current post the DOD has allowed me to do exactly that. I also have to thank the training providers that have trained more than 10 000 young people through the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA), and the business world that gave them an opportunity to undergo experiential learning or provided job opportunities.

This has given me immense job satisfaction, more than any promotion could. Looking back I can talk about this legacy that I shall leave for the DOD.

At a personal level things have been quite good; God has been amazing. The woman I was yesterday introduced me to the woman I am today, which makes me more excited to meet the woman I will be tomorrow. I must say I really like the woman I have become. Yesterday I developed and became a remarkable person against all odds. I have seen myself taking life blow by blow, stride by stride. In the past 20 years I have achieved an academic record and I have learned the lesson that no circumstance can determine your outcome; it is how you react to every circumstance that determines the outcome.

In 2004 I got my first degree, in Business Administration and in 2007 an honours degree in a specially designed programme by the then South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) more in the line of Public Administration and in 2009 I obtained a certificate in Defence and Security. Guess what, if all goes well this year with my ten modules next year I shall complete my LLB degree. Sure, I have been very busy, yet have enjoyed every minute of it. By the way, I also lost 25kg in the process and I love the new me.

This article is meant to motivate the men and especially the women in uniform who have in the past 20 years committed their God-given right, their right to life and their all to building this organisation that we love so much. To them I say: keep going, for no one can keep a good man or woman down. Remember, character is not measured by the number of times you were made to knock you down, but by the number of times you have remained standing when an attempt was made to knock you down, but by the number of times you stood up when you were knocked down. In the final analysis your reward will be according to how responsibly and fairly you have used the power and authority entrusted to you. Let history be the judge. 20 years have opened the gates, but only the deserving will enter.

Brig Gen Mari is one of the outstanding women who do not let anything stand in the way of achieving their objectives; and always remember that her position means nothing if she does not raise the status of youth as per government imperative.

*Nkosi sikelel’ izikhathi! I salute South Africa! I salute South Africans! I salute the SANDF!*
Rooivalk making headlines

Making headlines “is certainly no exaggeration where there the Denel/Atlas Aviation Rooivalk and the all composite ACE turboprop trainer are concerned.

The Dubai 93 air show in the United Arab Emirates is where the Rooivalk and the ACE were displayed abroad for the first time, the front page headline of Aviation International News was: “South Africa’s big Rooivalk making a Dubai debut”.

(For more information, read the articles as published in Paratus: March 1994, pages 36-38 and in Salut: April 1997, page 32)

UNITAS MEDAL

The British came to South Africa

The Commander of the British Military Advisory Training Team in South Africa (BMATT SA), Brig Dick Trigger, and a small team of staff officers, arrived in South Africa on 14 May 1994. Brig Trigger headed the British team of 31 members who acted as monitors and as adjudicators when placement or appointments were made in all four Services of the new SANDF. The presence of BMATT in South Africa arose from the integration of various forces into the SANDF.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: May 1994, pages 30-40)

Members of the SANDF were issued with the new Unitas Medal commemorating the first non-racial elections in South Africa’s history (27 April), culminating in the inauguration of Mr Nelson Mandela as the country’s President on 10 May 1994. The medal was awarded to all the members who served within the nation’s armed forces from 27 April to 10 May 1994.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: December 1994, pages 12-13)

ABOVE: The Unitas Medal.
The eagle has landed

The new SA Air Force Headquarters was officially opened on 16 September 1994. During the opening function a statue of an eagle was unveiled, which was presented by the Pilatus Company of Switzerland. This was the company responsible for the production of new training aircraft to be used by the SA Air Force. The eagle in flight symbolises strength and determination, qualities which epitomise the SA Air Force and its new headquarters.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: November 1994, page 42)

Humanitas – military medicine in an international environment

The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) hosted the thirteenth International Advanced Course for Young Medical Officers from 24 September to 11 October 1994, at their training centre in Voortrekkerhoogte.

The Surgeon General of the Federal Armed Forces of the Bundeswehr, and President of the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM), Lt Gen Gunter Desch, officially opened the proceedings at a flag-hosting ceremony on 26 September.

Delegates from more than fifteen countries attended the course, among others, China, Germany, Greece, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany.

In addition to the pure exchange of experience, the worldwide idea of “Humanitas” which links all medical officers regardless of their nationality and which makes it possible that even medical officers from nations at war can work together and communicate with each other, was established.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: November 1994, pages 10-11)
One of the principal factors governing the speed of integration was bridging training. The majority of the ex-Non-Statutory Force members have been trained for irregular warfare, and the agreed strategy for the SANDF calls for conventional training. *(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: June 1995, page 35)*

**Bridging the gap**

At the official launching of the Service Corps on 31 January 1995 at the Dunnottar Military Base, the late Mr Joe Modise, then Minister of Defence, said: “The Service Corps provides an opportunity for the men and women leaving military life to gain vocational and life skills. These skills will enable them to be employment in RDP-related development and maintenance projects”. *(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: March 1995, pages 28-29)*

**Above:** To streamline the integration process it has undergone several changes, specifically administrative.

**Civil control over the military**

The interim Constitution created a new order in South Africa in the form of a constitutional democracy. Civil control over the military is a hallmark of a democracy. To enhance this control, the TEC decided that a DOD be established of which the SANDF will form a component. *(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: June 1995, pages 46-47)*

**Friendship through sport**

Fifty years after the end of World War II and the ratification of the United Nations Charter, the first Military World Games took place from 6 to 15 September 1995 in Rome. The Military World Games are CISM’s contribution to these commemoration and proof of the fact that, through its motto “Friendship through sport”, CISM is sending a message of peace around the world. *(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: November 1995, page 36)*

**Above:** Members of participating countries gather at the Studio Deu Marni before entering the Olympic Stadium in Rome for the opening ceremony of the first Military World Games.
When horror is real

On 21 May 1996 the worst marine disaster in Tanzanian history occurred when a ferry (MV Bukoba) sank approximately eight nautical miles northwest of Mwanza, a town on the southern shores of Lake Victoria, claiming 500 lives.

According to information at the time, the ship sank due to a combination of factors, e.g. overloading and an unbalanced cargo. The ship initially capsized, but only sank after local rescue attempts resulted in some of the ballast tanks being punched.

In the spirit of the Inter-State Music - a common thread that brings people together and resounds through the hearts of mankind. The 46th Edinburgh Military Tattoo was held at the Edinburg Castle in London on 4 August 1995. The Massed Pipes and Drums marched proudly across the drawbridge of the Castle and onto the Esplanade to the strains of “The Inverness Gathering”.

None marched so proudly as the members of the Witwatersrand Rifles Pipe Band, appearing at the Tattoo for the very first time. It also signalled the first time in history of the Tattoo that a South African band took part in the event.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: January 1996, pages 34-35)

White Paper on Defence

On 8 May 1996 a White Paper on National Defence for the RSA was tabled in Parliament by the late Mr Joe Modise, the then Minister of Defence. It was approved by Parliament on 14 May 1996 and reflected the Government’s overall policy on defence.

The aim of the White Paper was the formulation of a new defence policy and the transformation of the Department of Defence (DOD). It is also a historic document, as for the first time in South Africa’s history defence policy has been shaped by substantial inputs from Parliament, members of the public, non-governmental organisations and the DOD.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: July 1996, pages 17-19)

SANDF goes gold

Tangible savings – R467 million, intangible savings – R1,6 million, and a cost avoidance of R165 million to R315 million.

The SANDF won a gold award in the National Productivity Institute’s (NPI) Productivity Competition. The awards were presented on 2 September 1996 at a formal dinner at the Carlton Hotel in Johannesburg.

The NPI Productivity Competition is an annual event which gives national recognition to the best productive use of resources in the country. This is a means of encourage organisations to operate more productively in order to ensure higher and sustainable economic growth” for South Africa and therefore more job opportunities and a higher standard of living for all its citizens.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: October 1996, pages 20-21)
Major changes for the military

The former Minister of Defence, the late Mr Joe Modise, announced a major reorganisation and restructuring of the Department of Defence at its top administrative levels in Parliament on 11 February 1997.

