From the Editor’s desk

Deployment is just not for money

Delville Wood Centenary Commemoration and the inauguration of the Memorial as a Heritage Site

Honouring our fallen soldiers by recognising their war efforts

The Delville Wood Story - SA Schools’ Essay Competition 2016

Eustace St Clair Hill (Padre) – Priest and Chaplain extraordinaire

Background to the Delville Wood Memorial and Museum

Personal reflection on the centenary of the Battle of the Somme

Chief SANDF visits Rose Happy Times Elderly Care Centre

The Military Command Council attends to military facilities on Mandela Day

The joy of making someone happy

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

2005 - Winner of the Government Communicator of the Year Award (GCIS).
2005 - Winner of the National Ubungcweti Award (GCIS).

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The amazing power of the South African R5 coin

Mandela Day at JSB
Garrison has become a 365 days affair

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FRONT COVER: Cpl Elias Kholane, a Piper from the SA Military Health Service, leading the Military Veterans at the Arques-la-Bataille Cemetery (situated in the Archelles district southeast of Dieppe, France) with the National Ceremonial Guard Band in the background. (Photo by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe)
As I was editing the various articles on the centenary commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood I recalled the first time I stepped onto the green grass in front of the South African Memorial and Museum complex at Delville Wood in France ten years ago during the 90th commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood.

It is a little piece of sacred land belonging to South Africa lying at the edge of the village of Longueval, 140km north-west of Paris in France. It is there in that wood – also referred to as Devil’s Wood – that our fallen heroes fought the fiercest and bloodiest battle ever to be fought in the land of the Somme.

Read more on pages 12 to 27 about our never-to-be-forgotten heroes – the soldiers who went to France, but did not return home. Let their sacrifice be our inspiration.

In the remainder of this edition of SA Soldier we publish articles reflecting the good deeds done by our members in the Department of Defence/SA National Defence Force when they dedicated 67 Minutes of their time to International Mandela Day.

18 July is International Mandela Day which was the late former President Nelson Mandela’s birthday. This day seeks to honour his life’s work by changing the world for the better.

Let us try to pay forward what our world icon of humility, selflessness and forgiveness encompassed. This world icon and Nobel Peace Prize winner – Madiba – as the world fondly remembers him, was the first Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force.

Kindly take cognisance of these two famous quotes by the late Tata Madiba, especially when dedicating 67 Minutes towards International Mandela Day:

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” - Madiba

“If there are dreams about a beautiful South Africa, there are also roads that lead to their goal. Two of these roads could be named Goodness and Forgiveness.” - Madiba

Let us strive to do our 67 Minutes not only once a year, but 365 days per annum …

**Nelda Pienaar**
Editor SA Soldier

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**message**

**from the editor’s desk**

Full text page:

- Ke lefelo le kgethwa le le nyane le elego la Afrika Borwa mo mafelelong a naga ya Longueval, 140km leboa-bosubela bja Paris ko Franse. Ke gona ko di woods - gape e bitswa Devil’s Wood – mo bagale ba fitileng ba re na bwanan ngwana ya nama le madi ya ga sanka ya lwena pele nageng ya Somme.

- Balang gape mo letlakaleng la 12 go fihla go la 27 ka hlaletse ba re ka se ba lebaleng - masole a a ileng Franse, morupela sa sanka a boe gae. ga nke goba sehlabelo ga bona e be hloholetso ya rena.

- Ka kgopotso ya kgatiso ya SA Soldier re phatlalatsa di athihhle tse hlaqisang di tiro tse botsie tse di dirilweng ke magaborena gotswa kgorong ya tsa ishirilelele e negela metsotso ya bona ye 67 go letsatsi la Mandela la inthansinale.

- Letsatsi la Mandela la inthansinale ka di 18 Julae, le ebeng eleng letsatsi la matswalo la Mopresidente Nelson Mandela ya a fitileng, le bontsha go tlhompha moreko ya bophelo bja gage le go tlisa phetogo ye e kaonafatsang lefase.

