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CONTRIBUTIONS:
Although all possible care is taken with articles, the editorial staff cannot accept any responsibility for lost articles and photographs.

STREET ADDRESS
Defence Headquarters
cor Nossob & Boeing St
Erasmuskloof
PRETORIA

POSTAL ADDRESS
SA SOLDIER
Private Bag X158
PRETORIA, 0001

TELEPHONE
Tel: (012) 355 6341
Fax: (012) 355 6399
email:sasoldier@mil.za
website: www.dod.mil.za

EDITORIAL STAFF
Editor: Ms Nelda Pienaar
Deputy Editor: Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Editorial Staff: S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole
Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Cpl Ally Rakoma

Translation Consultant: Directorate Language Services
Distribution: Mr Jim Tshabalala
Tel: (012) 355 6341
Layout & Design: Mr Werner van der Westhuizen

2005 - Winner of the Government Communicator of the Year Award (GCIS).
2005 - Winner of the National Ubungcweti Award (GCIS).
Soldiers have a special moral duty to protect their country

SA SOLDIER “Imbokodo” has done it again

42 Battery unveils its mascot – the rhino

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FRONT COVER: Pte Qhawe Manco recently obtained the overall second position in the bantam weight category in the South African Elite Men’s and Women’s Boxing Championships. (Photo by L Cpl Eshmael Mukwevho)
We live in times where there’s so much to FEAR, but in all of it God still says: “FEAR NOT for I am with you”. We live in times where evil is on the increase. This is according to Chaplain Pearl Rasebopela in her devotion: “FEAR NOT” on page 46.

Peace has to do with people and not with things. Borders, money and weapons do not make war – people make war! Peace cannot be achieved through force and violence, but only through unreserved dialogue. Thus is peace without justice only a different form of tyranny.

As long as dialogue continues, war can be prevented. “There is nothing achieved through war, that could not as well be achieved through peace” - Havelock Ellis.

I would like to quote a few relevant quotes by the late Tata Madiba: “A good leader can engage in a debate frankly and thoroughly, knowing that at the end he and the other side must be closer, and thus emerge stronger. You don’t have that idea when you are arrogant, superficial and uninformed”.

Another applicable quote by Tata Madiba to the topic at hand: “If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner”.

A last wise quote by Tata Madiba: “I learned that courage was not the absence of FEAR, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that FEAR”.

Do not ever underestimate the worth of peace. Peace is a precious and rare treasure. Therefore do not FEAR, because FEAR is an enemy of peace which is already conquered by Jesus Christ.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

Ons leef in tye waar daar so baie is om voor te VREES, maar tussen dit alles deur sé God: “MOENIE VREES NIE want Ek is met jou”. Ons leef in tye waar boosheid aan die toeneem is. Dit is volgens kapelaan Pearl Rasebopela in haar boodskap “MOENIE VREES NIE” op bladsy 46.

Vrede het met mense te doen en nie met dinge nie. Grense, geld, gewere maak nie oorlog nie – mense maak oorlog! Vrede kan nie deur mag en geweld verkry word nie, maar slegs deur openhartige gesprekke. So is vrede sonder geregtigheid net ‘n ander vorm van tirannie.

So lank as wat daar nog in gesprekke volhard word, kan oorlog afgeweet word. “Daar is niks wat oorlog bereik het, wat nie ook deur vrede bereik kon word nie” - Havelock Ellis.

Ek wil graag ’n paar toepaslike aanhalings van oorlede Tata Madiba aanhaal: “n Goie leier kan in ’n diep en openhartige debat deelneem, wetende dat aan die einde daarvan sal hy en die ander kant nader aanmekaar wees, en dus sterker ander kant uitkom. ’n Persoon het nie daardie idee as hy arrogant, oppervlakkig en oningelig is nie”.

Nog ’n gesikte aanhaling van Tata Madiba met betrekking tot die onderwerp ter sprake is: “Indien ’n persoon vrede met sy vyand wil maak, moet hy saam met sy vyand werk. Dan kan hy jou vennoot word”.

’n Laaste wyse aanhaling van Tata Madiba: “Ek het geleer dat moed nie die afwesigheid van VREES is nie, maar om dit te oorwin. Die dapper man is nie hy wat nie VREES nie, maar hy wat sy VREES oorwin”.

Moenie die waarde van vrede ooit onderskat nie. Vrede is ’n kosbare en seldsame skat. Daarom moenie VREES nie, want VREES is ’n vyand van vrede wat reeds deur Jesus Christus oorwin is.

Nelda Pienaar
Redakteur SA Soldier
Minister of Defence and Military Veterans embraces Mandela Day

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, accompanied by the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the Surgeon General of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, other senior Generals and ministerial staff embraced and celebrated International Mandela Day by visiting the Lenz Military Hospice.

The United Nations adopted 18 July, the birthday of Mr Nelson Mandela, the first democratically elected President of South Africa and Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, as International Mandela Day. The day is devoted to community service in honour of the legacy and values of the late Mr Mandela. On this day individuals are called on to live Madiba’s legacy by doing 67 minutes of community work to remember Madiba’s 67 years of uninterrupted and selfless service to the people of South Africa.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula donated blankets and planted a tree at the Hospice. She was following Mr Mandela’s example of what it truly means to give back to our communities and our nation.

During her speech, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said that one of the lessons we must draw is that we should work together to entrench unity and solidarity in the country. She said that the day’s activities and community service were in honour of the legacy of Mandela.

The Minister said: “His story is filled with an amazing strength and integrity and is a symbol of hope for oppressed and marginalised people around the world. Moreover, by doing this we recognise Mandela’s principles, values and dedication in serving mankind, as well as his contribution to the struggle for international democracy and the promotion of a culture of peace.”

She added that as a department we hailed Mandela for his extraordinary vision, leadership and spirit. We strive to build upon his example of tolerance, compassion and reconciliation. The Minister said the Lenz Military Hospice needed resources and improvements to its facilities. The Minister, the Chief of the SA Army and the Surgeon General cleaned the prayer room of the Hospice.
BE PROUD TO BE A FEMALE MOTORISED SOLDIER!

Being a female infantry soldier is not something every woman can excel at. Be proud to be a female motorised soldier. You are fit to carry all your battle equipment and walk long distances. Be proud to be a fighting woman. Your tasks may be challenging but you complete them.

Being competent and efficient makes your job easier. Your courses are physically and mentally demanding but you pass them. Your job requires speed and our country relies on you as a skilled and well-trained soldier. You finish with excellence the tasks committed to you. You are tolerant when dealing with discord. Your job keeps you away from your family but you are always focused. Be proud to be a female motorised soldier. Pte Victoria Mathibela, 7 SA Infantry Bn, Phalaborwa.

AIR FORCE MEMBERS HONOURED WITH MANDELA COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS

Dedicated, committed, deserving and disciplined - these are some of the words to describe the Air Force Base Waterkloof members who played a significant role in taking care, planning and executing the funeral of our late President Nelson Mandela.

Air Force Base Waterkloof recently held a Mandela Commemorative Medal Parade. At the parade about 198 members were awarded the Mandela Medal Bronze for duties performed by members, including their participation in official ceremonial escorts, guards of honour, motorcycle escorts, manning the carriage and other forms of support.

The Director of Logistics, Brig Gen Elvis Phale, said: “He understood the ties that bind the human spirit for there is a word in South Africa - UBUNTU - a word that captures Mandela’s greatest gift. He recognised that we are all bound together in ways that are invisible to the eye, that there is oneness to humanity by sharing ourselves with others and caring for those around us.”

He also acknowledged the recipients for dedicating long days away from their family members while they were taking care of Tata Madiba up to his last days on earth.

Brig Gen Phale said: “The SA Air Force has witnessed more than twenty years of democracy. We proudly continue with our roles and responsibilities as custodians of our air space to protect the sovereignty of our skies and South Africa as a whole.”

Tata Madiba once said: “It always seems impossible until it’s done”. Sgt Thapelo Nyalungu, Air Force Base Waterkloof.

Col Constance Make, Officer Commanding 1 Air Servicing Unit (left), congratulates the Mandela Medal recipients. (Photo supplied by 5 Air Supply Unit)
The annual SA Army Warrant Officers Dedication Service was recently held at the St John's Methodist Church in Thaba Tshwane. The event, which is a worshipping platform for Warrant Officers, was well attended.

The SA Army Warrant Officers hold the dedication service as a way to unite warrant officers and to share together in the camaraderie and fellowship.

Among the special guests invited to the service were members of the International Non-commissioned Officers Association (INCOA), General Officers Commanding, Warrant Officers of the Services and Divisions and Retired Warrant Officers.

Col (Rev) Ronnie Stanton from SA Army Headquarters delivered the key sermon, which was themed: “Arrest the decline, offer yourself spiritually and try to make a difference in the lives of others”.

The key issues dealt with by Col (Rev) Stanton was the kind of difference that a single person can make using limited resources, and living a purposeful life based on spiritually sound values.

Between sermons and Scripture reading by WO2 Boitumelo Mahlangu from the SA Army Artillery Formation Headquarters and WO2 Samuel Goeda from the National Ceremonial Guard, the SA Army Signal Formation Choir under the leadership of Sgt Joakuina Chitua and L Cpl Mthetheleli Mditshane serenaded those in attendance with their music.

There is always something to give, first to God then to our fellow human beings. Whatever you have in your hand is enough to create something for the future and give the next person hope. No matter how small, just share with everyone. We all have talents and gifts from God which are enough to multiply into great things and we must share them with others. When you have a good thing you must share with others in order for you to receive more. Help those who might not be able to help themselves and that will make you a bigger person. It is also advisable to give without expecting to receive back; indeed there is always something to give to our families, colleagues, friends, strangers and any other person around us. Some of the things which we can give: are our time, money, clothes, skills and a smile. Pte David Tshivhula, 44 Parachute Regiment.

The Warrant Officers, who are the custodians of discipline in the military, took this opportunity away from their demanding work schedules to connect with their Creator and together seek spiritual upliftment. S Sgt Chené Kruger, SA Army HQ.

SA ARMY WARRANT OFFICERS WORSHIP AT DEDICATION SERVICE

SOMETHING TO GIVE

Personnel of the Chief Directorate Defence Policy and the Defence International Affairs Division were delighted when they were finally relocated to their permanent offices in Block 1, Level 1 at Defence Headquarters in Pretoria. They expressed their thanks to the helpful personnel of the Armscor Maintenance Section for the part they played in getting the telephones and IT equipment installed, as well as having the door locks fitted and the air conditioners functioning. Col Jan Kotzé, Policy Adviser at the Directorate Departmental Policy Support, said: “We are glad to be settled in and it is business as usual.” Clients can contact him at: 012 355 6978 with any related queries. Col Jan Kotzé, Defence Headquarters.
AIR FORCE BASE MAKHADO AWARDS MEDALS TO ITS MEMBERS

The Officer Commanding of Air Force Base (AFB) Makhado, Brig Gen Schalk van Heerden, recently awarded medals to loyal and deserving members of the base in recognition of their achievements. Addressing the members on parade, Brig Gen Van Heerden commended them on a job well done and for serving the organisation with courage, dedication, dignity and pride. He said loyalty, professionalism, patriotism, integrity, leadership, accountability, human dignity and military discipline will always remain the cornerstones to play an integral part in building the organisation. He urged all members of AFB Makahado to be loyal to the organisation and to always strive to achieve the best for the organisation despite challenges.

Brig Gen Van Heerden praised the members for being combat-ready and able to respond and adapt easily to achieving the core business of the base and of the organisation. Sections of the base such as 3 Air Supply Unit and 515 Squadron were also commended for maintaining a stable platform for 2 Squadron and 85 Combat Flying School in order to execute and fulfil their roles and functions regarding force preparations and other operational commitments. Other sections of the base that were also commended on their roles and contributions towards the success of 85 Combat Flying School were 102 Squadron, Project System Support Management: Gripen and Project System Support Management: Hawk, which form part of Directorate Combat Systems. Brig Gen Van Heerden added that in the endeavour to remain a fighter centre of excellence, AFB Makhado will strive to remain a specialised and professional foundation for air combat training and operations. Brig Gen Van Heerden emphasised the importance of discipline within the flying environment and for all members to maintain a high standard during all air and ground operations. Chaplain Rebecca Simons, who conducted the sermon, urged the members on parade to continue doing what is good for the organisation. She, however, pleaded with all members to place God first in whatever they do. Lt Thomas Mulaudzi, Air Force Base Makahado.