It had been decide, inter alia, that in order to give the civilian Secretary for Defence the necessary authority and responsibility he needed to be both the Head of the Department and the Accounting Officer.

The Chief of the SANDF will henceforth be the commander of the military force. The Chief of the SANDF and the Secretary for Defence will thus function at the same hierarchical level, but with separate responsibilities.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: April 1997, page 15)

Our country has come under increasing pressure since the 1994 elections to play a leading role in peacekeeping missions in sub-Saharan trouble spots.

With this in mind, it can indeed be said that history was in the making in April 1997 when the SANDF, for the first time ever, participated in a fully-fledged, multinational peacekeeping exercise. Exercise BLUE HUNGWE (BLUE EAGLE) took place at the Nyanga Training Area in neighbouring Zimbabwe from 1 to 20 April 1997.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: May 1997, pages 40-41)

Human centrifuge goes full throttle

After three years of partial disuse, the human centrifuge at the SA Medical Service’s Institute for Aviation Medicine was reopened in Centurion in June 1997.

The only human centrifuge in sub-Saharan Africa is now operating at full throttle and is used by instructors of the SA Air Force and the SA Medical Service.

The centrifuge is a rotating mechanical apparatus in which humans can be exposed to varying degrees or tempos of acceleration, under controlled conditions, to simulate and study the effects as experienced by a pilot during a flight.

An increase in G-forces during a flight can result in unconsciousness and other disorders in a pilot, especially in experienced ones.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: September 1997, pages 42-43)

Above: It is regarded as the only real method of adaptation or habituation against motion sickness in aircrews.
Air power is versatile

Air power is and will remain a vital component of a balanced military force both in defence and in security building. The SA Air Force presented aviation wings to all newly qualified aviation personnel throughout the SA Air Force at the Central Flying School in Langebaanweg on 29 January 1997. The pupil pilots were the first group to train and qualify on the new Pilatus PC7 MKII Astra, which replaced the Harvard training aircraft. The last flight of a Puma helicopter in the service of the SA Air Force was at 17 Squadron at Swartkop Air Force Base on 15 July 1997. The Puma helicopters were sold and replaced by Oryx helicopters. (For more information please read the article as published in Salut: February 1998, pages 32-33)

Introducing new camouflage

Soldier 2000 - an innovative personal dress and equipment system for the SA Army was unveiled at a press conference held at the SA Army College in August 1996. The new camouflage uniform enables the soldier to function optimally under all climatic and geographical environments in Southern Africa. (For more information, read the article as published in Salut: October 1996, pages 32-34 and March 1998, page 64)

SANDF airlifts hundreds of trapped Tanzanian soldiers to safety

Answering a call for assistance in August 1998, the SANDF rendered sterling and potentially life-saving assistance to 616 Tanzanian instructors who were trapped in Kamina, a town in the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Having no means to evacuate the soldiers themselves, Tanzania requested the SANDF to airlift them to safety in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Tanzanian soldiers had already spent some thirteen months in the DRC, training soldiers. (For more information, read the article as published in Salut: October 1998, pages 20-21)

ABOVE: The SANDF advance team and their counterparts from Tanzania and the DRC. Back row, fltr: Maj Bruce McIvor, Interpreter and Movements Officer, Col “Doibie” Coetze, SA Army representative, the DRC Brigade Commander at Kamina, Col Minisi, Commander Tanzanian troops, Col Wessel Worst, Task Force Commander, and a DRC officer. Front, fltr: F Sgt Norman Caselton, Communication Operator, Sgt Dave Bezuidenhout, Communication Operator, and WO1 Jannie Henrico, Operations Officer.
The SANDF … building a UN observer capacity

The last week in August 1999 saw the beginning of a historic process in South Africa. At the SA Military Health Service Academy in Thaba Tshwane instructors were hard at work, creating a United Nation (UN) observer capacity for the SANDF. It was the first time that Military Liaison Officers and UN Military Observers were trained in South Africa, with the aim to gear these members for possible UN, OAU or SADC deployment.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: October 1999, pages 18-19)

The SA Navy Band and Vocal Group

Formed in 1954 the SA Navy Band was celebrating 45 years of music making, and was selected to provide both the entertainment and ceremonial music for the Inauguration of the President on 16 June 1999.

This was a repeat of the honour bestowed on them, with worldwide TV coverage, for the Inauguration of President Mandela five years previously.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: December 1999, page 21)

ABOVE: Participating in a flag hoisting ceremony held at Church Square in Pretoria on 13 October 1999.
The SANDF was asked by the then Department of Foreign Affairs to assist the Mozambique Government with logistical support after the worst floods in 40 years hit the southern part of the country in the year 2000. When

Codes of Conduct launched

The Codes of Conduct for uniformed members and Public Service Act Personnel in the Department of Defence were launched at a military parade held at the Thaba Tshwane Town Hall on 15 February 2000. The codes serve as a guide in the process of laying a firm foundation for building of discipline and morale in the SANDF.

(For more information, read the article as published in Salut: April 2000, page 35)

The role of the SANDF in emergency reconstruction

When tropical cyclone ELINE passed over South Africa in February 2000, the northeastern parts of the country, including the Northern Province, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, and parts of the Free State, Eastern Cape and other provinces, it wreaked the worst devastation since the country had ever experienced since the 1950s.

Thousands of people were left homeless, provincial roads, bridges, agricultural systems, national parks and other infrastructure were severely damaged.

On 27 March 2000 the Cabinet authorised the forming of an Emergency Reconstruction Committee (ERC), consisting of Ministers of departments involved in the provision of infrastructure, including the Minister of Defence. A Command Centre was established and located at the National Disaster Management Centre of the Department of Provincial and Local Government. The centre was to ensure the expeditious implementation of relief measures related to the disaster areas.

(For more information, read article as published in Salut: October 2000, pages 16-18)
The new SA Army Emblem

The issuing of shoulder flashes displaying the new SA Army emblem, “A Pride of Lions”, commenced on 6 June 2001 during a parade at the Army Office in Pretoria, when Lt Gen Gilbert Ramano, the Chief of the SA Army, issued the first shoulder flashes to members of the Army Office.

It was a milestone in symbolic communication. The wearing of the new shoulder flashes is a sign of commitment to the transformation process. In the same way as we accept the Code of Conduct as the cornerstone of our military culture, we must adopt the new emblem as a signpost directing us towards the acceptance of our transformed Army.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2001, pages 17-18)

Introducing new training programme

The opening of the first Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) took place in January 2000. The course content varies from the earlier Joint Staff Course and is now the premier programme in the SANDF with a focus on national and regional security.

Another truly momentous occasion was the official opening in July 2001 of the very first Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme to be presented at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane. By launching this programme, the SANDF ensured that it was aligning itself with internationally acceptable norms with regard to joint training at the operational level.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2001, page 29)

New electronic warfare system

Grintek Ewation (GEW), South Africa’s leading communications electronic warfare (EW) company, and the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor) have revealed a new tactical electronic warfare system (TEWS) to be delivered to the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

The system, consisting of state-of-the-art electronic equipment housed in highly mobile tactical Okapi vehicles, will enable the SANDF to support a fighting unit with electronic warfare requirements. The functions provided by the TEWS will facilitate monitoring of the radio communications of opposing forces, determine the geographic positions of these radio transmissions, and also disrupt communication nets by using various modes of jamming.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2001, page 39)
African Armed Forces Journal 2014 Writing Competition

The AAFJ 2014 writing competition will provide a valuable platform for writing and insight into all aspects of African Military Affairs.

The 15th Military Writing Competition hosted by the African Armed Forces Journal and a key sponsor is a project aimed at displaying the wealth of military writing on African military affairs. Creating a collection of professionally-written articles will help exemplify the significance of military thought on African affairs. This purpose is best-served in a competition format, allowing for the most insightful and original written pieces to be sourced and disseminated through the AAFJ publication. The competition will be divided into two categories - one for graduates and one for under-graduates.