- A re lekeng go tswetsa pele se aekhono ya botho ya lefase, yo a senang boithathi cupsa a nang le botshwarelo. Aekhono ye ya lefase, mohlodi wa khusto – Madiba - lefase le a mo rata ebele le a mogopola, e be ele Kgosi-Molaodi wa lefaphe la tsa ishirilelele la Afrika Borwa.

- Ka boikokobetsie elang bloko mantsu a tsebagalang a a mabedi a Tata Madiba, kudu ya re neela metsotso ye 67 go letsatsing la Mandela la inthansinale:

  - “Go lokologa ga se go robu diketwane tsa motho, cupsa ke go phela ka tsela ya go tlhompha tokologo ya batho ba bangu.” –Madiba

  - “Ga ebang ona le ditoro ka Afrika Borwa ye botse, gona le tsela ya goisa phiilelelong ya tsona. Ditsela tse tse pedi di ka bitswa toko le tshwarelo.” –Madiba

- A relekeng go dira metsotso ya rena ye 67 e seng ga tse ka ngevaga, cupsa matsatsi a 365 ka ngwaga.

**Nelda Pienaar**
Morulaganyi SA Soldier

*Translation into Sepedi by AB Samuel Ramonyai, trainee at SA Soldier.*
N ot only will the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) celebrate its fifth annual Armed Forces Day on 21 February next year in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, but it will also commemorate the centenary of the sinking of the SS Mendi - the largest naval disaster in the history of South Africa.

Blacks have equally played a very important role in the defence of this country dating back to World War I. In the northern hemisphere, on the early mid-winter morning of 21 February 1917, the SS Mendi, a steam driven troopship that set sail from Cape Town for La Harve (France) sank in the British Channel within 20 minutes after being rammed by the SS DARRO. Her cargo included 824 Army personnel, 803 of which were soldiers from the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC).

The SANLC men on board the vessel came from a wide range of social backgrounds, but the majority were from the rural areas of the Pondo Kingdom in the Eastern Cape. Most of them have never seen the sea before and very few of them could swim.

A large number of men died on impact and others succumbed of hypothermia. They sang and stamped the death dance together knowing their fate. Regardless of clan or tribe, these men faced death together as South Africans. The courage displayed by these brave men has remained a legacy in the South African military history.

A panic did not ensue among those left on board the vessel. Instead a leader emerged, Reverend Isaac Dayobha. He called those left on board the ship together and admonished them:

"Be quite and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die ... but that is what you came to do. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers. Swazis, Pondos, Basutos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries brothers for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies”.

The SA Navy has accorded honour to those who died in this tragedy by naming one of the new Valour Class frigates, the SAS MENDI, while a Warrior-class off-shore patrol vessel has been renamed SAS ISAAC DYOBHA.

The SA Government has also commissioned a medal, called The Order of Mendi, in recognition for an extraordinary act of bravery placing in great danger the life of a person trying to save the life or lives of others or even those who lost their own lives, or by saving property in or outside the Republic of South Africa.

Sources: SA Legion - Atteridgeville Branch and NavyNews
JUST A QUESTION

Just a question???
I always ask myself a few questions that do not need an answer, e.g. why are we not united and committed?
Why do we like to do things to impress, why do we perform our tasks/duties in the presence of our superiors, how about changing this tendency and giving our best even if there’s no one who’s looking at us?
How about commitment, care and support?

Remember, no one is perfect, but why cannot we strive for perfection and righteousness?
Hopefully we all know that together we can do more, regardless of the corps, rank or race. How about motivating, influencing, correcting and encouraging each other?
What are we going to lose if we work together as one - assisting each other and learning new things from each other daily? Sharing ideas and listening too; acting as one, believing in each other, committing to excellence, doing whatever it takes, not minding who gets the credits, overcoming the obstacles together and yearning to succeed together.
I believe in respect, love, teamwork, patient and commitment.
Just a question???
Pte Tshanduko Gwatuli, email