DEFENCE MATÉRIEL DIVISION SUPPORTS TAKE A GIRL CHILD TO WORK CAMPAIGN

2015 marked the 13th year of the Cell C’s Take a Girl Child to Work Day® annual campaign which gives opportunities to South African girl learners to visits places of work, to experience first-hand, the “world of work” and various career opportunities available in industry and within the public service sectors. This year’s theme was “Dream. Believe. Achieve”.

The goal of this initiative is to deepen the thinking of the girl child with regard to their infinite roles in society, enhance her self-esteem, inspire and motivate her to reach her full potential and through exposure to diverse careers and positive role models assist her to prepare for the world of work.

Defence Matériel Division (DMD) in support of the above campaign and the objectives of the development of youth in pursuit of transformation outcomes hosted two Grade 12 learners from Solomon Mahlangu Freedom School (previously known as Izikhulu Secondary) in Mamelodi.

Ms Precious Bontle and Ms Lerato Mthobeni were selected from five other learners in the school to be hosted by the Division. Ms Bontle and Ms Mthobeni who have career aspirations in the pharmaceuticals and bio-medical engineering field respectively expressed an interest in the Department of Defence (DOD) and a moving letter of motivation secured their selection as participants in the programme.

Both learners according to their Deputy Principal, Ms Galane, have great potential in achieve their dreams; and commented that “a day like this will inspire them to see what the DOD does and the contribution it makes to civil society.”

The Division through partnerships with its Directorates exposed the girl learners to a “world of work” and got to spend the day with the Division to get first-hand experience of what it takes to be in the DOD. After a day in the “field”, the learners were handed certificates and “care-packages” for their participation in the campaign.

Ms Mthobeni who previously expressed an interest in the bio medical engineering field said: “I wish to thank the Department of Defence for giving us this unique opportunity … we have learnt a lot about the SA National Defence Force, that it’s not only about the guns and the tanks, that there are more opportunities for us, especially in becoming a pilot”. At the end of the day, the girls’ excitement could not be contained and mentioned the stories they will share with their school friends about their positive experience at the DOD. For these young learners, definitely a day worth remembering! Ms Natisha Boodhoo, Defence Matériel Division.

Filtr: Lt Col Bernard Davids, Ms Precious Bontle, Ms Lerato Mthombeni, Maj Rebecca Mataboge and Lt Col Annelien du Plessis at Defence Headquarters during the Cell C Take a Girl Child to Work Campaign. (Photo by Ms Natisha Boodhoo)
CMWO Ulf-Jochen Kreck, Master Seaman of the German Federal Navy, recently visited TS Woltemade keeping his promise to the young Sea Cadets that he would return to share with them some fun creative advanced knotting techniques.

CMWO Kreck is a specialist seamanship instructor in the German Federal Navy with 35 years’ experience of which 26 years were at sea, fifteen years as a Buffer and nine years as a Cox’n. He hails from north of Frankfurt Hessen in Germany and would be called a “Deckmeister”.

His sea time experience was gained on the old school ship training ship Deuchland, strike craft and frigates as well as time on a USA Navy exchange programme. He was recently deployed to assist the SA Navy as part of the Operational Sea Training team in the Simon’s Town dockyard.

During his time in Simon’s Town he has visited ships of the SA Navy and assisted in evaluating is sea training and courses at SAS SIMONSBERG Seamanship School. He also visited Lawhill School and made proposals in order to improve seamanship training.

CMWO Kreck found the Sea Cadets at TS Woltemade to be “kind, disciplined, motivated and enjoyed the interaction.” In order to create an ornamental rope anchor he taught them a diamond knot, flat and sennit platting.

His kind offer of sharing quality time and his advanced knowledge and skills has resulted in the Sea Cadets learning some fancy knots which would assist them in creating a “knotting board”.

The TS Woltemade Sea Cadets and Officer Commanding, Lt (SCC) Paul Jacobs, were appreciative that CMWO Kreck honoured his promise and as a result the Sea Cadets have learnt something which is not taught in their curriculum.

The strong international relationship developed between the SA Navy and the German Federal Navy has fortunately also benefitted youth development thanks to the commitment of CMWO Kreck.

Lt Cdr Glen von Zeil, email

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VISION IS POWER

A vision is a route to the achievement of goals and dreams. Every dream could be reached by setting short term or long term goals. In order to achieve those goals one has to have a vision of how to reach or overcome the plan or reach the goal at hand. I know in life there are many challenges that sometimes make one doubt if one’s plans have a hope of success in reaching the goal, but I tell you a plan with a vision and determination is likely to reach the leader board.

South Africa is a very beautiful country with lots of opportunity, although some individuals are disadvantaged. Disadvantages limit the vision of the unfortunate individuals, who at some point lack resources and opportunities which increase their chances of dreaming big. Knowing is knowledge and knowledge is power, without knowledge challenges tend to be tougher than usual. A determined mind with a clear vision and knowledge produce fruitful results under any circumstances with the addition of courage of course.

Life on its own has a lot of challenges and the environment does not make any justice in warning one about the challenges that can be met across the life’s journey to success or reaching one’s dream and goal. The vision of a determined soul that really has a mission to achieve in life, fights and pushes through all obstacles that life put on his or her road to success. L Cpl Maria Mmaphefo Mapea, 43 SA Brigade HQ, Wallmannsthal

GOD WITH ME ALL THE TIME

If you are going to be successful in life, you must have the right vision. You must have foresight of the success that God has obtained for your life. Therefore it is pertinent that you visualise the good that God has ordained for your life again, and, breaking through the sound barrier, listen before you answer. If you do not, you are being stupid and insulting. To really communicate, you must give up three things: you must give up your assumptions. We get into trouble when we start assuming we understand the meaning of what people say to us. The truth is everything you pray for. Thanking in prayer, our prayer is powerful. It is true that prayers can move mountains; there are things that can be changed through prayer. Our faith in God can transform a bad situation into an acceptable one. God wants us all to pray. It is our only way of talking to Him, the one and only Almighty and Glorious God.

Shimmy Dimakatso Boshomane, Seshego
A DEDICATED AND HUMBLED BATTALION SECOND-IN-COMMAND IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In the olden days it was believed that the profession or the work you chose was a calling from God. Nurses, policemen, soldiers and pastors were not just seen as people who were working to make money or a living, it was said that “they had been called”.

The Second-in-Command of 5 SA Infantry Battalion (5 SAI Bn), Maj Harold Muzi Skosana, some members call him “jungle master, skos Nazareth”, is one of those people who sees his profession as a calling. The Major loves his work. He is dedicated and committed to his work, everything he touches at work turns to gold.

When the Battalion members arrived at the deployment area there was no network at the temporary base where the companies were staying and it was not easy for the soldiers to communicate with their families. Maj Skosana did his best to get Wi-Fi installed. He did not fail and made it possible. Soldiers were able to surf on the Internet, transfer money to their families, communicate with their loved ones, and as such the communication problem was solved, thanks to the “jungle master”!

Maj Skosana knew that as basaaza (South Africans) we love watching news, staying updated and watching soccer and cricket. So he made sure that every company got a television room with DSTV connection. Thus our soldiers were always updated.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) it is usually raining and Maj Skosana realised gore masole a rata monate, basaaza (SA National Defence Force soldiers like to have fun) in their leisure time. He then came up with the idea of building a hall that could accommodate the battalion members. The proposal was approved and so the hall was built at Sake Base.

It felt like the shortest deployment ever and the best one ever. There were always activities to keep the soldiers occupied such as sporting events, celebrations of public holidays and other social gatherings and the time simply flew. So humble, so politically correct, so supportive, so accommodative, when it was Friday company parade time, the battalion members always loved to hear his motivational speeches - perfect to uplift the spirits of the members who missed their loved ones at home or who encountered other deployment challenges.

Maj Skosana was always of help when it came to work. He was a mentor, a teacher and he understood his duties. He worked with personnel and ensured that no paperwork was late, administration was on par. He worked with logistics and the battalion members never ran short of anything. He excelled in his corps – the SA Infantry Corps. That is why I call him jack of all trades … “Nazareth”.

When it was time for work, he made sure his administration was done on time. We never had a pay problem - thanks to Maj Skosana and Lt Sanele Ngcobo and his personnel team. He made sure that our morale was high.

We always talk good about people when they are no more, but I want to say: “Thank you, Maj Skosana”, you have been the best Battalion Second-in-Command of 5 SAI Bn for 2014/2015 in the DRC. Keep burning the fire in this department; you were never a boss, but always a leader.

We thank the Officer Commanding of 5 SAI Bn, Lt Col Sehaka Thomas Hloka, for his Battalion Second-in-Command and personnel in all the various sections - together we made it, with each other's support we succeeded! It was not an easy 365 days, but we made it.

Cpl Dumisani Masetlhwa, the Democratic Republic of Congo
MY PRAYER

Heavenly Father I kneel before You this afternoon
I am fully armed but I know my protection comes from You
Please journey with me through the night as You did during the day
When I am feeling weak give me strength to move forward
Be my light during the dark and let your angels guide me
Make my duties and responsibilities be seen possible
Let me be an instrumental patriot for the United Nations and the RSA
If I fall, please pick me up and let me fly with wings
Let there be peace in your world
I ask this in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Rfn Siboniso Thwala, email

LISTEN TO MY STORY

I am so proud to write and thank soldiers who are part of my story:
Soldiers who are dedicated and loyal to the Department of Defence
Soldiers who are flying our flag higher and higher
Soldiers who always make their commanders happy
Soldiers who are always disciplined
Soldiers who are the centre of gravity of the Commander-in-Chief
Soldiers who promote and protect peace in our land
Soldiers who defend our liberty with pride
Soldiers who are prepared to risk their lives for the sake of our people
Soldiers who are peace lovers
Soldiers who take their work as priority number one
Soldiers who know their task ahead as soldiers
Soldiers who value the seven values
Soldiers who are soldiers today
Soldiers who are soldiers tomorrow
Soldiers who are soldiers forever.
Cpl Mafunda Guduza, Potchefstroom

THE PEACEKEEPERS

We fought no wars but we won battles
Battles of fear and battles of human displacement
We killed no masses but rebuild the nation
The nation’s hope and possibilities
We never cried victory songs but sang songs of peace
We captured no prisons but we freed souls
We restored no land but we helped build homes and schools
We couldn’t wipe the tears of years but we did make them smile
We made their skies blue with our blue berets
With our South African humanity we warmed their frozen and suffering hearts
With our cheerful greetings and smiles we made them look forward to the next day
Every land we step onto breathed life
Every road we travelled, river crossed and village, lived again
Children rejoiced in our presence
Churches, schools, roads affirm our generosity
Our presence couldn’t change yesterday but did make them feel safe.
Capt B.P. Ngcobo, Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal Bluff, deployed with 5 SA Infantry Battalion (A-Company) in the DRC

I AM A SOLDIER

One day as I was sleepin’, the sweat on my body kept creepin’
Even in my subconscious; I truly felt so anxious
For the events that I saw; were reflexions of a true show
The thunderous blasts, on the pillars and the masts
With the children crying’, as they’re watchin’ people dyin’
Truly lookin’ so helpless; for so many were homeless
I’ve heard them callin’; as constructions were fallin’
And developed a nasty feelin’; as if deep inside I was bleedin’
Eventually I woke up; and realised there was need for some back-up
I was urged by my conscience; to get back to my senses
For there was a need for combat mission
And without suspicion, I had some vision
Restorin’ the pride of the nation; was my real ambition
So I heeded the call, and truly stood tall
Armed with my knowledge for the aim of musketry
I am a real sentry!
With all the qualities of an infantryman; I represent my countrymen
For the infiltrators the world over; are truly takin’ over
Invidin’ different states; with all they’ve got at stake
I am a soldier; and I will never become a dodger
I know my obligations, and all my transgressions
I stay alert in wait for those captured I cannot bait
My duty is 24/7; (so) I won’t knock off at eleven
I’m on standby for life; with all my efforts I strive
To maintain discipline and to restore my pride
The flag of my country I raise high; and can never get high
On alcohol and drugs; truly divert our focus
To all the irrelevancies that bring divisions among us
That’s why I (still) make a claim; that I am a Soldier!
Smn Tshepo Magoro, 6 Signal Regiment
Operation PYRAMID launched at Skukuza

Over and above executing its main constitutional mandate of safeguarding the sovereignty of the state, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) assists other government departments in rendering essential services. One of these services is borderline control. Over the years that the SANDF operated in the borderline environment, it has performed exceptionally and in the process scored significant victories with regard to undocumented foreign nationals, recovering weapons, stock and vehicles, arresting criminals and preventing contraband.