The winner will receive a cash prize of $2600
Second place will receive a cash prize of $1300
Third place will receive a cash prize of $650

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www.aafonline.co.za

Terms and Conditions: The writing competition is organised by the African Armed Forces Journal. All entries remain property of the authors, but the journal reserves the right of first publication. Submissions must be between 2500 and 3000 words. All submissions must be under the name of the author. A cover page should be included which identifies the manuscript as an entry for: The 2014 AAFJ Military Writing Competition, giving the title of the entry and the author’s name and address.

Sponsored by

DENEL

AFRICAN ARMED FORCES

Dedicated to Military Affairs since 1975
Competing in the first Africa Military Games

They came from all over Africa, 2,000 soldiers from 26 countries, to fight it out on the sports field. But it no ordinary sports event; it was the first-ever Africa Military Games in Nairobi, Kenya, held over the period 15 to 26 April 2002.

The main goal of the Africa Military Games was to provide accredited defence forces from all over the African continent an opportunity to compete with each other on the sports field in order to reinforce friendship ties and to ensure the dream of peace and stability on the continent. Not only was this Continental Games a first for Africa, but also a first for the world.

Final Medal Standing

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(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2002, pages 38-40)

Col Portia Sibiya became the first female Officer Commanding of Air Command Unit. Col Sibiya took over command from Brig Gen Joseph Ledwaba during a parade at Air Force Gymnasium in Thaba Tshwane on 28 April 2002. Brig Gen Ledwaba is appointed as Director Operation Support and Intelligence Systems at Air Command Unit.

Col Sibiya was born in Diepkloof, Soweto, on 11 March 1967. She sees her new position as a challenge. Col Sibiya said: “I got the post of Officer Commanding of Air Command Unit, of which there is a perception that is a male post. Male counterparts still believe this.”

“My first priority is to improve this unit and make it one of the top units in the SA Air Force. She said: “I have an advantage over men in the sense that I listen. I am compassionate and, as a woman, I should be able to cross gaps.” (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2002, page 25)
A new system of National Orders for South Africa

The birth of a new non-racial and non-sexist democracy in South Africa necessitated a critical review of the system of National Orders. The previous system consisted of one decoration and four orders whose symbolic aesthetic was representative of the past.

National Orders are the highest awards that a country, through its President, bestows on its citizens and eminent foreign nationals.

Seeking to move away from the past, in May 1998, the newly instituted President’s Advisory Council on National Orders was given the task and responsibility to review the system of National Orders and awards. To implement the task, a technical committee was constituted which embarked on an extensive and inclusive research process that involved public consultations, interviews with stakeholders on a national scale, group discussions focusing on alternative systems, the commissioning of historical research and the gathering of jewellery and medal designers to design new medals through a design brief.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2002, pages 24-27)

New rank insignia is unveiled

The new rank insignia was unveiled on 22 August 2002 at the Defence Headquarters in Pretoria. This was a major milestone for the symbolic measurement of transformation in the SANDF. The new insignia reflect the national coat of arms and was introduced at a parade on 2 September 2002. As from 3 September 2002 all the members of the SANDF will be expected to wear the new rank insignia.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2002, page 10)
2003

Combating HIV/AIDS through spiritual and ethical conduct

A major break with the past

The old SANDF flag was lowered at the SA Air Force Gymnasium in Valhalla, Pretoria, and the respective Chiefs of the Services handed back the old flags of the Services to Chief of the SANDF at a retreat ceremony held on 25 April 2003.

Another milestone in the transformation process took place on 29 April 2003 at the SA Air Force Gymnasium when the new flags of the SANDF, depicting the SANDF logo, were launched and a complete new medal series was also introduced.

Facing a challenge head-on

Col Khuselewa Goboza became the first black female officer to be handed the command of a Military Police Region. Col Khuselewa officially took over command of the Northern Military Police Region from Col J.J. “Dippies” Dippenaar at a change of command parade in Thaba Tshwane on 28 February 2003.

Col Goboza joined the Department of Prisons, then integrated into the SANDF in the Military Police Corps in 1998. She was first appointed as SO1 Correctional Facility. She was the first black person to be staff qualified in the Military Police and the first female to be a Regional Provost Marshal.

Learning from each other – enhance peace support

The SANDF and the United States European Command conducted a bilateral training exercise, called Exercise FLINTLOCK, in Bloemfontein from 7 to 25 July 2003.

The exercise included a broad spectrum of military activities, such as combat life-saving procedures, live firing of weapons, day and night-time low-level flying and airdrops of personnel and equipment.

The South African training objectives for the exercise were to enhance peace support and humanitarian relief capabilities and the United States objectives were to enhance military relationships with the SANDF and to train in a new and diverse environment.

(Above: Col Khuselewa Goboza, first black female officer to take command of a Military Police Region.)
South Africa plays a role in the peace process

One could easily wonder what South Africa’s forces have to do in Burundi, close to the equator, far away from the southern tip of Africa. Our former President, the late Mr Nelson Mandela, played a leading role in negotiations to establish fertile ground for the peace process in this relatively small country in the Great Lakes region. Although Mr Mandela is not part of the process anymore, South Africa still plays a role in it.

The SANDF started Operation FIBRE in Burundi in November 2000 with the main objective of safeguarding politicians returning to the country. Following the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in August 2000, the deployment of the South African Protection and Support Detachment, and further regional initiatives, then the signing of two ceasefire agreements on 7 October and December 2002 took place. The African Mission was established in Burundi.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 14).

Life in a Congo village

On the arrival of the command group on 22 April 2003 Kindu was a ghost town with a handful of people. This was because many of its inhabitants were living in the bushes nearby in fear of the rebel group, known as the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RDC) - GOMA.

The RDC rebels are mostly children ranging in age from ten upwards, who have been supported by the Rwandan Army during the four years of war in an attempt to overthrow former President Laurent Kabila. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 15).

The first black commander of our warship

On 30 July 2003 the first black naval combat officer assumed command of a City Class vessel, SAS KAPA (ex-German 351 Class Minesweeper) during a change of command parade held at SA Naval Dockyard Simon’s Town.

While Lt Cdr Bubele Kitie “Bravo” Mhlana’s appointment constitutes the first appointment of a black Officer Commanding of an SA Navy warship, it is nevertheless one of many more steps in the progression of the transformation process which the SA Navy has successfully carried out for quite some time now. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2003, page 23).

Enthusiasm outruns capacity for peacekeeping efforts of SA

The President’s Office announced on 13 August 2003 that South Africa “will send troops” to Liberia to help stabilise the situation in the West African state. This was in addition to the troops already deployed in Burundi (1 359 and due to expand) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1 393). There are also elements supporting the European Union Interim Emergency Force in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and some military observers within the United Nations and the African Union missions in Eritrea and Ethiopia. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2003, pages 18-20).
2003

3 600 tons of beauty

To the SAS AMATOLA, the biggest warship in our land – Welcome home! The arrival of the SAS AMATOLA in the waters of the Cape of Good Hope on 4 November 2003 marks the birth of a new SA Navy whose latest acquisition reflects just that.

The SAS AMATOLA is a reward for a Navy with vision and foresight. This ship becomes the first of four corvettes to be acquired by the SANDF.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2004, pages 14-15)

ABOVE: The long awaited SAS AMATOLA.

Honouring our legal eagles

For the SANDF 6 November 2003 had a special significance as the first legal satellite office (LEGSATO) Thaba Tshwane medal parade and inauguration ceremony was held.

It was the first time that an official medal parade was held for military law practitioners and other members of the Military Legal Services Division.

It was also the first time in the history of the Military Legal Services Division that an officer of the division had the privilege to inaugurate a deserving member of the community as its Honorary Captain (SAN) – the Honourable Mr Judge President Bernard Makgabo Ngoepe.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2004, page 34)

ABOVE: V Adm Martyn Trainor, Chief of Corporate Staff (right), presenting Honorary Capt (SAN) Justice Bernard Ngoepe with a trophy which is regarded as a Symbol of Office.
Hawk Lead-in Fighter Trainer will lift eyes

T
he South African defence industry received the first Hawk MK 120 aircraft on 4 February 2004 at the SA Air Force Test Flight and Development Centre (TFDC) at Cape Agulhas, the most southernly tip of Africa.