MY SA NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

My life would have been black and white, but you became my rainbow, having brought so many admiring colours to brighten up my life.
My stay with you, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), became so spiced up with a lot of ingredients that it made me who I am today. The drills taught me order and obedience. The early mornings and nights reminded me that no empire that can be built by lazing around. The cleaning and ironing of the bed taught me that cleanliness is next to Godliness and the payday town passes, reminding me that it does not matter what I endure during the month as in the end hard works pays.
My SANDF, I personally have found comfort in you, you are the most special and phenomenal organisation I have ever came into contact with. My SANDF, keep up the good efforts and good moral values. My SANDF you are: S-Strong, A-Amazing, N-Natural, D-Diverse and F-Faithful.

Pte Tshanduko Gwatuli, email

PASSING OF COL MTHUTHUZILE VENA

The Military Academy recently experienced the sad loss of its Chief of Staff, Colonel Mthuthuzile Vena. All staff members were gathered in the Military Church when the Commandant of the Military Academy, Brig Gen Lawrence Mbatha, broke the sad news to the unit.
Everyone was mystified and it was difficult to accept the reality of it all.
The Chaplain of the Military Academy, Chaplain Phumza Nkuzo, had a prayer session with the family and some of the unit’s ladies on 13 August 2016.
Col Vena has been at the Military Academy since 24 February 2010 in the post of Staff Officer 1 Planning and Programming and was promoted on 1 January 2012 to the Chief of Staff of the unit. He leaves behind his wife and seven children.
The Military Academy will now continue to support the family. The unit held a memorial service on 18 August and the full military burial was on 27 August 2016. Maj Engela Meintjes, Military Academy Communication Officer

Cpl Dimakatso Davhana, Army Support Base Johannesburg

letters to the editor

SA SOLDIER welcomes letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited for reasons of style, accuracy or space limitations. Letters should preferably be typewritten. All letters must include the writer’s full name, address and home telephone number. The opinions expressed in letters are not necessarily the views of the Department of Defence/SA National Defence Force. The volume of letters we receive make individual acknowledgement impossible. Please send your letters to: The Editor, SA SOLDIER Letters, Private Bag X158, Pretoria, 0001. Letters may also be faxed to (012) 355-6399 or sent via email to sasoldier@mil.za. We would like to hear your comments or ideas, particularly about matters concerning the Department of Defence. Regrettably, anonymous letters cannot be published - Editor.

ABOVE: The late Chief of Staff of the Military Academy, Col Mthuthuzile Vena.
Making this tournament a success. It’s good sportsmanship that took place at the 2 SAI Bn soccer field. The tournament was organised by the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) together with Sanlam and the SA Military Health Service. It is with this understanding that we have to prepare our forces, not only with training and equipment, but also intellectually. This is to meet the security challenges of Africa with an acute awareness that security has social, economic, political and environmental dimensions to it.

The role that South Africa and the National Defence Force (SANDF) play on the African continent in building peace and supporting interventions for peace and security relies on the ability to project forces where and when needed. However, it also relies on an essential understanding of particular issues and complexities related to the security environment of our continent.

It is with this understanding that we have to prepare our forces, not only with training and equipment, but also intellectually. This is to meet the security challenges of Africa with an acute awareness that security has social, economic, political and environmental dimensions to it.

THANKS TO THE SANDF FOR SPORT TO CREATE UNITY

Congratulations to my home unit, 2 SA Infantry Battalion (2 SAI Bn), for winning the hard fought tournament that took place at the 2 SAI Bn soccer field. The tournament was organised by the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) together with Sanlam and eight teams participated, namely 2 SAI Bn, 1 SAI Bn A-team, 1 SAI Bn B-team, 10 SAI Bn, 2 Parachute Battalion, 12 SAI Bn, the University of North West and the Ramotshere Local Municipality.