The Department of Home Affairs, in conjunction with the Department of Defence/SANDF and the South African Police Service (SAPS), recently launched Operation PYRAMID at Skukuza in the Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga. Operation PYRAMID is a precursor to the establishment of a Border Management Agency (BMA) following the approval of the Cabinet in December 2014 of the BMA’s vision to be a single agency that will assume full control of port of entry and borderline functions.

This interdepartmental project seeks to have stricter but not xenophobic management of the cross-border movement of people and goods and clamp down on illegal activities. Accordingly, in that regard, Operation PYRAMID is clear that foreign nationals are welcome in South Africa. In implementing the new migration approach, which will be fully elaborated in the Green Paper to be released by March 2016, the risk-based management approach, which should involve the steps taken to enhance border management, will be outlined.

Key challenges facing border management in South Africa involve human movement, transnational organised crime, criminal activities, terrorism, endangered species and natural resources as well as animal, plant and human diseases.
Furthermore, large parts of South African air space and coastline are vulnerable to illegal air space and maritime movement.

The launch of Operation PYRAMID announces the start of an ongoing operational initiative in the borderline environment that seeks to improve the overall coordination and cooperation between government and civil society partnership to secure our country’s land, air, and maritime borderline.

Operation PYRAMID seeks to:
- Ensure greater coherence and impact of existing government initiatives in the borderline environment in the transition period while the BMA is being established;
- Elevate the profile and work of Government’s various borderline initiatives, with a specific focus on South Africa and the region;
- Position border communities as crucial partners with Government in securing and safeguarding the country’s land, air and sea borders;
- Optimally utilise the complementary role of technology, infrastructure, State personnel and local communities in border control and safeguarding; and
- Strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships at multiple levels of governance to secure South Africa’s borders.

Operation PYRAMID will focus on law enforcement, technological solutions, improvement of infrastructure, development of border communities, and on bilateral, multilateral and intelligence-driven operations.

“Through this launch, we emphatically intend to communicate the message that Government is committed to enhancing borderline security and control as well as improving partnerships and collaboration between various stakeholders and Government in the borderline environment,” the Minister of the Department of Home Affairs, Mr Malusi Gigaba, in his speech during the launch of Operation PYRAMID.

Lessons from Operation PYRAMID will be carried over to the BMA, considering that a safe and secure
South Africa is vital to the safety and security of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and the African continent as a whole.

The multifaceted role that foreign nationals play in our economy cannot be downplayed:

- By entering our country through our designated ports of entry as regular foreign nationals, and by complying with both South Africa’s immigration and other legislation, most foreign nationals contribute to enhancing the national security of the country and ensure that visitors in our midst are managed, while protecting South Africans as well as the visitors themselves.
- They contribute to economic development of our country by investing in the economy, supplying critical skills including in our health facilities, teaching our children and youth at schools and universities and thus transferring knowledge and skills, and paying much needed tax that contributes towards expanding the national revenue base.
- Foreign nationals contribute to nation-building and enhance social cohesion by bringing more diversity to South Africans and creating more understanding of the diverse nature, not only of Africans of Africa but also of the peoples of the world.
- By having new groups of foreign nationals in South Africa in the recent years, we have become a more cosmopolitan country, and our understanding of who we are as a nation has been deepened, based on the new complex dynamics that have enriched the nation.
- Foreign nationals have integrated South Africa into the global community, and African foreign nationals in particular have made South Africa an integral part of the African continent that we rightfully are.

Envisaged outcomes of Operation PYRAMID are enhanced coordination and visibility of frontline border initiatives, improved risk targeting of existing capabilities, increased participation and community development of border communities, flexible development and spatial targeting of borderline safeguarding and control capability, establishment and improved functionality of joint permanent commissions with neighbouring countries and appropriate municipalities and identifying and learning lessons for BMA’s involvement in the expansion of the BMA to borderlines.
SANDF and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba enhance military to military relations through Project THUSANO

*Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole*

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, accompanied by the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, and other high ranking Generals in the SANDF recently hosted the Vice-President of the State Council of the Republic of Cuba, Mr Antonio Salvador Valdes Mesa, at Logistic Support Formation in Pretoria.

In welcoming the Cuban delegation, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, emphasised that the relationship between the two countries has paved the way for cooperation in defence relations, military diplomacy and other cooperation dealings with a number of significant areas of beneficial engagements.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula further stated that the importance of the overall strategic partnership between South Africa and Cuba is beneficial to both defence forces and the two countries at large. She said: “Therefore the importance that we attach to your working visit to our country has been informed by our relationship that was forged during the liberation struggle. This has since seen our diplomatic relations going from strength to strength since the dawn of our democracy in 1994.

“We attach great importance to the assistance that was given to us in pursuit of our liberation. This partnership that was cemented by relationship during our struggle is a partnership that needs to be nurtured and enhanced in our endeavour to strengthen democracy, peace and security of our world.”

The Minister concluded by saying that since then, there have been several high profile visits and exchanges between the two countries and therefore South Africa views its bilateral relations with Cuba as a strategic partnership. The relationship between the two countries is one of mutual and reciprocal friendship that is firmly grounded on the liberation history.

During the visit the delegation interacted with a number of prominent members of the SANDF to gain more knowledge and insight in terms of Project THUSANO. As part of the partnership and bilateral military to military agreement between South Africa and Cuba, Project THUSANO aims at bringing expertise and capacity to our shores and share ideas with the technical services personnel of the SANDF that would see efforts injected into the repair and maintenance of the fleet of ageing vehicles.

As strategic partners South Africa and Cuba created a suitable platform for the respective defence forces to share information in various fields of mutual interest and exchange ideas and proposals to optimise the strategic capabilities and expertise. Members of the Cuban Defence Force are in South Africa to maintain and bring to life some of the ageing and unserviceable equipment of the SANDF that needs urgent attention.

This intervention adds to the efforts of the SANDF to maintain the equipment at its disposal at optimal operational standards that will ensure that SANDF soldiers are able to meet their operational objectives in supporting the Constitutional mandate.
Massmart hosted a breakfast meeting as a gesture of showing gratitude towards the vital role the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is fulfilling in continuing to support peace on the continent for the good of humanity in building a better world.

Massmart plays a leading role in facilitating the building of relationships between the various sponsors who are valued contributors of the SANDF Goodwill Parcel Project, including the SANDF Spouses Forum and the SANDF. Representatives of the various sponsors attended the event which was recently held at the Cricklewood Manor Boutique Hotel in Waterkloof, Pretoria.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, who was the guest of honour at the event, thanked Massmart and the other sponsors for their collective efforts for digging deep into their pockets in extending a hand of generosity. She expressed how much the Department of Defence (DOD) values their contributions.

The Minister said: “For a soldier it is an accepted reality that your life involves sacrificing the comforts and the familiar environment of your home in service of others, but it is through these gestures of goodwill that you let them know that the people they serve are thinking of them and appreciate the unique sacrifices they make.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added that the event is not just about giving, but also an opportunity to celebrate our National Defence Force and the work that is being done by a special calibre of women and men in securing peace, stability and a better life for all our continent’s people.

The SANDF Goodwill Parcel Project not only touches hearts of the deployed midwives of peace and stability internally and externally, but also reaches out to their families back home over the festive season showing them gratitude and appreciation.

The Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, the SANDF Spouses Forum, chaired by Ms Charlotte Shoke, the wife of the Chief of the SANDF, and the Warrant Officer of the SANDF, MCWO Victor Kgalaedi, were thankful to the sponsors for generously supporting the men and women in uniform who continue to carry the baton and flag of peace.

The following sponsors were thanked for their generous contributions to the SANDF Goodwill Parcel Project: Massmart, Anchor Yeast, Entyce Beverages, Promasidor, Nestle, Colgate-Palmolive, Kimberly-Clark, Pakco, Bull Brand, Lucky Star, P&G, Giants Canning, Tongaat Hulett, Simba, Unilever and Premier Foods.
Minister of Defence reaching out to learners at Makhado

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, recently visited Makhado as part of her youth outreach programme. The programme forms part of the Government’s goals of “Youth Empowerment and Education in Achieving Friendship and Peace” programme.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) also held a career exhibition at Louis Trichardt High School to create awareness in the community and to inform the learners about the structure, organisation, roles, functions, career opportunities, as well as to expose them to the functioning of the SANDF.

Speaking to the learners, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said that the SANDF was in the process of rejuvenating itself by recruiting young people from different backgrounds throughout the country. She said: “We particularly need educated and skilled young South Africans to serve in a modern and technologically advanced National Defence Force.”

The Minister said that the Department of Defence was determined to place youth at the centre of its plans to create a highly professional, disciplined and technologically advanced defence force equipped to execute its core constitutional mandate and other assigned tasks.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “The recruitment into the SANDF of young South Africans with great potential is critical to our efforts to have a military that efficiently and effectively serves the needs of the country and its people. We are here to highlight the work of the SANDF and to create awareness of the full range of its activities and its role in society as well as the career opportunities that exist in the SANDF. I urge you to see our career exhibition and engage with officials manning the stands.”

The Minister invoked the spirit and courage of the youth of 1976 whose selfless heroism paved the way for the freedom we enjoy today. She requested the youth of today to drive the economic development of transformation needed for an inclusive economy that would provide a better life for all South Africans.

Whereas the core responsibility of the SANDF is to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and people of South Africa, its role goes beyond that. It has an inherent ability to contribute to the nation’s economic development and to the upliftment of communities.

The SANDF is in the forefront of promoting social cohesion in the country. It has opened its doors to young people of all races and social backgrounds to serve their country. This also entails recruitment in rural areas. The rainbow nation is reflected in this precious national asset which exists to serve us all.

The exhibition provided an opportunity to enhance the corporate image of the SANDF and to focus on the social responsibility programmes in support of the Government’s developmental outcomes. The event was also an opportunity for the SANDF to promote its image and highlight its role in a democratic society. The learners interacted with a number of prominent SANDF personalities to gain more knowledge and insight regarding career opportunities in the SANDF.
The SANDF Spouses Forum and the Transnet Foundation support community upliftment initiatives and recently increased their footprint by opening two additional classrooms at Kiddy College in Tek Base.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, expressed her gratitude and admiration to the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, the SANDF Spouses Forum and the Transnet Foundation. She borrowed the words of the late former President Nelson Mandela: “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children”.

Thanking the Transnet Foundation, the Minister said: “The work that has been done here makes us proud and we see these classes as symbolic building blocks for a brighter future”.

The Transnet Group Executive of Human Resources, Ms Nonkululeko Sishi, said: “As we descend at this community this morning, cognisant of a myriad of socially challenging realities we face daily, we reaffirm Transnet’s commitment to support every effort that spurs our children and the youth to make a meaningful role in advancing their lives through education.”

The Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke, thanked the collective efforts of members of the SANDF Spouses Forum for their commitment and support to this initiative. She further thanked Minister Mapisa-Nqakula, the leadership of the SANDF and the men and women of the SANDF for their outstanding support. Ms
Shoke extended wholeheartedly her gratitude to the Directors and Executives of Transnet and the project team members for their tremendous contributions to secure the success of the project they worked so hard to achieve being driven by commitment and compassion.

Ms Shoke pointed out that the SANDF Spouses Forum in future will expand its footprint and roll-out to other areas. She highlighted that the SANDF Spouses Forum does not shy away to go the extra mile when necessary. She said that it was with great pride that they can say that the SANDF Spouses Forum is involved in the upskilling of the spouses of soldiers of the Thaba Tshwane military community, empowering them with sowing, cooking and entrepreneurial skills to start their own small business ventures.

Speaking on behalf of the community of Tek Base, Maj Lesego Mosingathi, the Interim Chairperson of the Tek Base Married Quarters and a parent, thanked the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the Chief of the SANDF, the senior leadership of the SANDF, the SANDF Spouses Forum, the Transnet Foundation for their unrelenting commitment to changing young lives and their involvement with Kiddy College.

Maj Mosingathi thanked the team efforts of Ms Helena Langenhoven, the Principal and founder of Kiddy College, Maj Sylvia Dinala, the Social Worker, and the staff members for their deep sense of caring for childhood development and bringing hope for their future.

He said that they stand out head above the rest and reflect the true spirit of UBUNTU and epitomises the values of Tata Madiba. He announced that Kiddy College started eleven years ago and has today 48 children ranging from the age group 6 months to 5 years (27 girls and 21 boys) and five staff members.

Maj Mosingathi made a humble plea to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the Secretary for Defence and the leadership of the SANDF that unemployed women of Tek Base request to convert the piece of open land in Tek Base to a vegetable garden where they can plant vegetables which could supply messes and be sold to the market. He also highlighted that there is a dire need for a recreational centre for keeping the young people safe and sound after school hours. Maj Mosingathi also asked for a school bus to transport the children of Tek Base to schools in Thaba Tshwane and Lyttelton.