The TFDC is where the integration and flight test of the Hawk Lead-in Fighter Trainer programme will be conducted for the next fifteen months.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2004, page 11)

The doors of the first Phidisa Clinic opens

T
he official opening of the Phidisa Clinic at 1 Military Hospital brought light and hope for many SANDF members. As HIV/AIDS is slowly killing our nation the Department of Defence and the United States National Institute of Health are making a difference to many SANDF members and their dependants by fighting the HIV/AIDS virus.

20 January 2004 marked the beginning of a new journey as one of the six sites that was selected to conduct the research was officially opened.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2004, page 13)

Partially blind receives reading aid

M
er Stephan Johnson, who has been partially blind since he was a child owing to a condition of the retina in his eyes, ended 2003 on a good note and started 2004 even better when he received the Tieman Reading Aid, which is a machine that enlarges any document.

Mr Johnson received this from the office of Lt Col Martin Combrink, SO1 Control Corporate Services, who is the representative for the Army of the People with Disabilities Forum.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2004, page 31)

ABOVE: Mr Stephan Johnson, a PSAP member at Army Support Base Bloemfontein Facility Management Service Centre, in front of the Tieman Reading Aid.
20 years of defence in democracy
Review of the first 10 Years of Freedom – South Africa’s first 10 Years of Freedom campaign has been about a decade of growing unity in action, relative peace and stability, making resources in the hands of the State available to uplift disadvantaged South Africans and increased opportunities for building a better South Africa, a better Africa and a better world. Government’s Vision 2014 at a glance

• Reduce unemployment through job creation and skills development;
• Poverty reduction through economic development;
• Provide the skills required by the economy, build capacity and encourage self-employment;
• Ensure that all South Africans, especially those at risk – children, youth, women, the aged, and people with disabilities – are fully able to exercise their constitutional rights and enjoy the full dignity of freedom;
• Compassionate and efficient Government service to the people – the Batho Pele concept;
• Improve the national health profile, with specific emphasis on TB, diabetes, malnutrition and maternal deaths, turn the tide against HIV and AIDS, and reduce road accidents;
• Significantly reduce the number of serious and priority crimes, as well as address the social roots of criminality;
• Position South Africa strategically as an effective force in global relations, with specific emphasis on the poor of the African continent.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2005, page 12)

The SANDF has placed South Africa among the world’s largest contributors to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, which includes helping to support democracy, facilitating economic and social stability and creating a better world for all.

10 Years of Democracy

The heart of a diver!

Women are making inroads into traditionally male dominated fields, eg the first ever black female to qualify as a Fleet Support Diver in the SA Navy. Seaman Nompumelelo Thabisile (Thabs) Goba is only the second female to become an SA Navy diver.

From May to September 2004 all the diving recruits were put through the Diving Enablement Programme, which includes a heavy schedule of swimming and general fitness training. The SA Navy runs this course to train and equip potential diving candidates to meet the exacting standards of the Navy’s Operational Diving Team.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: March 2005, page 9)

Above: The first Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Mandela, acknowledges the work of SANDF members in support of peacekeeping missions in Africa.

The Minister of Defence remarked in the DOD’s Annual Report of the past year that the “DOD intensified its efforts to promote security, peace and stability on the African continent in support of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)”. This is also evidenced by the continued deployment of members of the SANDF to peace missions, among others in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in Burundi.

He also expressed his pride in “the role the DOD played in the establishment of the structures of the African Union (AU), especially in the role Southern African Developing Countries (SADC) has to fulfil through the African Standby Force”.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: March 2005, pages 28-29)
Meet our female Air Supply Instructor

Assisting in the Mozambique election

Regional and continental integration is the foundation for Africa’s socio-economic development and political unity, and essential for South Africa’s prosperity.

The rain that fell during the 2004 elections in Mozambique, especially in the northern provinces, forced the Mozambican Government to request assistance from the RSA with the collection of ballot boxes. Col Harry Anderson was appointed as the Joint Task Force Commander of the operation and, after a recce to the affected provinces, 61 members were deployed at short notice on 4 and 5 December 2004 to Pemba and Lichinga in northern Mozambique.

The deployed members had to provide all the equipment to sustain the operation and within hours of arriving in Mozambique the “ops room” was up and running and communications were established.

After the Oryx helicopters landed on 6 December 2004 the operation could proceed. 119 hours were flown during the operation, while 87 ballot boxes were collected from the various districts in the two provinces so that their voting papers could be counted and 303 officials were transported during these flights. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: March 2005, page 10)

The Department of Defence Air Supply Unit, the second oldest airborne unit in the SANDF, and the only air supply unit in sub-Saharan Africa, prides itself on having in its fold Sgt Beauty Sawula, who achieved a first by being the first African woman to qualify as an Air Supply Instructor. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: August 2005, page 18)

First ever woman in command at sea

The SA Navy has announced the appointment of its first ever woman in command at sea. She is Sub-Lieutenant Latha Starling, who has been appointed Officer Commanding of SAS TEKWANE, an inshore patrol vessel (IPV) currently based in Durban. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: August 2005, page 13)

Meet our female Air Supply Instructor

LEFT: Sgt Beauty Sawula, the first African woman to qualify as an Air Supply Instructor.

RIGHT: Sub-Lieutenant Latha Starling.
South Africa recognises the need for greater solidarity between nations. The SANDF plays an important role in defence diplomacy. Sound military relations between allied countries are vitally important, especially in the quest for global peace and security.

Col Susan Palmer is the first and only female Military Attaché in Rome, which has 150 embassies and 107 Military Attachés. She is privileged and proud to have represented South Africa and the SANDF in Italy and Romania. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: August 2005, page 21)

Exercise COMBINED ENDEAVOR 2005

On 9 May 2005 fifteen members of the Command and Management Information Systems Division (CMIS) left for Germany to participate in Exercise COMBINED ENDEAVOR to mark a historic milestone for both the SANDF and Southern Africa as whole. Exercise COMBINED ENDEAVOR is an interoperability exercise which is presented annually by the United States European Command. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2005, page 25)

Peace capacity building in the making

In pursuance of the broad RSA strategic engagement in the countries in the Great Lakes region to ensure greater stability and good governance, the DOD is actively and effectively involved in peacekeeping and peace capacity building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). South African soldiers are deployed with the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the DRC, dubbed MONUC, and are part of a special mission called the South African Detachment Assisting with Integration and Training (SADAIT), which has all the necessary expertise to pursue integration and training objectives. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2005, page 16)

Promoting the African Agenda through Regional Peacekeeping

The Government has congratulated the people of Burundi on the remarkable progress that they have made in bringing peace and democracy to their country. It marks an important watershed, not only for the people of Burundi, but also in Africa’s efforts to create conditions that are conducive to economic growth and development.

The inauguration of their democratically elected president represents a triumph for the people of Burundi and the African continent. The inauguration of President Pierre Nkurunziza is the culmination of a protracted and difficult, but successful, peace process to which the continent and the international community contributed. South Africa is proud to have been part of the Great Lakes Regional Initiative on Burundi, in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2005, page 25)
Exercise INDLOVU

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) hosted the biggest exercise of them all since Exercise SWEEPSLAG ten years ago – Exercise INDLOVU. This exercise was conducted over the period 29 September to 16 November 2005, which makes it the largest conventional exercise in the history of the SANDF. The exercise was aimed at preparing the SANDF for future deployments and integration into the African Union’s African Standby Force and as a preliminary to the formation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Brigade. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2006, pages 22-23)

Medics in Darfur region

The “medics” have always played a role in, and been a part of the military set-up worldwide. Very few soldiers will feel at ease in battle without medical support on hand. The “medics” also assist the local population as the need arises. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2006, page 11)

First black mechanical engineer in our Navy

The SA Navy has taken yet another step towards achieving the transformation objectives of the Government with the first black African to qualify as a mechanical engineer. Lt Bhekinkosi Williamson Mvovo has made history by being the first African in the SA Navy to have completed his BSc (Mechanical Engineering) at the University of Cape Town. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2006, page 33)

DOD Youth Foundation Training Programme

The DOD/Denel Youth Foundation Training Programme is a second chance that the SANDF wants to give young South Africans who want to turn their academic focus around and do whatever it takes to produce much better matriculation grades. The Youth Foundation Training Programme (YFTP) started in April 2001 with 167 learners. Altogether 120 of the 167 began specialist careers as engineers, technical officers, medical doctors, naval combat officers, etc. An additional 20 began careers as technicians and nurses. In 2002, 190 learners out of 205 were admitted to the Department of Defence. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2006, page 32)
Women technicians keeping our aircraft serviceable

At Air Force Base Waterkloof’s 41 Squadron a few remarkable technicians are part of a steadily increasing number of women who maintain the serviceability of the aircraft of the SA Air Force. Cpl Melissa Leslie and Sgt Lesego Tlharipe are aircraft avionics technicians, while Sgt Zoleka Mabena is an aircraft mechanic.