I was part of the tournament as a player and was very impressed with the professionalism displayed by all participants, from coaches to players, and all members who contributed to making this tournament a success. It’s not an opinion but a fact that football is an emotional sport which at times has the potential to result in fighting, disagreements and tantrums, but in this case our tournament was a sign of unity as it ended successfully without a fight, disagreement or misunderstanding and the process of choosing those who walked away with accolades was comprehensive and fair. This was good sportsmanship to showcase to the local population who attended the event as they saw soldiers as friendly and reasonable players. So I would propose to the SANDF that it organise this type of event regularly to strengthen our relationship with the local population and colleagues from other units in the organisation. Previously soldiers were defined as rude and arrogant people by civilians, but through such sporting events the local population has finally come to realise that soldiers are also reasonable people who enjoy socialising with them and can live in peace and harmony.

As our former President, world icon Mr Nelson Mandela, said: “Sport has the power to change the world; it has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can awaken hope where there was previously only despair.”

Lt Col Pieter Roos, Directorate Operational Support and Intelligence Systems: SA Air Force

DEBUT OF A YOUNG FEMALE AUTHOR

I am highly inspired and motivated by Maj B.P. Ngcobo who was born in Umlazi, Durban, and joined the SA National Defence Force through the Military Skills Development System. She graduated from the Durban University of Technology as an Emergency Care Practitioner (BTECH EMC).

Maj Ngcobo recently launched her first book titled “Love, Life and all in Between” in Durban. The book is inspired by her life, the mistakes made and lessons learnt.

I believe that she is the first black female soldier to publish a book of this kind. As we celebrated National Woman’s Day, this young author should be made known in the SA National Defence Force community, especially in the SA Military Health Service.

I salute you. Lt Zanele Buthelezi, Military Health Training Formation

SANDF SENIOR OFFICERS ACHIEVE ACADEMIC HONOURS

The three officers attended the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it. The subjects completed for both the PGDip as well as MM-S covered the fields of: Governance, Leadership and Public Value, Public Policy, Analysis Methods, Economics, International and Local Security Concepts, the Rule of Law and Research Methodology. The masters programme also required the submission of a final research paper which contributed 50% of the degree final marks. The research paper is the culmination of one’s understanding in a particular field of study. The research paper also allowed these officers to apply this understanding by demonstrating their ability to identify a particular problem within the field of Security Studies and to address it with sound research skills and methodology.

The studies completed by these officers have endowed them with particular knowledge and skills as senior officers to continue their military careers, with the ability to contribute meaningfully to the work of the SANDF and South Africa as a whole. Their achievement also serves to inspire colleagues to follow suit.

Lt Col Pieter Roos, Directorate Operational Support and Intelligence Systems: SA Air Force

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Capt (SAN) Theo Hokoma, Col Failecia Joseph (SA Army) and Lt Col Pieter Roos (SA Air Force) commenced with studies at Wits in April 2013 by enrolling for the Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDip). By April 2014 the three officers attained the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it. The subjects completed for University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Capt (SAN) Theo Hokoma, Col Failecia Joseph (SA Army) and Lt Col Pieter Roos (SA Air Force) commenced with studies at Wits in April 2013 by enrolling for the Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDip). By April 2014 the three officers attained the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it. The subjects completed for University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Capt (SAN) Theo Hokoma, Col Failecia Joseph (SA Army) and Lt Col Pieter Roos (SA Air Force) commenced with studies at Wits in April 2013 by enrolling for the Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDip). By April 2014 the three officers attained the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it. The subjects completed for University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Capt (SAN) Theo Hokoma, Col Failecia Joseph (SA Army) and Lt Col Pieter Roos (SA Air Force) commenced with studies at Wits in April 2013 by enrolling for the Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDip). By April 2014 the three officers attained the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it. The subjects completed for University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Capt (SAN) Theo Hokoma, Col Failecia Joseph (SA Army) and Lt Col Pieter Roos (SA Air Force) commenced with studies at Wits in April 2013 by enrolling for the Postgraduate Diploma in Management (PGDip). By April 2014 the three officers attained the PGDip qualification, and as they qualified for the masters programme they also enrolled immediately for it.
TRIBUTE TO S SGT MAHWANYA NTAVHANYENI PETER (MUDOBI)

Words cannot describe how lost I am because of your passing when I hoped that you would be fine, and once more hear you calling my name “Lufuno” as you used to call me. You are the only friend who called me by my Venda name. How I wish things were different, after hearing of your accident I prayed without ceasing for your speedy recovery, and I cried to God to spare your life.