In an interview with SA Soldier, Mr Sbusiso Ngomane, Senior Manager for Transnet Special Projects, said that it is true that two heads are better than one. He said: “We are proud to be associated with the SANDF Spouses Forum, especially because we know that we are involved in enriching young minds and shaping their future. There is no truer reflection of the spirit of UBUNTU than a society that takes care of its children.”
Mandela Day is the ideal time to express love and good wishes for those less fortunate. The significance of the day is known to all and is celebrated on the birthday of the late Mr Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. Members of Defence Corporate Communication (DCC) in conjunction with Defence Materiel Division, Paramount Industrial Holdings and the National Conventions Arms Control Inspectorate celebrated Mandela Day at Lodewyk P. Spies Home in Eersterus.

Talking about the significance of Mandela Day we are reminded that former President Mandela was an inspiration to the world, his gesture of solidarity with humanity and his actions towards a global movement for good are a motivation for us all. During the launch of his campaign Tata Madiba said: “I would be honoured if such a day can serve to bring together people around the world to fight poverty and promote peace and reconciliation.”

In an effort to echo the sentiments of the campaign to become Madiba Change Makers, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and its partners played a part by contributing towards the welfare of our senior citizens. Living the legacy of Tata Madiba and as a Force that cares, donated blankets, a wall clock and Paramount Industrial Holdings donated R10 000 to the home. It was heart-warming to witness the members reaching out to the residents of the Home and doing their utmost to contribute towards the welfare of our senior citizens.

Speaking to the residents of Lodewyk P. Spies Home and the guests, Maj Gen Jabulani Mbuli, Chief Director Defence Acquisition Materiel, said that they are blessed to appear before the residents of the Home and to see the joy and excitement on their faces. He said that it was an indication to them that the objective they wanted to achieve in hosting such an event was realised. He added that it is always wonderful to be among the senior citizens of our country, to be surrounded by so much wisdom, experience and expertise of people who have made sacrifices and helped to build this country to be what it is today.

Maj Gen Mbuli concluded: “Our Department recognises the important role that senior citizens
You have worked hard in your youth building this country and continuing to shape its future. How we treat older people is therefore an indication of who we are as a society. If we treat you poorly, then we are doing a disservice to the founding father of our democracy, Mr Nelson Mandela, who said a society that does not value its older people denies its roots and endangers its future.”

The Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory in Johannesburg has made it clear what the icon wanted by way of his legacy. He does not want a legacy cast in stone, concrete or marble, no monuments or highways, but a living legacy of volunteerism and service. It is our duty to do now, to serve, to give and to help and to be better citizens of this country.

Lodewyk P. Spies Home is an inpatient convalescent care, residential care and primary health care service. It includes homes for the frail elderly and a nursing home for the severely handicapped. The home has 45 workers of which three are professional nurses, two enrolled nurses, seven auxiliary nurses and 14 care givers. An auxiliary social worker has now been employed on a voluntary basis to manage the Individual Development Programme and the Home’s Active Ageing Programme.
Chief Army shares landward operations expertise with his Pakistani counterpart

By CO Marumo Machete, SA Army Corporate Communication
Photos by S Sgt Chené Kruger

The SA Army rolled out the red carpet for the visiting Chief of Army Staff (COAS) from the Pakistani Defence Force at the SA Army College. Gen Raheel Sharif (COAS) who was the guest of the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, is the head of the Pakistani Army and as is tradition with visiting Army Chiefs was recently treated to a 15-gun salute at the grounds of SA Army College, with the National Ceremonial Guard providing a company on parade.

Gen Sharif was on an official visit as part of the two armies’ long-standing bilateral agreement that commits them to cooperation and sharing of expertise on various aspects of landward military operations.

At the conclusion of the welcoming parade, the Pakistani COAS was escorted to SA Army Headquarters where an army-to-army dialogue between the two friendly countries ensued with both parties raising issues of mutual concern, including points of discussion that the Chief of the SA Army had with the Pakistanis during his visit to General Headquarters in Rawalpindi late last year.

Gen Sharif’s visit culminated in a farewell function in the evening at the College. He was accompanied by an entourage that included his wife, a son and daughter, his Private Secretary, Maj Gen Azhar Abbas, the Pakistani High Commissioner to South Africa, Mr Ajm Us Saqib, and numerous aides.

Addressing guests during the evening function, Lt Gen Masondo expressed appreciation that Gen Sharif had come to South Africa and strengthened the bond between the two armies.

Lt Gen Masondo stated: “Your visit is truly significant to us because of the intention to build on the good relations that we already have. As the SA Army, we do not take for granted the type of relationship we have with the Pakistani Army. I am truly happy that it is also your desire to see our relations grow from strength to strength.”

He added that the SA Army also appreciated that Gen Sharif managed to bring his family along. He intimated that this not only meant that the Pakistanis were on a working visit but also that they considered the SA Army as a friend. Lt Gen Masondo explained to Gen Sharif’s delegation that there were other potential areas of cooperation that their two armies could tap into to enhance their relationship.

Lt Gen Masondo added: “The area of possible cooperation is that of defence related industry where you will be able to see what South Africa has to offer. I am saying this because when I visited Pakistan, you personally ensured that I was exposed to your country’s defence industry.”

The Chief of the SA Army also highlighted areas of cooperation between the Pakistani and South African armies which had already yielded positive spin-offs. He said: “As the SA Army, we truly appreciate opportunities that your army has given to our officers to learn and we intend building on that.”
The Chief of the SA Army concluded his address by inviting Gen Sharif to consider bringing Pakistani military bands to South Africa to perform during either the Cape Town or KwaZulu-Natal military tattoos in the future. He told Gen Sharif that SA military tattoos had gained much popularity and as a result had attracted a number of bands from other countries.

In his response to the Chief of the SA Army’s address, Gen Sharif acknowledged the SA Army’s hospitality and expressed his gratitude for Lt Gen Masiondo’s words of friendship. Gen Sharif said: “It is reassuring for us to see that our relations with you are destined to grow. We cherish the hospitality that we enjoy here.”

Gen Sharif drew parallels with his host’s army, stating: “We are both young nations with a lot in common in as far as the adversity faced by our people is concerned.” He lamented the fact that Pakistanis continue to pay a heavy price in the fight against terrorism, while the SA Army is also faced with its own challenges, among them the pressing need to contribute troops to peace missions on the African continent.

He stated: “Pakistan will triumph over its challenges and achieve lasting stability and peace for its people.” Gen Sharif also expressed his gratitude for the support of the SA Army and pledged to take their two armies’ relations to even great heights.

With regard to defence industry cooperation, Gen Sharif intimated that he was impressed by the SA Army equipment as well as that of the country’s defence industry. “My team will soon be visiting these shores with the hope of finalising a memorandum of understanding between our mutual defence industries; more especially in as far as army equipment is concerned,” Gen Sharif said.

The two Chiefs were in agreement that a strong defence industry was vital to ensure that armies do the work that they must do. Gen Sharif expressed great enthusiasm for the interaction he had with his South African counterpart and said: “I have really found a friend in you, General, and this I have seen in both our formal as well as informal interactions over the years.”

Gen Sharif concluded by saying: “Long live Pakistani/South African friendship” - a slogan that was received warmly by his South African counterpart, a sign of the admiration that the two armies, the SA Army and the Pakistani Army have for one another.

The function was attended, among others, by the Army Command Council and executives from Denel who interacted with the Pakistani delegation and shared ideas.

ABOVE: The Pakistani delegation was well received and even took time off to take a group picture. Front row, fltr: SCWO Charles Laubscher, Warrant Officer of the SA Army, Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, Chief Director Army Force Structure, Maj Gen Nontobeko Mpaxa, Chief Director Army Force Preparation, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, Chief of the SA Army, Gen Raheel Sharif, Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Maj Gen Azhar Abbas, Private Secretary to Pakistani COAS, Brig Zahid Malik, Defence Military Adviser to Pakistani COAS, and Capt Umer Sajjad, Aide-de-Camp to Pakistani COAS. Back row, fltr: Brig Gen Mawethu Mdulwa, Commandant SA Army Combat Training Centre, Brig Gen Eddie Drost, Director Army Strategy and Direction, Brig Gen Gerhard Kamffer, Director Army Reserves, Col Charles Buyse, SSO Army Foreign Relations, Col Muzikayise Tyhalisi, Personal Staff Officer to Chief of the SA Army.
MILITARY SKILLS NATIONAL COMPETITION 2015
19 - 24 October 2015 in POTCHEFSTROOM
ENTRY FORM
(After completion fax to 086 560 9085 or email: uys@cornergate.com)

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I hereby confirm that the above competitor is a member of this unit and hereby authorise his/her participation in the Military Skills Competition and that man days are available for the member.

For Official Use: Accepted | Yes | No |  |
What is the Military Skills Competition?

Every year the Reserve Force Council is host to the Military Skills Competition, supported by the Defence Reserves. The competition is open to all ranks, gender and ages. We have invited various countries to enter teams for the 2015 competition and are looking forward to observe how their skills have developed over the past few decades. Unit commanders are urged to enter at least four members to be considered for the team prize.

Please note: all entries to be submitted through your unit.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Land Obstacle (500m)</strong></td>
<td>Reserve Force Council: Ms Fryer Tel: 011 444 2843</td>
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<td>The competitor must pass over 20 obstacles on a 500m track as quickly as possible. Dress: 4b Long Sleeves (cammo)</td>
<td>Defence Reserves: Col Motswadira Tel: 012 355 6397</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hand Grenade</strong></td>
<td>SA Army Force Prep (ETD): Lt Col Kamana Tel: 012 355 1516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing four grenades, + 575g, at four targets placed at 15m, 20m, 25m &amp; 30m. Three attempts to throw the grenades as far as possible. Furthest to count.</td>
<td>OIC MILCOMP 2015: Lt Col Van der Westhuizen Cell: 083 321 9356 email: <a href="mailto:uys@cornergate.com">uys@cornergate.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Pistol Shoot (25m)</strong></td>
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<td>Deliberate: Standing position - 10 rounds in 2 min. Rapid: Standing position - 10 rounds in 30 sec. Wearing of paratrooper helmet is compulsory. Dress: 4b Long Sleeves (cammo)</td>
<td>Fax nominations: Lt Col Kamana: 012 355 1570 email to: Lt Col Van der Westhuizen <a href="mailto:uys@cornergate.com">uys@cornergate.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Combat Run (8km)</strong></td>
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<td>Running the full distance over different types of terrain in as short a time as possible. Dress: Dress: 4b Long Sleeves (cammo) and military/combat boots</td>
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The Chief of the SA Army bestows Mandela Medals

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, recently conferred Mandela Medals on its members who had contributed in taking care of the first Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), President Nelson Mandela, during his lifetime and his memorials, lying-in-state, final send-off and execution of his state funeral.

Among the medals bestowed were 24 Mandela Medals Silver. This category of medals was received mainly by senior members of the SA Army, including Chiefs of formations and Major Generals. In addition, 15 Mandela Medals Bronze were conferred on men and women in uniform who had worked tirelessly during the world’s darkest hour. The departure of this global icon did not only touch South Africa but the entire world. It therefore befits the SA Army members who meticulously planned and conducted this dignified state funeral.

Addressing the members on parade and guests at the Army Headquarters Parade Grounds in Pretoria, Lt Gen Masondo applauded the value of the medals presented to deserving members who successfully executed the state funeral of the Nobel Peace Laureate winner and South Africa’s first democratically elected President.

Lt Gen Masondo said: “A military medal – by its nature – brings joy, sentimental value and significance to the life of a soldier, which no amount of money can replace; even more so if it is associated with a world respected statesman such as Tata Madiba.”

The Chief of the SA Army reminded the parade of that gloomy hour on 5 December 2013 when President Jacob Zuma, the President of South Africa, announced the sad news of the departure of Africa’s greatest son, Tata Madiba.

In his inauguration speech on 11 May 1994 this African visionary said: “Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud”.

Lt Gen Masondo said that recipients should proudly parade with the Mandela Medals as “a most patriotic honour”. He added: “I urge you, as the country’s landward forces, to rigorously peruse our mandate and to support the programmes of Government.”

ABOVE: Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the Chief of the SA Army, bestowing Mandela Medals.
The SANDF Spouses Forum visits the elderly on Mandela Day

Article and photos by Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

On Mandela Day members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Spouses Forum took hands with the spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps to show compassion to the elderly.

The Holy Cross Home at Suiderberg in Pretoria was identified as their place of choice to do their bit for the 67 minutes campaign on Mandela Day. The Chairperson of the Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke, said they were delighted to be among the elderly at the home and spent the day in their presence.