After completing their respective ground school phases at 68 Air School, where they were introduced to basic aircraft technical mechanisms, Cpl Leslie and Sgt Tlharipe went to 5 Air Servicing Unit for their depot phase, while Sgt Mabena did her depot phase at 1 Air Servicing Unit. The three technicians qualified on the Casa at 44 Squadron in their specialist fields. *(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: August 2006, page 40)*

SA Navy appoints its second female Admiral

To be a flag officer is one of the greatest aspirations to officers in the SA Navy, even more so to the women within the force. For many years the rank of Admiral was thought to be an unattainable rank for women. It took 82 years for the SA Navy to appoint its first female Admiral and another two years for the second one. *(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2006, page 21)*

Our soldiers in Burundi making us proud

The United Nations mission in Burundi is to create and maintain a stable environment for sustainable development in that country by means of area military domination operations. Soldiers from 121 SA Infantry Battalion in KwaZulu-Natal are deployed in Burundi for this purpose under the flag of the United Nations.

The young and energetic soldiers were deployed from the beginning of March to the end of August 2006. *(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2006, page 21)*

ABOVE:  A patrol under the command of the United Nations approaches Giza village situated in a mountainous area.
Our sailors returned from Burundi

At the beginning of 2006 the SA Navy deployed a maritime contingent of 65 sailors to Burundi to assist the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) in peacekeeping operations.

On 2 November 2006 the contingent returned home from Burundi and was met by Director Maritime Warfare, R Adm (JG) Rusty Higgs, who represented the Chief of the SA Navy. He welcomed the contingent back and expressed how proud South Africa and the SA Navy were of them and that they had done our Department proud once again. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2007, page 20)

Young soldier honoured

“Poverty is not an excuse to commit crime; I could have been a gangster or drug addict, but I chose to be an example to my peers and live a clean life”. These were the words of CO Arend Hoffmann.

The former President, Mr Nelson Mandela, recently honoured CO Hoffmann with the Presidential Award for Youth Empowerment. The President’s Award was founded in 1983 under the banner of the Golden Shield Award. In 1994 it was relaunched as the President’s Award with Mr Nelson Mandela as its Patron-in-Chief.

The fundamental aim of the programme is to empower young people from all walks of life to believe in themselves, develop new skills, keep physically fit, be of service to others and challenge themselves. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2007, page 20)

**ABOVE:** Col Nelson Mangesi, Commandant Personnel Service School (right), congratulating CO Arend Hoffman on receiving his Gold Level Certificate as the President’s Award for Youth Empowerment.
2007

The Chief of Human Resources, Lt Gen Temba Matanzima, hosted the first Human Resources Lekgotla in the DOD at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research International Convention Centre (CSIR) in Pretoria on 30 November 2006. The aim of this gathering was to create an empowerment, communication and networking opportunity for senior Human Resources functionaries of the DOD (uniformed and civilian defence employees). “The DOD Human Resources Lekgotla 2006 comes at an opportune moment in the evolving transformation of the DOD.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: March 2007, pages 40-41)

Commissioning of SAS SPIOENKOP

The European South African Corvette Consortium (ESACC) delivered its third Valour Class SAN Meko A200 patrol frigate, SAS SPIOENKOP, to the people of South Africa at the commissioning of SAS SPIOENKOP in Simon's Town on 16 February 2007.

Ms Thandi Modise, the then Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Defence, named SAS SPIOENKOP in Hamburg, Germany, on 4 June 2003. Although she was not available on this auspicious occasion due to unavoidable duties as Speaker of the North West Legislature, she had this message in her capacity as godmother of SAS SPIOENKOP: “As sponsor of the SAS SPIOENKOP, I believe that my captain, Capt (SAN) Douglas Roy Faure, will steer this beautiful ship with diligence, fairness and honesty”.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2007, page 12)

Young Officer Commanding on board

The new Officer Commanding SAS ISANDLWANA, Capt (SAN) Bubele “Bravo” Mhlana, is a breath of fresh air. He is young and vibrant! In an SANDF that strives to rejuvenate itself, Capt (SAN) Mhlana’s new appointment certainly reflects an SA Navy that is not just “talking the talk”, but also “walking the walk”.

Capt (SAN) Mhlana has been charged, inter alia, with the task of protecting the lives of men and women who serve on board the SAS ISANDLWANA, a SAN Meko A200 patrol corvette recently acquired by the SA Navy.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2007, page 16)
20 years of defence in democracy

Sa soldier

Our Navy warship is a symbol of sacrifice and hope

The SAS MENDI is a symbol of rebirth for the South African Navy and our country. The SAS MENDI is the last for VALOUR Class SA Navy Frigates acquired under Project SITRON. Designed to the SA Navy’s specific operational and environmental requirements, the ship is one of the most advanced warships in the world today.

The task of the SAS MENDI is to participate in providing maritime defence for our country, its people, the region and the continent. However her task is far greater than this, for she is also to serve as a constant reminder of the bravery and valour of our predecessors.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2007, pages 12-13)

LEFT: Our young sailors stepping abroad the SAS MENDI.

International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers


Maj Gen Vusumuzi Sindane, Chief of Military Policy, Strategy and Planning, officiated at the service. He said the SANDF was determining to achieve the objectives set by the international community under auspices of the UN to bring about prosperity, development and to promote peace and stability.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2007, pages 12)

ABOVE: Maj Gen Vusumuzi Sindane, Chief of Military Policy, Strategy and Planning, paying his respects and laying a wreath.

Protecting human rights

Providing media coverage on SANDF members deployed at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital has got to be one of my most intense experiences yet. It is the largest hospital in Africa with about 88 patients’ wards, but unforeseen and unpredictable public service national strike brought the enormous institute to a virtual standstill.

The wage dispute between the “Government” and “workers” who put down tools and went on protest marches meant that all things stopped moving. Heeding the call to provide damage control the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) deployed most of its members to public hospitals where the sick were left in dire straits.

(For more information please read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2007, pages 18-20)

ABOVE: Cpl Patricia Khumalo and S Sgt Agnes Tladi see to a patient in the admissions ward.
2008

First woman to command SA Army Combat Training Centre

25 January 2008 will be remembered as a highlight in the history of the SA National Defence force (SANDF) because on that day Brig Gen Nontobeko Mpaxa was inaugurated as the first woman Commandant, at the SA Army Combat Training Centre at Lohatla in the Northern Cape.

Brig Gen Mpaxa, previously the Officer Commanding of Army Support Base Port Elizabeth, has been entrusted with the country’s biggest military training facility as the Commandant of the SA Army Combat Training Centre at Lohatla in the Northern Cape. She fulfilled the expectations of many women in the SANDF and this is a tumultuous achievement and a great inspiration for all women in South Africa and those serving in various security sectors.

Spirit of giving in peacekeeping operations

The South African Special Forces School opened its doors again to members of defence forces from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries at Murrayhill, north-west of Pretoria, in January 2008.

This year soldiers from Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland (SADC) together with 120 South African soldiers will participate in the first phase of the Commando Training at the South African Special Forces School.