When I got the news that you were out of the hospital I never stopped thanking God for what he had done. My heart was stabbed when I heard the news that you had given up fighting for your life, so one part of me left with you and I know I will never be the same without your undying love and support. Mudobi, you were my brother, my friend and my mentor.

I remember when “Chiefs” was playing with “Pirates” you would always tell me to prepare supper first as there would be a problem if “Pirates” lose. It was nice having you in my life and knowing the man in you.

Your sudden departure left me in absolute shock and great sadness. It is true that death is a thief. Nevertheless, when it is time to go none can stop it, and I can only slowly but surely accept it. Thank you for a life well lived. I will hold on to many memories. I know where you are there is no pain and suffering. You will be deeply missed, not only by me but by the whole SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and your family on whose life you have left a great impact.

I am happy I paid my last respects the way I did and your send-off was that of a true hero. I am still hurting and trying to accept, but all the things you have done in this world and your community, including the youth spent in your village makes me happy knowing you lived your life not only for yourself but for all the people around you.

The SANDF has lost a great member, a hero, a mentor and the SA Army Signal Formation will never be the same without you - S Sgt Ntavhanyemi Peter (Mudobi) Makhwanya.

Rest in peace my friend and your name is engraved in my heart forever: Makhwanya Ntavhanyemi Peter.

Between you and me there can never be goodbye because I will meet you again in the next life. Sgt Brenda Mudau, Joint Support Base Garrison, Thaba Tshwane.

By the end of December 2012, 56 out of 59 clinical associates qualified from the University of Pretoria and the Wits University combined. Many of my fellow military students got lucrative offers both from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector and government hospitals. By the end of December 2013, 22 of us were left of the original 59. In January 2013 we were joined by 34 newly graduated clinical associates. By June 2014 we were 47 instead of 56 due to resignations.

The rest of us soldiered on, working hard and were loyal to the SA National Defence Force (SANDEF), for which we got accolades for good service delivery by our clients. We took joy in pushing passion, our trade as Health Care Practitioners and perfecting our craft. Our best reward has been to see our clients healthy and happy. Col Ledwaba came to investigate in 2014.

He was concerned about resignations, our unhappiness and questionable support we were getting. He was impressed with our loyalty and ambition to carry on working. He struck us as a person who was guiding us not to let our situation spill over to the outside world, such as the media or the courts.

I confess that it did cross our mind, but our love for the SANDF and faith in our potential within the SANDEF stopped us. After Col Ledwaba’s visit with his esteemed panel, we were properly advised and saw the light. He lit the spark even in those who were felt hopeless and were losing faith. The soaring numbers of resignations dropped.

Some of us went on courses while others got the opportunity to study further (MBCHB & BPharm). Many of us benefited from the energy, leadership and vision that he showed. He introduced us to a lot of those that he had trained, taught and worked with: they are all superb people. He has also empowered a lot of those who were doing their best to help us to be super ordinary Human Resource members.

The SANDF is like the 10th Province, a community and a family in the Republic of South Africa where we need each other. He never said he was just here to investigate the situation. He advised us, opened doors for us, shared his love, vision and loyalty for the SANDF and its members unconditionally and then remedied the situation with us so that the SANDF, country and our clients could benefit more. I have visited his office with some members and we could not stop praising his professionalism, how he respects and abides by the Constitution, the Code of Conduct, Batho Pele principles, various ethics and above all being a great human being.

Many people visit his office distraught, frustrated, challenged, looking anxious. Those that I met later were happy and told me he was the man that brought a smile to their faces. I can now bravely attest to their praises. I am honoured to have worked with him. I believe I am really a better soldier and a professional. I salute the man, Colonel Ledwaba.