Ms Shoke said: “We hope you are enjoying your day. We like to thank the staff of the Holy Cross Home for allowing us to pamper the elderly people here on Mandela Day. We take pleasure in knowing you and sharing with you something which you will remember us by.” She indicated that it was Madiba’s wish for people to think of others who have not much and feel neglected. The spouses donated blankets and goodie bags that lit up the elderly’s faces.

She said: “We draw inspiration from the self-sacrifice that Mr Nelson Mandela made for the people of this country. He spread the message and made a call to people everywhere to take responsibility to change the world for the better.”

Ms Shoke added: “We are glad that we could manage to put a smile on your faces. But what is important is to make such an initiative to be an everyday thing. So parents, please accept these tokens as a sign of our goodwill to you in honour of Mandela Day.” She emphasised that by continuing to lend a helping hand to those who are less fortunate, the spirit of UBUNTU will be revived as advocated in the African cultures, which simply means humanity through serving others.

Col Samuel Malose Mokubela from the Inspector General SA Army Office mentioned that most of the people he knows where born at the Holy Cross, as the facility was previously a hospital. He explained that the place has a special place in his heart given his experience with it. He added: “This place has a very important and symbolic meaning to me as I understand its history. Parents, I would like to say do not feel lost; we still recognise you as the ones who gave birth to us, loves us and brought us up.” Col Mokubela said he was touched by one elderly lady who said that they are in need of walking sticks. He undertook that his Division would do its utmost to fulfil the request.

LEFT: Ms Charlotte Shoke, Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum, in conversation with one of the residents of the Holy Cross Home after donating a blanket to her.

ABOVE: Ms Charlotte Shoke, Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum (front, middle) with the members of the SANDF Spouses Forum and the spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps at the Holy Cross Home at Suiderberg in Pretoria.
The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Defence Subcommittee (DSC) hosted the 23rd DSC meeting recently at SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane to address fundamental defence issues concerning regional security developments, to review progress, identify gaps and shortcomings and to refine areas of cooperation in order to maximise the value of engagements.

The DSC meeting also provided the delegates with an opportunity to assess progress made in implementing the commitments made in the DSC meeting held at Windhoek in Namibia and further explore avenues and solutions in the quest for security and economic stability, thereby giving effect to the visions of the principals as reflected in security cooperation.

The DSC was preceded by an Operational Sub-Subcommittee (OSSC) meeting in May 2015 which was aimed at finalising the Contingency Operational Plan for the protection of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Intervention Brigade against any attack in accordance with the decision adopted by DSC in Windhoek whereby the OSSC was directed to prepare a roadmap for the completion of the Contingency Operational Plan.

During the conference it was announced that an Extraordinary DSC meeting was held on 29 November 2014 in Pretoria and, following its recommendations, South Africa volunteered to host the AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise which is aimed at evaluating the state of readiness of the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability with a view to achieving Full Operational Capability by December 2015.

Furthermore, it was agreed, among other issues, that there was a need to intensify efforts aimed at strengthening the SADC Standby Force as an important pillar of the African peace and security architecture. The strengthening of the SADC Standby Force, other security structures and the action plan would assist in meeting the daunting challenges of peace, security and stability, particularly in deploying missions in support of peace support operations.

South Africa is regarded as a leading country in contributing military personnel and major equipment for peace missions in pursuance of its foreign policy of promoting peace and stability on the continent. The country’s important role in mediation to end conflicts have earned it a good standing, reputation and respect among SADC member states, African countries and the international community in general.

Speaking at the opening ceremony the Chairperson emphasised the importance of the overall strategic partnership between the SADC member states. He said that South Africa was indeed honoured to be a member of this prestigious defence group which was taking ownership of future economic growth and social development of the people.

Gen Shoke highlighted the long and important partnership embodied in the Defence Subcommittee as reflected in many years of collaboration. He hoped that the deliberations would be frank, open, dynamic and robust in order to achieve the common objectives of the SADC Defence Subcommittee.
Acknowledging determination of SANDF men and women

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The nobility of wearing the uniform, ribbons and medals of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) shows where the uniformed member has been and what he or she has achieved in his or her military career. These decorations visually reflect acknowledgement, gallantry, loyalty, devotion to duty, outstanding sacrifice, distinguished service, pride and honour.

The Acting Chief of Corporate Staff, Maj Gen Louis Dlulane, recently held a special medal parade in honour of the late former President and first Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Mandela, at the Armscor Sports Ground in Pretoria.

Maj Gen Dlulane acknowledged the selfless determination of SANDF men and women by honouring 177 deserving members with Mandela Bronze Medals. The recipients included those who contributed in taking care of the iconic statesman while he was alive up until his death, his memorials, lying-in-state and his final send-off and the execution of his state funeral.

In addition to the 177 Mandela Bronze Medals, 47 members were honoured for 20 Years of Good Service, while 16 members were awarded 10 Years of Good Service Medals for distinguished conduct and loyal service to the SANDF and the people of South Africa.

Addressing the members attending the parade, Maj Gen Dlulane said that medal parades are prestigious military ceremonies and proud moments for soldiers, as they are an illustration that their services are recognised and appreciated. He said: “This ceremony is held to recognise and celebrate your achievements and I hope that you take good memories from it. I further hope that after this parade you will be recharged with more energy that will inspire you to go further. May your achievements and these medals set an example and be a source of inspiration to others, while encouraging you to walk the extra mile.”

Shortly after the medal parade, Maj Gen Dlulane spoke to members of the media. He mentioned that he had opportunities to preside over a number of medal presentations in the past, but this one will be one of the most historical in his military career. He said: “I know its significance, some of the people who performed the operation during Mr Mandela’s funeral activities were under my command.” He also touched on how military discipline, which our global icon, Mr Mandela, epitomised, was central to a successful career in a defence force. Maj Gen Dlulane said: “Discipline is something former President Mandela practised throughout his life, as a lawyer and as a politician. It is an established military norm and value. A soldier that is ill-disciplined has no place in the military.”

The Director Defence Corporate Communication, Brig Gen Xolani Mabanga, was among the medal recipients. He was honoured with a Silver Mandela Commemoration Medal and the 20 Years Good Service Medal. He said that the recognition for service was overwhelming. Brig Gen Mabanga said: “I am humbled and feel honoured and privileged that among all the Brigadier Generals in the SANDF, I was selected to play the role that I did during Mr Mandela’s last days.” Speaking about the greatest lesson learnt from the life of Mr Mandela, Brig Gen Mabanga pointed out that the greatest lesson he learnt was the respect for humanity and dignity for all people. He added: “He would not do anything or allow anybody to harm a fellow man or woman.”

Capt (SAN) Prince Tshabalala, Senior Staff Officer Media Liaison, proudly said that he remembers when the local and international media descended on Pretoria for the farewell activities of the first founding President of a democratic South Africa and security was escalated to ensure maximum protection and ease of movement. He added that the greatest lesson he learnt from Tata Madiba was that of humility.

The Acting Chief of Corporate Staff, Maj Gen Louis Dlulane, awards the Mandela Medal Silver and the 20 Years Good Service Medal to the Director Defence Corporate Communication, Brig Gen Xolani Mabanga, next to him stands the SA Air Force Director Corporate Staff Services, Brig Gen Marthie Visser, who receives the Mandela Medal Silver.
NOTICE

Defence Act No 42 of 2002, Section 104, Subsection 7: “Subject to the Promotion of Access of Information Act, 2000 (Act No 2 of 2000), any person who, without authority, discloses or publishes any information, or is responsible for such disclosure or publication, whether by print, the electronic media, verbally or by gesture, where such information has been classified in terms of this Act, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.”

NOTICE

Offences relating to signals, watchwords and disclosure of information

Defence Act No 44 of 1957, First Schedule (Military Disciplinary Code), Section 8, Subsection f: “Any person who contrary to his duty discloses the contents of any document or is negligent in the performance of any duty, in consequence of which an unauthorised person becomes or might become aware of the contents of any document, to the prejudice of the South African National Defence Force.”

NOTICE

Offences and penalties

Defence Act No 42 of 2002, Section 104, Subsection 7: “Subject to the Promotion of Access of Information Act, 2000 (Act No 2 of 2000), any person who, without authority, discloses or publishes any information, or is responsible for such disclosure or publication, whether by print, the electronic media, verbally or by gesture, where such information has been classified in terms of this Act, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.”
Training prepares members for future command

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo by Mr Frans Setlau

The SA Army College awarded certificates to learners who successfully completed the Joint Command and Staff Duties Course in recognition of their achievement during the course.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, emphatically commended the performance of the learners who successfully completed the course as he conferred the certificates and floating trophies. Lt Gen Masondo mentioned that this part of training prepares the learners for future command.

Lt Gen Masondo said: “The Junior Command and Staff Duties Course is a custom made programme that should teach you some of those values that a good commander ought to possess. Take these lessons to greater heights and harvest them for the benefit of the SA Army. Always remember that no amount of military training could be useful in war unless buttressed by a high level of good leadership, discipline and selflessness.”

This phase of training of unit commanders and staff officers at the tactical level of war is one of the essential core activities of the SA Army and empowers members to adequately face some of the challenges that leadership brings.

Lt Gen Masondo said that it is a crucial point in a commander’s career where learning opportunities are streamlined to help mould careers of senior officers. Commanders and staff officers have to equip themselves with war fighting skills and craftsmanship that would bring them closer to their objectives in battle.

The Chief of the SA Army said: “As you undergo courses such as these, bear in mind that you will be gradually absorbed into leadership positions where you will eventually be the last point of call for decisions that dictate which direction our young army will take. Sooner or later the buck will stop with you and the fate of this glorious army will fall squarely on your shoulders.”

Lt Gen Masondo cautioned that commanders must keep abreast of incidents of conflicts as they happen, in particular on the African continent. He indicated that they should take note of occurrences in countries such as Burundi, which the SANDF once guided away from civil wars. He said: “As forward thinking commanders it is incumbent on you to familiarise yourself with the events as they happen in Great Lakes country, so as to be better informed and ready should the need arise to deploy.”

He said that the SA Army commanders recently held a successful Extended Army Command Council at the Infantry School in Oudtshoorn where they deliberated on the state of the SA Army and how best to move it forward in support of its mandate.

Lt Gen Masondo urged the learners to do introspection on whether they have the correct mix of character, skill, tact and patriotism to respond to the challenge of leadership, and if they have what it takes to move the SA Army and country forward.

The Chief of the SA Army said: “There will come a time when the current command and leadership cadre of the SA Army would not be in a position to continue in their positions, and all eyes would be on you to take over the leadership baton. The question you should ask yourself is whether you will be up to the task. “It is courses such as this one that prepares you to confront the challenges that we face as an army, and I am confident that you will be taking from here a toolkit that will add to your arsenal of how to deal with tactical and operational challenges that our work environment brings.”

Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the Chief of the SA Army, presents the floating trophy to Maj David Kassoma from 1 Tactical Intelligence Regiment for being the best overall achiever on the Junior Command and Staff Duties Course.
SA Army commends the Department of International Relations and Cooperation for its language training intervention

Article and photos by CO Marumo Machete, SA Army Corporate Communication

The SA Army presented a certificate of appreciation to the Diplomatic Academy of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) in Pretoria for its prompt response in providing language training for SA Army students in recess from their training in Brazil.

When the SA Army identified an opportunity for its members on recess in the country to brush up on their Portuguese language skills, the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, did not hesitate to engage his counterparts at DIRCO to step in and facilitate training of his members, and they obliged.

The Basic Portuguese Language programme was recently presented under the guidance of Mr Georgino Cambinda, a Portuguese language facilitator at the Diplomatic Academy of DIRCO. Representing the Chief of the SA Army at the appreciation ceremony, Maj Gen Lindile Yam, General Officer Commanding SA Army Infantry Formation, expressed the SA Army’s gratitude to the Diplomatic Academy for their help in providing language training at short notice to the SA Army.

Maj Gen Yam indicated to Ms Cecilia Colarossi, Director Language Training at the Academy, who received the SA Army’s token of appreciation, that the SA Army did not take their gesture to lend it their facilities and expertise lightly. Maj Gen Yam said: “We forwarded the request to you at short notice and we were extremely happy to hear you say yes.”

Maj Gen Yam added: “With South Africa’s strategic thrust now and in the future it has been imperative that we consider looking at some of the other languages, with Portuguese being central to that, as that language has mainly been our handicap.” He cautioned the learners to remain focused and always to remember that they were sent to Brazil for a purpose.