The main purpose of training the Special Forces of SADC countries is to qualify them as special operators and prepare them to be ready for deployment in peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Special Forces training boosts SADC integration

The SA Infantry Battalion (Charlie Company) deployed in Millet, in the Sudan under the command of Maj Mahlomola Motitsi, has been actively playing its role in the renaissance of the African continent, demonstrating that as uniformed members of the SANDF we are also able to make a difference in other people’s lives. The members of this company have proved that soldiers of South Africa can and should play a more active role in the process of rebuilding a society, a town, a city and eventually a country.

Knowing that the months of December and January can be cold, the soldiers donated warm clothes and blankets to the internally displaced people (IDP) of Millet. It did not end there. They went a step further by taking money from their own pockets to buy stationery and to help with the school fees of all the children in the IDP camp.

Pushing back the frontiers of poverty through education

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF), in conjunction with the Mpumalanga Department of Education, held an Imbizo in Siyabuswa, Mpumalanga, on 11 April 2008. This was a Government initiative to uplift the education system and raise the awareness of the youth about the different careers within the SANDF. (The interdepartmental Imbizo formed part of the nationwide Government’s Imbizo Focus Week.) Learners came in large numbers from all neighbouring villages to attend the Imbizo and to seek guidance for careers. This was an opportunity to assist Grade 11 and 12 learners to decide which field to venture into after completing matric.

LEFT: The outgoing Officer Commanding of Army Support Base Port Elizabeth, Brig Gen Nontobeko Mpaxa (left) handing over the Sword of Command to her successor, Col Bayanda Mkula.

ABOVE: Lt Linda Els, an SANDF soldier and a fitness instructor at the South African Special Forces School.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2008, pages 23)

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2008, page 18)

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2008, pages 12-13)
Works Regiment presents first reskilling programme

Education and empowerment are the language spoken within the SANDF. On 4 April 2008 the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Solly Shoke, visited the Tshwane South College in Atteridgeville to talk to the 100 soldiers who enrolled for the Works Regiment’s reskilling programme offered by the Department of Defence. This programme was the way of the Department to eradicate poverty and bridge the skills gap within the country. The training was aimed at offering the soldiers skills in construction, electrical and mechanical engineering.

Lt Gen Shoke said: “With this programme we will be sure that when the soldiers leave the college, they will be responsible for the maintenance and repair of our facilities and also provide a service to the country.”

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2008, page 21)

SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I arrives in SA in gentle rain

Anyone acquainted with the rainmaking ability of the legendary Balobedu Ba Ga-Modjadji in Limpopo will tell you a story about how Queen Maselekwe Modjadji I, daughter of King Mogodo, would give instructions to her subjects to lay drums in readiness for the coming rain in the midst of scorching heat under the blue sky of this northeastern Limpopo village.

Naval Base Simon’s Town had the same experience on 22 May 2008 as one of the praise singers from Balobedu narrated the history of her people in poetry amidst the cool showers that characterise the Cape. The occasion was a welcoming function for SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I at Simon’s Town, as the black German made submarine quietly arrived in Cape waters.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2008, pages 16-17)

SA Air Force students get wings in Botswana

On 23 May 2008 Thebephatshwa Air Base, near Gaborone, was turned into a centre of Batswana traditional cultural activities during a wings parade of 18 students, including four members of the SA Air Force, namely CO Nkosinathi Bulwana, CO Aran Mark Gatenby, CO Molobane Lesley Ramasenya and CO Sumeshen Padayachee.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2008, page 22)
New ranks for Warrant Officers

The new Warrant Officer ranks in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) came into effect on 1 June 2008. These new ranks were aimed at providing an extended career path for warrant officers in the SANDF. According to the new ranks, Warrant Officer Level 1 (WO1) becomes Master Chief Warrant Officer (MCWO), addressed as Master Chief Warrant Officer. Warrant Officer Level 2 (WO2) becomes Senior Chief Warrant Officer (SCWO), addressed as Senior Chief Warrant Officer. Warrant Officer Level 3 becomes Chief Warrant Officer (CWO), addressed as Chief Warrant Officer. Warrant Officer Level 4A becomes Master Warrant Officer (MWO), addressed as Master Warrant Officer. Warrant Officer Level 4 becomes Senior Warrant Officer (SWO), addressed as Senior Warrant Officer. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2008, page 17)

First woman submariner

Petty Officer Candice Chetty made history by being the first woman to qualify as a submariner in the SA Navy. She joined the SA Navy in January 1997 and completed her Basic Military Training at SAS SALDANHA. In August 2007 she completed a two-month General Submarine Knowledge Course and completed one week of submarine escape training in Germany. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2008, page 25)

First SANDF woman to complete the French Joint Staff and Command Course

When Col Jerry Masisi was appointed as Deputy Defence Attaché in France, Col Pat Masisi thought about how she could benefit from her husband’s deployment by not stagnating in her career and also gaining insight from the foreign defence force so that she could plough back the skills and knowledge acquired during deployment in Paris. She decide not to accompany her husband as a spouse only, but also to be prospective military student at the École Militaire (French War College), and commenced learning the French language first and then continued with the French Joint Staff and Command Course. Despite the many challenges encountered, she finally made it when she obtained the first and second degree in the French language in both oral and writing levels, which is the standard required by NATO for further deployment anywhere internationally, including the Diploma in the French Staff Course. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: November 2008, pages 24-25)

Members deployed abroad enabled to vote

Tension and expectations were high on 8 April 2009 when 47 members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) boarded a Boeing 737 from South Africa to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Sudan and the Central African Republic to be utilised as election officials to afford deployed members the opportunity to vote in the South African National Elections on 15 April 2009. An additional five SANDF election officials followed suit to Mozambique and smaller bases in the DRC. A total of 1 935 deployed members voted in the elections, of which 728 were in the DRC, 642 in Burundi, 417 in the Sudan, 114 in Mozambique and 34 in the Central African Republic. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2009, pages 18-19)

Towards effective maritime governance for Africa

The SA Navy hosted the third Sea Power for Africa Symposium in Cape Town from 8 to 12 March 2009. The theme for the symposium was “Towards Effective Maritime Governance for Africa”. African Chiefs of navies, coast guards, countries without seacoasts and members of the international maritime community attended the event. It afforded leaders, stakeholders and key players in Africa’s military maritime sector an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest in order to improve maritime awareness and to foster closer maritime ties and relationships between the different African navies. The symposium also recognised the vulnerabilities of our oceans and seas, both in environmental degradation and climate change, and also the unscrupulous rogues who engaged in acts of maritime crime, piracy and other illegitimate activities that compromised the maritime security of the continent. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: April 2009, pages 14-16)

Air Force Gymnasium relocates to Hoedspruit

Since the foundation of the Air Force Gymnasium on 1 December 1951 and its first intake of 133 recruits, it has come a long way and has grown from strength to strength. Now the training facility of Air Force Gymnasium at Valhalla (opposite Swartkop Airfield) has moved to Boston complex at Air Force Base Hoedspruit in the Limpopo Province. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2009, page 29)

2009

20 years of defence in democracy
Official visits to mission areas

Exercise GOLFHINO

Exercise GOLFINHO was a multinational peacekeeping operation with over 6 000 participants from different security forces and support elements.

This unique approach to peace support missions has surprised the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region because of its complexity. The SADC Standby Force was established as agreed upon by the African Union (AU) in 2010 with the aim of participating in peace support missions.

Its main objective was to prepare elements of the SADC Standby Force for a multidimensional peace support operation as reflected in the road map of the African Union standby force.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2009, pages 11-13)

The Commander-in-Chief honours the South African peacekeepers

The SANDF has spent a decade participating in peace missions. To celebrate this worthy deed by our soldiers on 16 October 2009, the SANDF brigade parade under the command of Brig Gen Ashton Sibango and CWO Joachim Pretorius was held in Bloemfontein in honour of our peace “angels”.