Lt Mpho Kanono, Clinical Associate 2012 & 2013, email

SALUTE TO A VISIONARY

Col Joseph Ledwaba is a phenomenal human being. He is a Samaritan, a fresh morning breeze in our organisation. He takes a project as a challenge and creates a masterpiece out of it.

We as the clinical associates met Col Ledwaba at a time when we had exhausted most of the available means in the SA National Defence Force to be officially appointed and recognised. We had approached many avenues for aid in our situation. Many people in the organisation tried to help us, but they could not stand the test of time.

It is a well-known and undeniable fact that our country’s health system needs an injection of well qualified, trained and ambitious, passionate, fresh and patriotic health care practitioners.

Believe you me; clinical associates are part of the solution nationwide. We are well groomed, trained and qualified mid-level health care professionals who register as supervised professionals at the Health Professionals Council of South Africa.

Our mother body, the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS), sent us to the University of Pretoria and Wits University to study at state expense. This university had a 100% pass rate for military students in 2012, 2013 and 2014 consecutively.

At the University of Pretoria most passed in record time, with few failures. To our surprise and disappointment, we were working day in and day out without proper appointments and professional recognition until we met Col Ledwaba.
COMBAT READINESS: THE ESSENCE OF MILITARY FORCES

The evolving political and socio-economic discourse, influenced by protracted poverty and community conflicts, have indirectly caused an undue and catastrophic shift in the conduct and application of military elements. Change is good. Through change, organisations are able to avoid becoming redundant and irrelevant. However, with change comes many other things.

Organisations either succumb to the usual death of liberation movements or they rejuvenate themselves and stand the test of time. In most cases, and particularly where certain inherent politics dominate, organisations miss the train to equal prosperity. Arrogance and remoteness from issues affecting communities are usually at the core of organisational decline.

Military forces are, unfortunately, not exempted from organisational change and cultural shifts. These forces constitute the front and last line of defence and, by virtue of their social standing and expected political impartiality, change has to be militarily guided. This does not equate to suppression and intimidation of agents of change. Militarily guided change means realising when to effect change and to avoid activities that are foreign to the military. It means military forces should not compromise on discipline. With the sudden proliferation of military technology, sudden at least in Africa, in the comprehension of what constitutes combat readiness must be sought. At times military forces scramble to stay abreast with would be a future enemy and the concept of combat readiness has to be redefined.

The military is no longer only about muscles, but rather mental strength, commitment, willingness to serve the country, understanding the nature and culture of the organisation and, most importantly, having the desire to drive the organisation to new heights. The military is neither about huge numbers nor job creation. Soldiers voluntarily surrender their lives for the good of the country. The military is not about practising democracy but preserving it.

This could be a departure point towards arresting the decline. What does arresting decline actually mean? What is decline in the military context and what causes it? Arresting decline means recruiting and retaining suitable people and placing them in the right positions. However, this should be regarded as a means to an end. This end should be preceded by an acknowledgement of existing signs of decline. Decline could mean a shortage of scarce skills, lack of leadership and/or discipline, suppression of independent and innovative thinking, the promotion of a patronage system as well as insufficient funding. A military without discipline and leadership is doomed to fail in its mandate. In the absence of discipline, command and control suffer the most.

In the face of continuous socio-economic crises and the need to restructure and reposition military forces, the approach should be on reviving and restoring cultural practices. This process must be informed by the appreciation of contemporary military challenges and the envisaged future. Social and political conflicts are endemic and, as such, interventions by military forces must adopt a progressive approach in addressing such conflicts. Military forces would need to be a couple of miles ahead in terms of planning and understanding of possible conflicts. This would be possible if military forces were combat ready.