“It is not about being in Brazil, but what you do when you come back.” Maj Gen Yam said that he was pleased that the Diplomatic Academy was able to help the SA Army address the need for broad language proficiency among its...
members. He stressed that language was of critical importance for the successful execution of the military’s operations. Ms Colarrossi was equally enthusiastic about her department’s role in supporting the SA Army.

Ms Colarrossi said: “General Sir, thank you for allowing us this opportunity to improve the communication between our two departments. We know how critical and vital language is in executing your task just as it is ours.” She indicated that it was always a pleasure for her department to help.

The students were on recess in the country from their Command Action Training that was being presented by the Brazilian Army as part of the standing bilateral agreement in terms of which the two armies shared military expertise with one another. The South Africans are upbeat about their stay in Brazil and are determined to share their expertise acquired from the Command Action Training they have received with their colleagues back home.

These SA Army students, nine from the SA Army Infantry Formation and one from the Air Defence Artillery Formation, left the country for Command Action Training which started early this year in Brazil. It is scheduled to end in December when the members concerned are expected to be reunited with their colleagues and families in South Africa.

They were taken through their paces, in class, sharpening their Portuguese language skills which they had already acquired first-hand in Brazil for the past three months. Interacting with this group of South Africans at the OR Tambo Building in Pretoria, the offices of the DIRCO, one cannot help but recognise just how articulate they are in the Portuguese language even after having been in Brazil for only a short time.

Although they have been in Brazil for only a few months, the group is starting to get a clearer grasp of the language and is now able to string together a few sentences in Portuguese. This tailor-made language programme was made possible by the spirit of interdependence and cooperation between the two government departments of the country. The Diplomatic Academy provides diplomatic, consular and language training for South Africans and international clients.

ABOVE: Front row, ftr: Capt Godfrey Makola, PA to Maj Gen Lindile Yam, Col Mafi Mgobozi, SSO Com SA Army, Maj Gen Lindile Yam, General Officer Commanding SA Army Infantry Formation, Ms Cecilia Colarossi, Director Language Training at the Diplomatic Academy of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), and Mr Georgino Cambinda, a Portuguese language facilitator at the Diplomatic Academy of DIRCO with nine of the ten students (back row).
SA Army BATTLELABS – gateway to the digital landward battle space

By Col Laetitia Olivier, Project Officer Future Directorate Army Strategic Direction
Photos by WO2 Tanja Steyn

Members of 101 Air Supply Unit and Pretoria Regiment recently participated in a demonstration of the proposed Infantry BATTLELAB at the Conflict Simulation Centre at the Army College. The aim of the demonstration was to reveal how the SA Army’s BATTLELABS (to be established at all the SA Army’s Centres of Excellence) could be utilised as hubs for blended learning and Concept Development, Experimentation and Simulation (CD, E & S).

Blended learning is a formal education programme in which students learn through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some elements of student control over time, place, path or pace. Face-to-face, traditional “brick and mortar” classroom methods are combined with computer-mediated (E-learning) activities.

The SA Army’s CD, E & S capability has over time, demonstrated how simulation can be used to test the validity and feasibility of futures-oriented concepts and strategies. To this effect, several of the SA Army’s simulation systems were demonstrated during the course of the week. The demonstration focused on how various simulation systems already in use by the SA Army could be integrated as part of a blended learning process to enhance cost-effective training in the SA Army.

ABOVE: The demonstration focused on how various simulation systems already in use by the SA Army could be integrated as part of a blended learning process to enhance cost-effective training in the SA Army.

Systems that were utilised during the demonstration included the CHAKA command and control system, the BATTLETEK constructive simulation system, the VIRTUAL BATTLE SPACE (VBS) synthetic environment and the GAMER MANPACK force-on-force simulation system.

The SA Army’s simulation systems were demonstrated during the course of the week. The demonstration focused on how various simulation systems already in use by the SA Army could be integrated as part of a blended learning process to enhance cost-effective training in the SA Army.
The SA Army’s CD, E & S capability has, until recently, been centralised in Pretoria. Since the beginning of 2014, however, the SA Army has embarked on the process of decentralising this capability and the first tentative steps were taken to establish BATTLELABS at three training units in the SA Army, namely at the School of Armour in Bloemfontein, the School of Tactical Intelligence in Potchefstroom and Infantry School in Oudtshoorn. The intention is to, by means of the BATTLELABS, establish an integrated, networked CD, E & S system that is dispersed among a number of SA Army training units. Ultimately, these BATTLELABS will be linked to one another to establish a tailor-made network for experimentation, simulation and blended learning.

The BATTLELABS will facilitate simultaneous independent as well as collaborative learning and can be successfully used for distance-learning and pre-admission evaluation training which has become mandatory for admittance to certain SA Army courses. Learners will be able to improve their understanding of course material via the use of computer-based assessment modules. The BATTLELABS will also be capable of connecting learners with instructors via web conference technology (SMARTBOARDS) to establish digital classrooms for future cyber warriors. The SA Army is in the process of instituting annual Wargaming Olympiads and the BATTLELABS will be used to prepare SA Army members to participate in these events in a decentralised manner.

The training presented at BATTLELABS will be focused on developing the decision-making abilities of all SA Army members. To accomplish this, a balanced mix of various types of simulators, human-in-the-loop, live and constructive simulation will be used to enhance formal teaching techniques. The BATTLELABS will therefore be used for formal training, continuation training, mission-readiness and combat readiness training or a combination of them all.

One of the greatest advantages of simulation training is to be found in the After Action Review (AAR) and Lessons Identified Lessons Learned (LLILALS) environments as changes to tactical doctrine and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs) can be recorded as part of a scientific research process.

The demonstration was attended by members of the Army Council, as well as members of the respective Services, Divisions, Armscor and the CSIR. The demonstration proved that simulated training can be utilised effectively as part of the SA Army’s blended learning approach and that it remains one of the most cost-effective ways in which knowledge can be disseminated over distance among a great variety of role-players.
Military Academy presents the 7th South African-Netherlands International Security Course

By Maj Engela Meintjes, Military Academy Communication Officer
Photos by WO1 Melanie Smith

This year the Military Academy hosted the 7th South African-Netherlands International Security Course. Apart from becoming an annual event, the course attracts increasing attention from the African continent. Members from the Centre for Military Studies (CEMIS) at the South African Military Academy and members from the Netherlands Defence Academy co-hosted and organised the event. Owing to major renovations at the Military Academy, the course was presented at Air Force Base Langebaanweg.

The aim of this course is to provide young officers with a proper appreciation of international relations and to develop the skills necessary for forming and developing opinions on the matter.

Participants received a number of presentations during the course and also had ample opportunity to participate in discussions and make presentations on different subjects. The approach was therefore twofold: to provide relevant information on international relations and security and to stimulate debate and independent thought on the subject. The course contents are intended to address the needs of junior officers serving on peacekeeping or other complex missions. The course also equips attendees with a broader understanding of the geo-political environment in which current missions are undertaken as well as of human rights, the law of armed conflict, the role of gender in conflict and peace, and lessons learnt from specific case studies.

Owing to repeated student requests and the range of the content of the presentations, the course duration was extended to two weeks. This year the students were officers from the SA National Defence Force, as well as officers from the Defence Forces of Botswana, Mali, Mozambique and Zambia.

The course was presented by lecturers from CEMIS (SA Military Academy), the Netherlands Defence Academy, Transparency International and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Also a first for the course was the visit by the General Officer Commanding Training Command, Maj Gen Andries de Wit, accompanied by the Commandant of the Military Academy, Brig Gen Lawrence Mbatha. It was really appreciated by the members and the overall feedback from the attendees on course was again very positive.
The Military Ombud Symposium

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The Military Ombud, Lt Gen (Ret) Temba Matanzima, recently hosted a symposium to mark the third anniversary of the Military Ombud Office in Highveld Park, Centurion. The symposium was an outreach programme for different stakeholders, including SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members and former members, Military Veterans, the Defence Industry, Academics, Defence Attachés, the Commission for Gender Equality, the SA Human Rights Commission, Chapter Nine Institutions and civil society.

The 2015 symposium was held under the theme: “Fairness, Independence and Trust – Motivation and Productivity in the Current Economic Climate”. The Head of Communication of the Military Ombud Office, Ms Nthombikayise Mduli Jacha, said that the expected outcome of the symposium was to heighten awareness about the services of the Military Ombud Office and to improve the profile of the Office in the military community. Furthermore, the symposium was held to increase cooperation between the Military Ombud and its stakeholders and to gain insight into stakeholders’ perceptions about the Office and to identify gaps in the services of the Office.

The Military Ombud Act No 4 of 2012 mandates the Military Ombud Office to investigate complaints lodged in writing by SANDF members regarding conditions of service. It also safeguards the rights of all members of the SANDF by allowing individuals to raise their concerns when they have been treated improperly or unfairly.

Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima during his opening remarks said that his office had made progress in addressing soldiers’ problems and disputes. He also highlighted that the Office was getting enough support from the Department of Defence and other stakeholders such as Chapter Nine institutions.

The Military Ombud said: “I am pleased to say we can look back with pride and a sense of achievement. Over the past Financial Year 2014/15, the Office received about 279 complaints of which 156 was finalised within the same year. Over and above this a total of 158 complaints from the previous year’s backlog was finalised within the same year.” He also pointed out that the Military Ombud Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary for Defence, the Chief of the SANDF, the Government Pensions Administration Agency and the Commission for Gender Equality in order to enhance the spirit of cooperation as required by Chapter 3 of the Constitution of 1996.

Prof Dayana Ndima, Senior Lecture at the University of South Africa (Unisa) College of Public Constitutional and International Law, was the guest speaker. He highlighted the fundamental elements of an Ombud institution and the characteristics of an Ombudsperson. He said that the functions of an Ombudsperson are to receive and investigate complaints. He added: “Characteristics of an Ombudsperson are independence, impartiality and fairness, credibility of the review process, accessibility and public accountability.” Prof Ndima added that each of those characteristics is effectuated by a number of essential provisions found in the laws creating such Ombudspersons.
The SANDF exercised its Right of Freedom of Entry into Ladysmith

Article and photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

Various regiments and units of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) exercised the Right of Freedom of Entry Parade into Ladysmith as part of the recently held 5th Annual Battlefields Festival of the Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality.

The following Regular and Reserve Force units exercised their Right to Freedom of Entry into Ladysmith, namely 121 SA Infantry Battalion, Durban Light Infantry, Natal Field Artillery, Vrystaat Artillery Regiment, Transvaal State Artillery, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, Natal Mounted Rifles, 1 Medical Battalion Group, 15 Maintenance Unit, 5 SA Infantry Battalion, Natal Carbineers, Light Horse Regiment and Naval Station Durban.

The exercising of the Right of Freedom of Entry into Ladysmith meant that these mentioned regiments and units of the SANDF should be mindful of the supreme sacrifice paid by the many soldiers in the siege and relief of Ladysmith, as well as those who have given their lives in the many surrounding battlefields as it was their sacrifices that have brought these regiments and units this freedom.

The custom of granting this privilege of the city to a regiment, so that its soldiers may march through the city concerned with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed has a long history. It symbolises the confidence that the civilian population has in these regiment and units to confer on it the right and privilege of bearing arms while marching through their city.

Addressing the guests and spectators, the Mayor of Emnambithi/Ladysmith Municipality, Councillor Vincent Madlala, said that South Africa’s role during World War II was acknowledged as truly remarkable. Many of the regiments that paraded in Ladysmith participated with distinction in some of the major battles that took place in North Africa and Europe.

Councillor Madlala further said that the regiments and units that paraded through the streets of Ladysmith reflected the demographics of a modern South Africa. This is one remarkable achievement in any country’s history and the soldiers who serve in these regiments reflect the same pride in their traditions as those who served before them.

The Municipality celebrated the 5th Annual Battlefields Festival through a diversity of events, which included a literary festival, an oral history workshop, an Arts and Culture festival, an international gun-run, a multicultural exhibition and the Right of Freedom of Entry Parade into Ladysmith.

The annual Battlefields Festival aims to increase awareness of the rich historical and cultural heritage of Ladysmith and its other tourism attractions, thereby growing visitor numbers, ultimately resulting in a stronger economy.
Assistant Director ready to fulfil her role as attaché’s wife in Argentina

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

Ms Karin Swart has a 23-year unbroken career in the Department of Defence (DOD) in the Human Resources environment. She recently accompanied her husband, Capt (SAN) Doric Swart, the newly appointed Defence Attaché in Argentina, to Buenos Aires.

In the years of her employment in the DOD, she was known as dedicated and committed to her work. Ms Swart was well known for being empathetic to the problems of others and often assisted people to realise their goals at work.