This parade was held in Air Force Base Bloemspruit and the Bloemfontein City Hall. The SANDF Commander-in-Chief and President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, was invited to attend and to honour our tireless and fearless peace warriors. President Zuma laid a wreath in memory of those who lost their lives during peace missions.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: November 2009, pages 13-15)
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SANDF exercise: an example of excellent service delivery

Following several interdepartmental meetings involving the Department of Defence and Military Veterans, the Department of Public Works and the Department Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, it was resolved that a task team be formed and that Public Works should take the lead in addressing the current status of roads and bridges in rural areas.

The Eastern Cape was identified as a priority province. The task team visited the province from 1 to 3 July 2009 to do on the spot assessment. Three crossing points, viz at Lefukufuku, Ntafufu and Daluhlanga, were then identified as being in need of bridges.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2010, pages 22-24)

DOD closes gaps on service delivery

The Department of Defence in conjunction with the Department of Public Works completed the construction of three bridges in the Eastern Cape villages of Lefukufuku near Tsomo, Ntafufu near Port St Johns and Daluhlanga near Mount Ayliff.

The 16th of March 2010 saw the opening of the newly constructed bridges by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, accompanied by the Minister of Public Works, Mr Geoff Doidge, and the MEC of Roads and Transport in the Eastern Cape, Ms Pemmy Majodina.

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

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: May 2010, pages 16-17)

Operation LITCHI: 10 years down the line

Rosita Mabuiango and her mother, Ms Sofia Chuire, were the guests of honour at the Department of Defence and Budget Vote on 4 May 2010 in Parliament, Cape Town, where it was announced that the SANDF had formally adopted Rosita, and would be contributing towards her educational and other costs related to her upbringing.

On 1 March 2000 the villagers in the Gaza Province of Mozambique woke up to a flood that endangered not only their village but nearby villages as well. An Oryx helicopter of the SA Air Force rescued a newborn baby, Rosita, with her mother Sofia from a tree during Operation LITCHI.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2010, pages 16-17)

The SANDF returns to borderline control

The SANDF has returned to safeguard the country’s borders, and the general public has enthusiastically received the return of the SANDF to borderline control, known as Operation CORONA. This was evident during the visit of the Portfolio Committee on Defence to the borders where they examined the conditions under which the SANDF members redeployed. South Africans living near these borders, especially farmers and farm workers are pleased with the SANDF’s return.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2010, pages 18-19)
Democracy in our country can also be attributed to the military veterans, who over the years have sacrificed their lives to rebuild the nation.

In an attempt to compensate them, the Department of Military Veterans was officially launched at the Denel Campus in Centurion on 30 April 2010. The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, gave an overview of the department’s structure and its directives. The launch was a culmination of long discussions and debates. It had been incumbent upon the Commission to draft policies that best suited the challenges of the military veterans. The former Acting Secretary for Defence, Mr Tsepe Motumi, was appointed as the Director-General of the new department. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2010, pages 22-23)

SA Air Force welcomes international leaders for the Soccer World Cup

Fourteen African heads of state and other foreign dignitaries, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon, arrived at Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof in Pretoria between 10 and 13 June 2010. The aim of their visit was to attend the opening ceremony of the 2010 Soccer World Cup that was to be held at Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg, AFB Waterkloof is home to transport aircraft, and accommodated two types of fighter aircraft from AFB Makhado, the Hawk and the Gripen. The base was used for both air transport and air defence over the period. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2010, pages 18-19)

SANDF deployed soldiers to hospitals during public service strikes

During the Public Service labour action, the SANDF deployed more than 3 500 soldiers to different hospitals to assist the Department of Health in rendering medical service. They also provided security and support to the South African Police Service (SAPS). More than 130 SANDF members were deployed at the George Mukhari Hospital and over 70 at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. The South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) attended patients in public hospitals across the country during that period. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: October 2010, pages 14-15)

SA Air Force boasts first female Gripen pilot

The SA Air Force can boast of the first female Gripen fighter pilot in the world – Maj Catherine Labuschagne. She remarked: “This is fantastic for me and I am excited. It’s amazing what you can do with the aircraft, but you need to be persistent and work hard.” In 2004, after joining 85 Combat Flying School in Hoedspruit, Maj Labuschagne had an opportunity to become the first female fighter pilot in the world to fly in the back seat of a Swedish built Gripen fighter jet at the opening of the African Aerospace and Defence Exhibition. In 2010 she did her first solo flight in a Gripen. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: November 2010, page 17)
Acknowledging the efforts of our peacekeepers

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Goodwill Parcel Project, while at the same time showing appreciation and support to our externally deployed members, as many sponsors as possible were invited to meet with our peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic when goodwill parcels were presented to them.

The goodwill visit took place over the period 11 to 17 December 2010. For the past ten years goodwill parcels have been synonymous with tokens of appreciation. The Goodwill Parcel Project has since grown and evolved to provide goodwill parcels to all internally and externally deployed members, including hampers for these members’ families back home. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2011, pages 13-15)

The Interim Military Service Commission report curtain unveiled

The Department of Defence and Military Veterans announced the release of the interim National Defence Force Service Commission (INDFSC) report at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 25 November 2010. In October 2009 the INDFSC was established to deal with the following: (1) the unique challenges of the SANDF that fall outside the ambit of the Public Service; (2) to advise on a regular framework for unique service dispensation; and (3) to investigate and provide advice or recommendations on conditions for service for members of the SANDF.

Since the INDFSC was established some of its recommendations were implemented immediately and the results of the commissioner’s tasks and recommendation have indeed brought much needed change in the lives of the South African soldiers. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: January 2011, page 16)

Above: Acting Chairperson of the Interim National Defence Force Service Commission, Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana, reports on the commission’s findings and recommendations.

The SANDF supports humanitarian aid for Somalia

On 16 August 2011 the SA Air Force C130 Hercules airlifted 18 tons of aid from Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria to Mogadishu in Somalia. The airlift was part of a massive drive by Gift of the Givers to take much needed food and medical supplies to millions of refugees fleeing the country’s drought and hunger.

Humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping have been important to the South African Government’s efforts to ensure a better Southern Africa, thus contributing to a better Africa. In this regard the SANDF has partnered with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), and the Gift of the Givers Foundation in response to the United Nations’ appeal to offer humanitarian assistance to the draught stricken country of Somalia. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2011, pages 20-21)

Renewed partnership aims to integrate Phidisa into SAMHS

Project Phidisa is a collaborative project led by the SANDF and other partners, including the National Institutes of Health of the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Defense.

It is a clinical research project that aims to establish the impact of HIV infection on the South African military community and develop strategies for the effective management and prevention of HIV infection.

The Memorandum of Understanding, which lapsed in 2010, has since been renewed for the next five years. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: December 2011, pages 28-29)

Above: The Second-in-Command of Project Phidisa, Dr Lotty Ledwaba, informed delegates of the progress and achievements of Project Phidisa.
S A S O L D I E R

20 years of defence in democracy

S A N D F intensifies war against rhino poaching

Members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) continue to have more successes in the fight against rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park as they operate in support of the South African National (SAN) Parks. The extent of the success in the fight against rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park is marked by a drastic rise in the arrest of the number of the poachers from three to 37 between January 2012 and mid-May 2012, while the number of rhinos poached during the same period has declined from 17 to seven. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2012, page 19)

A bodyguard’s life

In the past it was generally believed that the bodyguard profession, such as VIP protection or close protection in the military was only for men. However, many people, mainly politicians, actors, singers and businessmen and women are starting to think that female bodyguards may offer a just as good an alternative. Speaking to Ad Astra magazine recently Cpl Nadia Forbes (23) from Cape Town confirmed that she was one of only two female qualified VIP Protectors in the entire protection service of SA Air Force. 500 VIP Squadron’s Maggie Rasesemola is the second qualified female bodyguard, and currently serves at Air Force Mobile deployment Wing. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2012, page 26)

ABOVE: Maj Gen Tsoku Khumalo, Chief Director Force Preparation, congratulating Cpl Nadia Forbes on her achievements.

Celebrating SANDF young model citizens

Chief Directorate Transformation Management, under the helm of Maj Gen Ansuayah Fakir, through its DOD Youth Section, the Services and the DOD Ceremonial Warrant Officers has put together an event which is very close to the hearts of all South Africans.