As mentioned before, numbers are immaterial but attitude and willingness to fit in and realise the end goal are more important. It serves no purpose to have thousands of underperforming and ill-disciplined members who are only a liability to the organisation. These individuals, of all age groups and in all post levels, are preoccupied with promotions even without merits. And, since military institutions operate within a democratic order, the country’s labour laws indirectly influence them. The aftermath of the seniority list approach is the unintended decline in personnel morale, stagnation in terms of positive growth and the exodus of qualified personnel. And what remains is an organisation at a plateau stage where the military is vulnerable and not combat ready. That stage is caused by inadequate or lukewarm attention to succession issues. It is important to guide against this stage. History shows that after a plateau stage comes a downward spiral and premature death. For military, death is not an option. The last nail in the coffin is the waning respect of the community.

It is not easy to be combat ready, but it is gravely important. What is to be done? The uniqueness of the military rules out the death and resurrection option. The obvious and only possible solution is structural transformation of the military. Structural transformation could include devising new financial models to fund the organisation without compromising its mandate. It could also mean a paradigm shift from the normative military practices.

Divorcing the military from the historical background is a learnt fallacy, which equates rank to one’s mental strength. The move would see the adoption of the unpopular, but productive merit system. Members would be forced to justify why they should be retained. They would be physically and mentally fit, and consequently combat ready. There would be soldiers, not civilians in uniform.

Continuous succession planning based on merit could see growth and promotion of innovative thinking. Succession should not be done to promote continuity. While it is desired in many instances, continuity could lead to stagnation and complacency. The combination of the two would render any organisation incapable of progressive policies and adequately trained personnel to implement such policies.

If such a situation exists in the military institution, the organisation will not be combat ready. Instead, succession should enhance human development and productivity. In the military credible succession planning will not only lead to combat ready force elements, but there will be respect for those in leadership. If combat readiness is not only about numbers, physical strength and armament, then the human aspect should take centre stage.

Capt Ntokozo Ntshangase, email
DEPLOYMENT IS JUST NOT FOR MONEY

This is a personal point of view based on my more than four weeks experience in Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is my attempt to refute the deeply rooted misconception that SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members volunteer to be deployed solely for monetary gain. During my mini (more than four weeks) deployment in Goma with deployed SANDF soldiers in Sake and Munigi. I took the effort to get different points of view from soldiers of different demographic groups. Not based on age, creed or colour I interviewed soldiers who were due for rotation after having spent more than 12 months on deployment, others who were still to complete their deployment period and newly deployed soldiers who were about to start their 12 months’ deployment.

South Africa deploys its soldiers in different areas in the DRC for various peace missions under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). In Goma, Sake, the SANDF has deployed the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) for peace enforcement. The FIB comprises all elements of the SANDF from the four Services, namely the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service as well as members from various Divisions such as Defence Intelligence and the Department of Defence Logistics Division. In Munigi, the SANDF has deployed a contingent comprised mainly of the Engineers and support personnel. At Goma Airport an Aviation team is stationed comprised of medics, logicians, pilots and other supporting personnel.

Peace enforcement is about taking all the measures necessary to bring peace. Since the first FIB deployment in 2014, all deployments were 13 months including the pre-deployment training phase. This period will be the norm for the current FIB as well as future deployments.

What is the UN Chapter VII mission? The UN Chapter VII mission of which the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) in the DRC is part stipulates that UN soldiers are to take action with respect to threats to peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression. The UN approach to dealing with conflicts is not to retaliate by military force. The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the members of the UN to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations. Should the Security Council consider that the measures provided are inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockades, or other operations by air, sea or land forces of the members of the UN.

Based on the above one may deduce that the UN can and does authorise direct confrontation with negative forces (rebels). This means that UN soldiers can and will sometimes find themselves having to exchange fire with negative forces. Exchanging fire without any doubt comes with a high risk of injury and death.

When one volunteers to be deployed one must always bear in mind the risks involved. If one solely wants to be deployed for monetary gain, as soon as one gets to the deployment area one comes to realise that monetary gain becomes the least of one’s challenges.

Psychological, social and health challenges of deployment: Over and above the possibility of dying, the external deployment areas (deployment outside of the Republic of South Africa) are harsh environments. The fact that one will be spending 12 months or more away from home and one’s loved ones takes its toll psychologically, while climatic conditions are extreme compared to South Africa. Spending extended periods of deployment sleeping uncomfortably in a canvas tent or other shelter in such extreme weather makes it worse. There is always a language barrier and sometimes hostility from locals who see soldiers as a nuisance rather than as peacekeepers.