Ms Swart said: “I joined the Department in January 1992. Subsequently I ended up in Career Management at Chief Directorate Human Resources Development (HRD) specifically for defence civilian education, training and development (ETD) as an Assistant Director in 2007.” Ms Swart said that HRD was involved in controlling the development of individuals when they join the DOD, and in this way bringing all the HR components together. She indicated that the strategic planning for development was also being implemented at the lower level.

She added: “My role is to direct, orchestrate and control the development of civilians in the DOD, specifically from a policy perspective. We have a policy in place and professional development for DOD civilians.”

Ms Swart said that the DOD has over 12 000 civilian employees and the HRD is responsible for providing strategic direction to Services and Divisions on the ETD of civilians. She said: “As national coordinators we have rolled out the Public Service Induction Programme also in connection with other projects.” They also monitored compliance of the Skills Development Act on behalf of the Secretary for Defence and they needed to spend at least one per cent of the DOD payroll on civilian ETD.

She said that she was satisfied with what she had been able to achieve in her career. However, she believed that people should aspire to do more as this was likely to bring growth and prosperity in their careers and lives. She stated that she had a very fulfilling career in the DOD.

Ms Swart said: “The challenge I have encountered and had to overcome was to get to know different kinds of people and network on different levels. It just means that you have to approach your work in a way that is in line with how most of the things operate in the military.”

She mentioned that going to Argentina with her husband was also an opportunity to network. Although she has dreams of her own, she said that she supported her husband ever since he joined the SANDF and will continue to do that. She added: “My role is to represent the DOD in terms of liaison and to support my husband.”

Ms Swart completed her Advanced Diploma in Management at Southern Business School in 2014. She also completed a Higher Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and a Certificate in Basic Counselling from the University of South Africa (Unisa).

Newly appointed Defence Attaché

For Capt (SAN) Doric Swart, who joined the SANDF in 1986 and leaves his current appointment as Senior Staff Officer Maritime Joint Operation Division, believes he had a career of wide variety. He holds a Bachelors Military Degree from the University of Stellenbosch.

He said: “I have gone from intelligence officer into the operational aspects at the Navy Headquarters and then the Joint Operational Division. And now to represent my country in a foreign country, I think is the epitome for any professional soldier.”

Capt (SAN) Swart indicated that to be selected as defence attaché, Service Chiefs nominate the names of possible candidates for a selection board of the Defence Foreign Relations.

He added: “We always regard a defence attaché as your eyes and ears in another country in terms of trading opportunities and in strengthening military ties between countries.”

Capt (SAN) Swart said a defence attaché should be seen as an ambassador whose responsibility is to promote his or her defence force and assess opportunities that can be beneficial to their own country. As defence attachés from other countries are also posted in the country concerned, this would be an opportunity to broaden the South African defence industry in terms of cooperation with other countries.

Ms Karin Swart and her husband, Capt (SAN) Doric Swart, the newly appointed Defence Attaché in Argentina. (Photo provided by Ms Karin Swart)
Soldiers have a special moral duty to protect their country

By Col Riaan Louw, SSO Crisis Management Centre

In the execution of its main role of defending its country or safeguarding its strategic interests, the military exposes its members, especially those in uniform, to a variety of stress-related and social influences, including combat situations where soldiers must have considerable courage to achieve important objectives while their enemies are actively trying to kill them.

These members are also exposed to, and sometimes confronted with different cultures and practices as well as different and new values and standards that need to be dealt with professionally during internal and external deployments. This, in turn, impacts on their conduct and their response to specific situations.

The politically, technologically and practically complex nature of modern warfare furthermore expose the actions and activities of soldiers and especially their conduct during military operations to ever increasing levels of public and media scrutiny. The public therefore rightly requires the military forces that act on its behalf to operate in accordance with the highest professional standards.

Because a military organisation by its very nature is people-focused, and its composition in normal circumstances should reflect a micro-cosmos of the full spectrum of the society it represents, its main priority should be the profiling, recruitment, appointment and training of the right people in the right positions for the right reasons and, once they have been appointed, looking after their interests.

As an organisation which should regard its people as its most important asset, the military should understand that it requires a special “brand” of people who are able to survive not only on the battlefield, but also in all other situations it may be confronted with. It therefore requires skilled, competent and committed people who require little supervision, who get the job done first time and who can make the organisation look good. Without such people and especially without quality leadership to direct the outputs of the organisation, not even an adequate budget or the most sophisticated equipment and technology will guarantee the success or the survival of such an organisation.

A military organisation that is confronted with poor leadership, lack of decision-making, low morale as a result of poor human resource practices (appointments, promotion, remuneration, accommodation and employment security), poor discipline (conduct of personnel during deployments, absence without leave, absence from work, disobeying lawful commands, insubordination and drunkenness), poor service delivery, high levels of criminality, endemic corruption, poor public image and perceptions of the organisation as reflected in a perceived loss of interest in and support for the organisation’s core business, and a lack of timeous and in-time communication with its stakeholders, is in serious trouble.

Most of these issues are linked to human conduct and human interaction and therefore impact drastically on the morale of the organisation. Poor morale, in turn, impacts on the soul of an organisation and has the ability to destroy it. The importance of addressing these challenges in a professional and ethically responsible manner can therefore not be over-emphasised.

This includes the issue of grievances. In this regard, history has taught that soldiers in peace time and due to the long periods of inactivity have a tendency to complain about day-to-day issues, including accommodation, pay, promotion, perceived injustices and other personal matters impacting on their financial status. If not addressed through specific mechanisms to deal with individual or collective grievances in time, these issues can result in actions that undermine not only morale but also the credibility and reputation of the organisation and its leadership and the security of the state.

A military organisation can be identified by special characteristics such as the monopoly on the lawful use of force within the ambit of existing rules, the following of orders and commands from superiors within the framework of rules that protect subordinates from unfairness and the abuse of authority, action, the consequences of which must be calculated in advance, a unique identity which has in essence remained the same despite centuries of change and upheaval, the fact that it constitutes a reflection of society in the sense that it recruits personnel from all strata of the population and special working conditions to enable soldiers to survive in difficult circumstances.

The military can also easily be distinguished from other organisations because of its dependency on rules, its specific way of doing things, its reliance on discipline, its standards for correct behaviour which is all-important for seniors to model correct behaviour for juniors and effective communication to ensure common understanding of goals and objectives.

Although the military has very specific rules linked to disciplinary measures which regulate the conduct of its members in every possible scenario, the actions and activities of the members will always also have an ethical dimension, which implies exposure to a magnitude of ethical dilemmas on a daily basis.

All interventions to address these

Col Riaan Louw.
identified challenges (or current way things are done in the organisation) as well as its key performance areas (expected outcomes of interventions) will therefore have to focus on human conduct and interaction, and therefore have to address the soul of the organisation.

While the rules for ethical conduct are the same for soldiers and civilians, the military has a constitutional obligation to protect the country and its people from external threats. In order to carry out this duty, it is entrusted with special powers and rights, including the use of force and the option to kill when necessary.

Although the use of force by the military is limited by just-war principles of discrimination and proportionality which are intended to minimise harm to noncombatants, it is granted a constitutional monopoly over certain uses of force, based on the legal principle that extends the right of individuals to defend the innocent with deadly force. Should the military abuse the constitutional limits on the use of violence, it would violate its “social contract” with society.

It is therefore important that whatever loyalty military organisations foster among their members must always be subordinated to loyalty to the country and commitment to preserve its constitution. Soldiers must therefore be encouraged and trained to refuse to obey clearly unethical or illegal orders without any threat of retribution (normally pertained to in the organisation's code of conduct).

The military’s premium on hierarchy which inculcates strong habits of fully willing obedience to superior officers by new members entering the profession remains a challenge in this regard. It must, however, be interpreted within the context of the nature of the military where it is important for soldiers and especially officers to be trusted, respected and admired as leaders by their subordinates and to be effective and responsible stewards of the people and resources entrusted to them.

Soldiers are members of a unique breed who forms bonds with other soldiers that are of the strongest in human experience. They show themselves to be compassionate and willing to sacrifice their lives to preserve the lives of others and often share a heavy burden of guilt for having killed and maimed other human beings, even when they are confident that it was the right thing to do under the specific circumstances.

The military unfortunately does not consistently live up to the high standards expected of them due to questionable tactics, human tendencies and a management by objective approach that may lead to unintended consequences. Soldiers furthermore often have to face ethical dilemmas, which constitute a conflict between powerful moral values.

An example in this regard is when a commander must balance a desire to avoid inflicting unnecessary civilian casualties against risks to his own troops if he avoids attacking an enemy military installation. Many ethical issues facing the military are also rooted in broad political and economic questions as well as tactics chosen by its enemies.

The military is therefore subject to a special moral duty to execute its responsibilities to protect the country in an ethically responsible manner on behalf of the citizens of the country. As indicated above, this implies obvious moral dilemmas and a special need for a strong ethical foundation that can be used as the basis for ethical decision-making, especially because proper ethics training can prevent soldiers from being punished after the fact. This, however, can only be done with well qualified and trained personnel and a proper ethics awareness plan.

The military accordingly has an obligation to prepare its members to face challenges with an ethical dimension. In this regard, ethics training is a non-negotiable preventative measure which can ensure that soldiers are empowered to confront morally difficult situations in their day-to-day activities with the necessary confidence. This, inevitably, will protect their interests, as well as that of all citizens of the country.

While most militaries world-wide has to content with conflicting views on whether service in the military is just another job or a unique vocation which calls for “service before self”, or both, the institutionalisation of professional military values and a unique military culture seems to be a good point for departure. The strategic challenge (command challenge) facing the military is thus to institutionalise the military as a unique vocation calling for high discipline and high standards in all respects, and to be proud of such discipline and standards, rather than letting the military degenerate into just another job.

This will call for decisive leadership and low tolerance for transgressions of discipline and standards. In this regard it is important to note that a unique military culture would imply one new organisational culture incorporating the best elements of other cultures brought on board – including issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion and political sentiment.

As is the case with any organisation, the leadership of the organisation is responsible for the full spectrum of the ethical dimension of the organisation and the moral conduct of its members. It is therefore important for the military to understand that its commander is the custodian of ethics in the organisation.

What distinguishes the military profession from other professions with which it might share high values, is the fact that soldiers will preserve and protect the honour and independence of their country with their lives. Professional soldiers do not require written laws to know that a soldier and especially an officer’s word can be depended on to be the absolute truth, in other words that their word is their bond, their honour.

If subordinates perceive their leaders’ word to be credible it will boost their confidence and trust. Because nothing destroys an organisation’s effectiveness quicker than a lack of integrity on the part of its leadership, leaders at all levels must demonstrate the utmost integrity in everything they do - on duty and off duty.

If combat therefore occurs, the professional soldiers must fight. To refuse a combat assignment is to break faith with all other members of the profession and this is a first-order violation of professional ethics. Just like a teacher refusing to teach and a doctor refusing to treat a patient. Because the stakes are so high in the military, this breach of professional ethics could be devastating.

Soldiers as servants of the state are therefore deemed ethical if they make decisions and act on them in a manner that is not questionable. The effective management of ethics in the military should therefore seek to promote acceptable behaviour and the right attitude in performing entrusted duties and contribute to the cultivation of an ethical corporate culture, which implies that ethics should become a way of living in the organisation.

*Note: This document is an excerpt from a background document prepared by Col Louw for a presentation done on the topic.
South African women have always been acknowledged for marching in the forefront. Even nowadays the “Imbokodo” (meaning woman) is a trademark for holding the knife by its sharp edge as a legacy left by the great legends of our country. This time one of our young women in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has made name in the boxing ring.

Pte Miseka Qhawe Manco was born at Mpeko village, Mthatha, in the rural Eastern Cape on 13 September 1989. She is the second child and the only daughter of the three children of Ms Thethiswa Manco. Her second name “Qhawe” literally means hero (heroine).

Pte Manco started her school at Ubuntu Junior Secondary School in Mthatha in 1997. In 2008 she finished her Grade 12 at Ngwayi/ianjwa Senior Secondary. During her days at school she was a sports fanatic who excelled in track-and-field events. In rural areas sport was confined largely to athletics. Consequently this is the reason why only track-and-field events are singled out as her best area of proficiency.

In January 2012 Pte Manco joined the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS). She completed her basic military training at Lephalale in Limpopo Province.

It was a double blessing for her to join the SANDF as she was able to revert to her sporting dream, which soon became a reality. She was awarded as overall fittest woman during her basic military training and overall fittest MSDS woman in the Western Cape Area Military Health Unit in 2013.

All these achievements inspired her to become more involved in sport and paved the way for her participation in major sporting events in the SANDF, such as the SANDF Fittest Soldier Championships held at Infantry School in Oudtshoorn in 2013.