The successful hosting of the 2012 DOD Youth Day celebrations is a true reflection of the SANDF’s ability to develop young soldiers as role model citizens of our country. The event reflected our shared history, vision, experience and common ideals. This resonates well with some of the key elements of the Government’s initiatives and policies, chief among which is youth development, the renewal of the moral fibre of our young generation and the National Youth Service Programme whose aim is to transform youth from being job seekers to being job creators. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: July 2012, pages 30-31)

Celebrating the age of opportunity for women in the SANDF

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

Every year since then, 9 August has been remembered as a very special day in our country’s calendar to remember and honour the 20 000 heroines who took action and came together to strive for a society free of all kinds of discrimination and inequality. On 24 August 2012 the Chief Directorate Transformation Management hosted the SANDF Women’s Day Parade at the Pretoria Military Sports Ground in Thaba Tshwane to celebrate our military diversity and pay homage to the country’s women who died in the past struggles and to remember the sacrifice, commitment, dedication and unity in action of the women of 1956. (For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: September 2012, pages 18-19)

ABOVE: Members of the SA Military Health Service proudly walking tall during the SANDF Women’s Day Parade.
Meet the first female commander of a Flossie in Africa

Maj Caro Duven (32) successfully qualified as the first female commander of a Hercules C-130 (fondly known as the Flossie) at 28 Squadron, Air Force Base Waterkloof, on 14 May 2012. Maj Duven has been a pilot in the SA Air Force since 2003 and has achieved over 2 300 flying hours. She said she achieved this milestone, but not because she is a woman. Maj Duven said: “I realised my dream with the assistance, support and backing of my family, friends and colleagues. It is merely coincidence that I am a woman, because to achieve this milestone depends on how well you can fly and not who you are”.

SA Army enhances its combat capability

The SA Army conducted Exercise SEBOKA at the SA Army Combat Training Centre in Lohatlha in October 2012. Exercise SEBOKA was one of the most significant training events as it allowed elements within the SANDF to test their state of readiness on conventional battle tactics co-ordinated at the brigade level, with greater emphasis on command of the participating units.

Exercise SEBOKA is primarily a force preparation exercise aimed at training and exercising the landward force to enhance capability and combat readiness, and to integrate the respective combined Services of the SANDF. The SA Army conducted the exercise in pursuit of the Government’s mandate of ensuring the safety of the citizens of South Africa.

SA Army Infantry Formation remembers our fallen heroes and heroines

The National Civic Remembrance Service and Wreath-laying Ceremony was held near the Johannesburg City Hall at the Cenotaph on the 11 November 2012. This day is known as Armistice Day or Poppy Day and is held annually on the 11th day of the 11th month at the 11th hour (11 November at 11:00) to remember those who laid down their lives fighting battles, wars and struggles to secure a democratic future for South Africa. On this day we honour them for the supreme sacrifice made for their country in the quest for eternal freedom.

Making inroads in fighting HIV and AIDS

World AIDS Day is celebrated on 1 December each year around the world. It has become one of the most recognised days internationally and is a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on and celebrate victories such as increased access to treatment and prevention services.

According to a United Nations report, South Africa increased its scale of HIV treatment by 75%, thus ensuring that 1.7 million people had access to the life-saving treatment. This has led to a decrease of more than 50 000 (41%) in new HIV infections in the past two years.
The official opening of the Military Ombud’s Office

The launch of the Military Ombud’s Office on 14 May 2012, under the leadership of Lt Gen (Ret) Temba Matanzima, was a remarkable event for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

A year after his appointment as South Africa’s first Military Ombud, Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima, and his staff members officially took possession of the Eco Fusion Office Park in Highveld in Centurion during a ceremony held on 14 May 2013.

The mandate of the Military Ombud is to investigate complaints lodged in writing by SANDF members regarding their conditions of service. It thus safeguards the rights of all members of the SANDF by allowing individuals to raise their concerns when they have been treated improperly or unfairly.  
(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: June 2013, pages 16-17)

Defence Minister inaugurates the Permanent Defence Force Service Commission

On 10 October 2013 the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, held a meeting to introduce and inaugurate the first Permanent Defence Force Service Commission at the Defence Headquarters in Pretoria. Since the establishment of the SANDF as the only statutory defence force of the South African state in 1994, its members have not been part of the bargaining mechanisms provided to improve or adjust remuneration, allowances and general conditions of service for the Public Service. This was the case because the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is not governed by the Public Service Act but by the Defence Act, which specifically deals with defence personnel without any reference to the Public Service Act. It became obvious that there was a greater need for a system to address issues of improvement and remuneration adjustment, allowances and general conditions of service for the Defence Act Personnel.  
(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: November 2013, pages 12-13)
The Day of Reconciliation is a significant day in the history of South Africa. The day came into effect in 1994, under the leadership of the late former President Nelson Mandela, who championed reconciliation. It is a day to reflect on our past and foster national unity.

On 16 December 2013 (Day of Reconciliation) President Jacob Zuma unveiled the 9 metre high bronze statue of the late former President Nelson Mandela at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the day after Madiba’s funeral in Qunu in the Eastern Cape. The statue resembles Tata Madiba and depicts him walking with arms outstretched and smiling.

The unveiling was followed by a military parade, a 21-gun salute and a flypast by the SA Air Force.

(For more information, read the article as published in SA Soldier: December 2013, pages 40-44)
Chief SA Navy passes the baton flamboyantly

After over eight years at the helm of the SA Navy, V Adm Johannes Mudimu handed over the command of the SA Navy to V Adm Samuel Hlongwane at the Change of Command Parade held in Simon’s Town on 31 March 2014.

With a day packed with events the fleet said its final goodbyes to their Chief with a fleet review. The crews of various vessels dressed the ships as the outgoing Chief of the SA Navy was cheered as the ships wished him well on his retirement. Tugboats sprayed water and fog horns from the ships made it a memorable occasion for V Adm Mudimu and his entourage.

The procession moved to Martello sports field where the formalities of handing over command took place with a huge fleet presence on parade. The first compliment was given, in the form of a 15-gun salute and a fly past by a Lynx helicopter.

This was followed by the tradition of inspecting members on parade, with the world renowned SA Navy Band providing the music. The members on parade got the opportunity to pay their last respects to the outgoing Chief of the SA Navy by saluting him with the march past to the podium where V Adm Mudimu reciprocated the salute.

V Adm Mudimu addressed all those on parade for the last time as the Chief of the SA Navy: “I am so indebted to all those that were involved in arranging and executing the events. This has and continues to be the attitude of the people’s Navy when given a task. How powerful it is if we pledge ourselves again and again to always seek opportunities to cast light in darkness and to create hope where there was none before. This is a defining factor of being a society that is creating hope for all our people who yearn for salvation and new hope”.

The Bloemfontein community was afforded a golden opportunity to celebrate the National Armed Forces Day at Air Force Base Bloemspruit on 21 February 2014. The event perfectly coincided with the celebrations of 20 years of democracy.

Decorations of bravery were awarded to selected gallant soldiers who fought in the Battle of Bangui and included posthumous awards to those who had died in the Central African Republic. This called for a gigantic and memorable occasion where the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Jacob Zuma officiated.

President Zuma said: “National Armed Forces Day is not a day for our soldiers but the whole nation. It must become an important day on the calendar of our government and our country. This day is an appropriate occasion to honour all those men and women in uniform who selflessly give their services to the sovereignty, integrity and betterment of our country, the continent and the world at large.”

The President also announced that throughout the year more parades will be held to honour members in various categories with appropriate medals. A total of 27 medals and commendation certificates were awarded to selected members and family members of all the fallen heroes of the Battle of Bangui during the parade.

Speaking to SA Soldier, Ms Mnamohau Mothabeng who received the Silver Protea (Iprothiya ye siliva) decoration on behalf of her late brother, Sgt Matlole Othniel Mahasa, said: “Things are no longer the same at home, but I am happy the SANDF is helping a lot”.

Armies Forces Day reflects on 20 years of patriotism

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