This was the beginning of better things for this young female soldier. In the same year while attached to 9 SA Infantry Battalion, Pte Manco started her boxing career.

In March 2014 Pte Manco was transferred to Defence Headquarters in Pretoria where she is currently employed at the Department of Defence Unit in the Human Resources Section.

On her arrival in Pretoria, she joined the Centurion Boxing Club in Thaba Tshwane where she is being trained under the watchful eye of coaches, Ms Moonyean Britz and Mr Hans Britz.

After joining the boxing club she participated in the Gauteng Boxing Development tournament which was held at Hoër Tegniese Skool Pretoria Gardens and won a gold medal. This was a huge achievement for a beginner, and was just the start of many good things in boxing circles.

Her second encounter as a member of the Centurion Boxing Club saw her competing at provincial level. On 6 June 2015 she competed in the Gauteng Boxing Championships at the Transnet Rail Engineering Academy in Pretoria. During this tournament she was selected to represent Gauteng in the South African Elite Men’s and Women’s Boxing Championships held in Grahamstown in July 2015. Pte Manco won in the semi-finals of the South African Elite Men’s and Women’s Championships and scooped a silver medal. This win also qualified her for the finals. Pte Manco only lost on points in the finals in the bantam weight category. But for a beginner in competitive boxing, it was a great achievement to obtain overall second position in the South African Elite Men’s and Women’s Boxing Championships.

The staging of this prestigious tournament coincided with the month of birth of the first Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Mandela. This month is celebrated worldwide as Tata Madiba is an international icon. Hence the tournament itself was a blessing for this young, enthusiastic and upcoming boxer.

Pte Manco is not only interested in sport. She is currently studying towards the Higher Certificate in Accounting at the University of South Africa. But her great ambition is to be the female boxing champion of the world one day.

*Sponsorships are welcomed interested parties can contact Pte Qhawe Manco on 078 350 4999.
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Smoking can be regarded as a “cool” thing to do, a stress reliever for some and eventually developing into a habit. However, a few puffs a day can lead to something very far from the coolness which is commonly associated to smoking. Some start this habit by experimenting with cigarettes, while with others it has recreational origins.

High tobacco consumption seems to be a global challenge, as the level of addiction seems to be escalating as well. Some of the challenges linked to tobacco are smoking at an early age and smoking large amount of tobacco which normally has negative implications of one’s health.

One of the main concerns by the Department of Health with regards to tobacco smoking is the negative implications which the substance has on citizen’s health. Medical research has indicated a number of health conditions which are caused by tobacco, which includes lung cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

A joint effort by the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners strive to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. Tobacco use is a single most preventable cause of death globally and is currently responsible for 10% of adult deaths worldwide.

High levels of nicotine contained in tobacco is said to be causing smokers vulnerable to addiction. The addiction seems to get increased by the inhalation of the tobacco into the lungs. It has been said that the nicotine takes about two to three days to exit the body, even though the physical and psychological withdrawal symptoms take longer.

When looking at the effects that the tobacco has on the society, there seem to be a growing concern about the effects of secondary smoking; these are the effects of smoking to the non-smoking people. The smoke that is been blown by the smoker, would normally be inhaled by people who are within the surrounding.

Inhalation of tobacco smoke or smoking cigarettes brings in large amounts of chemicals that would run in the bloodstream, subsequently having health implications. Some of the commonly affected areas include the eyes, digestive system, heart circulation, lungs, brain, and liver. On the damage caused on the eyes, it is proven that different chemicals in tobacco can cause damage to the macula, which represents the most sensitive part of the retina.

The common illness which is associated with smoking is cancer. In the digestive system, the cancer for the esophagus, larynx and the oral cavity are mostly common. Some of the cases of these cancers seem to lead to mortalities. While the heart and blood circulation are also affected because the nicotine increases the heartbeat and there is normally a sharp increase on the blood pressure.

Continuous tobacco use can also lead to many different cancers, as well as chronic lung diseases such as Emphysema, and bronchitis, heart disease, pregnancy-related problems, and many other serious health problems. However, all this can be preventable by not smoking and if you have already started, quit!

With regards to the negative implications which smoking has on the respiratory health, nearly 9 out of 10 cancers are caused by smoking. Smokers today are much more likely to develop lung cancer than smokers were in 1964. Nearly 8 out of 10 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) deaths are a result of smoking. And currently there is no cure for COPD.

Women smokers are up to 40 times more likely to develop COPD than women who have never smoked; moreover smoking increases a person’s risk of getting tuberculosis. While the effect on children and teens is that it slows their lung growth. And the generic effect of smoking is the cause of lung cancer which eventually leads to death in both men and women.
42 Battery unveils its mascot – the rhino

By CO Arisha Pather, the Acting Fire Control Officer: 42 Battery
Photo by Maj Wezile Pakade

2 Battery of 4 Artillery Regiment held an unveiling ceremony of its mascot – the rhino - recently in Potchefstroom. Maj Wezile Pakade, Commander of 42 Battery, welcomed the invited guests in honour of the commemorated rhino.

Brig Gen Hendrik Holtzhausen, General Officer Commanding Artillery Formation, was the invited guest speaker who had the privilege of unveiling the rhino together with Lt Col Jongile Maso, Officer Commanding 4 Artillery Regiment. Previous Battery Commanders and Battery Sergeant Majors of 142 Battery at 14 Field Artillery were also present at the gathering.

Addressing the members, Brig Gen Holtzhausen briefly expressed the essence of a mascot: “… a mascot is a person or an animal that is believed to bring good luck. It is used as a symbol to unite a group of people who share the same idea and objectives. I believe the mascot will serve its purpose for the members of this battery and those who have left this battery”.

Col Benjamin Schoonwinkel, Officer Commanding School of Artillery, announced that the School of Artillery had raised R27 700.00 in an attempt to save the rhinos.

Five years ago, the South African Football Association (SAFA) unveiled its mascot - Zakumi - also known as the World Cup 2010 mascot. This year 42 Battery had the pleasure to display the rhinoceros in the lines of 4 Artillery Regiment.

It is interesting to note that each weapon system in Artillery is represented by an animal. The M5 120mm mortar is represented by the cobra, the Gv6 155mm self-propelled gun-howitzer is represented by the rhino, the 127mm 40 tube self-propelled Multiple Rocket Launcher is represented by the bateleur and the Gv5 155mm gun-howitzer towed is represented by the leopard. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) nomenclature prescribes the representations of the various weapon systems.

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) revealed in its statistics that 333 rhinos were poached last year alone has resulted in a financial loss of about R228 million. The SANDF is strategically involved in saving the rhinos against poachers. Col Nceba Bobelo, Officer Commanding Joint Operations Tactical Headquarters Mpumalanga, said in an interview with SA Soldier: “Operation CORONA was making a huge difference in the fight against poachers”.

4 Artillery Regiment has been successfully deploying in support of Operation CORONA, while 42 Battery has recently returned from Fouriesburg under the command of Maj Pakade. 43 Battery of 4 Artillery Regiment is currently preparing for Operation CORONA in September 2015.

There are five critically endangered species of the rhinoceros: white, black, greater one-horned, Sumatran and Javan. Why should we save the rhino? What is the big deal? By the 19th century there were approximately one million rhinos. In 1970 there were around 70 000 rhinos. Today there are only around 28 000 rhinos surviving in the wild (statistics by the International Union for Conservation of Nature).

Rhinos have been around for 40 million years. We should not allow them to become extinct. It is humans who kill rhinos for their personal financial benefit. It is humans who cause illegal pollution that ultimately destroys their habitat and humans who cause political conflicts that adversely affect conservation programmes.

Rhinos are an umbrella species, which means that by protecting rhinos other species are also protected. Rhinos attract visitors and tourists as they are the second biggest living land mammals after the elephants. This tourist attraction allows for financial growth in the national parks, local communities and the South African economy as a whole.

Apart from the unveiling ceremony of the mascot of 42 Battery, 4 Artillery Regiment also hosted a week of excellence. Various activities took place in which all the members from the different artillery units: Artillery Formation Headquarters (Pretoria), School of Artillery (Potchefstroom), 4 Artillery Regiment (Potchefstroom), Artillery Mobilisation (Potchefstroom), Natal Field Artillery (Durban), Transvaal Horse Artillery (Johannesburg), Transvaal State Artillery (Pretoria), Cape Field Artillery (Cape Town) and Free State Artillery Regiment (Kroonstad) participated.

The day began with the unveiling of the mascot, followed by a drill demonstration, pace stick and gun run competition. The School of Artillery won first place in both the drill demonstration and the gun run competition. The day ended with a medal parade for the whole of the Artillery Formation. Brig Gen Holtzhausen awarded recipients with Good Service Medals and Mandela Medals.
**Fear Not**

*By Chaplain Pearl Rasebopela, the Chaplain at Central Procurement Service Centre*

Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

We live in times when there’s so much to fear, but in all of it God still says: “Fear not for I am with you”. We live in times where evil is in the increase. When we read the news, listen to the radio or television, there are reports about crime and many other stories that leave one with shock and goosebumps. We are faced with financial difficulties, marital problems leading to divorces and children without proper family bonds, work difficulties and many other difficulties. Recently we were clouded by the fear of attacks on foreign nationals. During those difficulties, fear creeps in to paralyse us or torment us. Fear is the devil’s weapon to disarm us and keep us vulnerable to his attacks.

In the book of Ephesians 6:16 it is written: “Above all, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil”. This is the call of God to us. He is calling us to act courageously and not allow ourselves to be moved or terrified by any situation as long as He is with us. God is calling us to have strong trust in Him, even in difficult situations. He wants us to demonstrate unshakeable faith regardless of our circumstances, because, after all, He is Jehovah Sabaoth, Lord of Hosts. He will fight for you during times of difficulties. He is Jehovah Shalom, the Lord our peace, and during troublesome times He will give us His peace. By the way, He gave us that promise through His Son, Jesus Christ, when He said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives” (John 14:27a).

God is our peace, and His peace will calm the storms in our lives and take away our fears with just a word. He makes us walk on stormy seas of life, as long as our eyes are fixed on Him. He makes water come out of a rock and provides for us in times of thirstiness. Our God is an awesome God and is faithful at all times. He is in control of the universe. We might not see His second set of footprints in our difficult journeys, but that is because He is the one carrying us through that difficult journey.

As the Bible says in 1 Peter 5:7 “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” The cross of Christ is the perfect indication that God cares for us and will take our fears away. When we were entangled by sin leading to eternal death, He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross and redeem us to eternal life with Him. It does not matter what fear you are facing, just know that our God is greater than that you fear. So let us fear not, for God is with us.
Facilities at Personnel Service School are now wheelchair user-friendly

LEFT: Sgt Noah Malatji, Senior Personnel Clerk at Personnel Service School, now has smooth access to the facilities of the School owing to the newly revamped wheelchair ramps.

By Cpl Ally Rakoma
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The Officer Commanding of Personnel Service School, Col Petra van der Merwe, and WO1 Ronald Chetty of the Disability Forum were pleased to inform the SA Soldier team on the progress regarding the upgrading of the facilities of the School.

The newly revamped wheelchair ramps and facilities including the parking area are now wheelchair user–friendly to accommodate people and learners with disabilities. The prescripts of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) on how such facilities should be like, including the heights for accessibility were applied.

Col Van der Merwe also highlighted that soldiers who served in combat or other musterings and not in the Personnel Corps, when seriously injured in their line of duty were remustered to the Personnel Corps. Therefore it was vital to upgrade the facilities of the School.

The Officer Commanding pointed out that Personnel Service School, as a training institution for Human Resource functionaries in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), had to acknowledge disability as a human rights’ issue. This led to the recognition that a person with disabilities does not imply his or her inability to work or learn.

Consequently the School demonstrated its support and recognition towards members with disabilities by creating a conducive and convenient work and learning environment for them as they contribute equally alongside their fellow colleagues.

Most of the buildings at the Personnel Service School in Thaba Tshwane were built in 1934 and facilities such as the office areas, halls, sleeping quarters, bathrooms and toilets. They were not designed to provide access for people with disabilities.

The SANDF Education Trust


The main objective of the SANDF Education Trust is to support the education needs of the dependants of the following persons:

• SANDF members killed or severely injured subsequent to April 1994, while on official duty.

The SANDF Education Trust is funded through donations and contributions received from the private sector and international business enterprises. Ongoing fund raising initiatives are in place, and the SANDF welcomes all contributions.

For more information on the SANDF Education Trust, visit www.dod.mil.za

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We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.

Together we move South Africa Forward
Medicinal myths and a lack of care for our natural environment will be the forces behind the extinction of this magnificent animal.