In deployment area(s) physical health is something one should always be aware of. The threat of insect bites or stings that could give rise to various allergies or illnesses, eg malaria or tick fever are a constant reminder that one always has to be on one’s guard.

Socially one is compelled to adapt to living with people for the duration of the deployment. Individual privacy is to a certain extent compromised. It is therefore prudent to make peace with the idea of living in a restricted area where strict rules must be adhered to and embrace fellow deployed members who become as if they were one’s family. Creating enemies and living with animosity towards fellow deployed members is a futile exercise that would only bring misery for the duration of deployment.

It is therefore important that if one is to be deployed one takes seriously the importance and relevance of pre-deployment training. This training empowers those who are about to deploy not only with fighting skills but with psychological and social coping skills.

Why deployment: South Africa is a member of the UN and a signatory to a number of agreements. The pledging of soldiers in a UN operation is a fulfilment of her multinational relations and international obligation. The fact that South Africa is deployed in the DRC is in line with the African Agenda. The deployment is further in line with national interest and imperatives as stipulated in the Defence Review. The military is an element of national power thus when necessary will be projected. Soldiers involved in these missions are compensated as per country prescription. South Africa relies on the voluntary nature of the SANDF members and to suggest that soldiers are deployed for the money is an insult to those individuals deployed under trying conditions but it also equates to members being mercenaries.

Mr Lufuno Netshirembe, email

news from abroad

Over

Mr Lufuno Netshirembe, email
All Welcome to attend the

C SANDF
PRESTIGE WEEK

17 - 21 October 2016

at the PMSC
/ Thaba Tshwane /

- Rugby (7’s)
- Bisley Shooting
- Combat Rifle Shooting
- Pistol Shooting
- Practical Shooting
- Small Cal Shooting
- Squash
- Swimming
- Fresh Water Angling
- Athletics
- Bowls
- Basketball
- Blackball Pool
- Cycling
- Football (6-a-side)
- Golf
- Handball
- Jukskei
- Martial Arts
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Walking
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
Delville Wood Centenary Commemoration and the inauguration of the Memorial

The Delville Wood South African National Memorial is a Great War memorial, located in Delville Wood, near Longueval in the Somme department of France. Historically the memorial did not bear the names of black soldiers who died as it was uniquely dedicated to white South African soldiers who had served in all theatres of war.

The names of those who died during the Great War (World War I) to whom the memorial was dedicated were registered in the roll of honour which was housed in the memorial’s museum.

At this memorial is an arch bearing the dedicatory inscription, “To the Immortal Dead from South Africa, who at the call of Duty made the Great Sacrifice on the battlefields of Africa, Asia and Europe and on the Sea. This memorial is dedicated in proud and graceful recognition by their countrymen”.

Though separated in death, a large number of black South African men were recruited by the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) and served during the Great War. The recruits were to have no combat role, but were to be utilised in relieving the shortage of labour. The key role of the SANLC was to work behind the front lines at ports, on the railways, quarrying and forestry. The then government ensured that no black man fought together with a white man on equal terms as this would breach the colour bar between the races.

Many of the SANLC men who died in France were buried at Arques-

ABOVE: Survivors and Military Veterans of the Great War.

ABOVE: The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Jacob Zuma, salutes during the singing of the South African and French National Anthems.

Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Jacob Zuma, delivered his keynote address.

LEFT: The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Jacob Zuma, delivering his keynote address.

100th Commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood

ABOVE: The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Jacob Zuma, with the French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, attached to the French Minister of Defence, Mr Jean-Marc Todeschini, observe a minute of silence after the “Last Post”, at the French Memorial at Longueval.

Not only was 12 July 2016 a Delville Wood Centenary Commemoration and the inauguration of the Memorial as a Heritage Site, but was a day that restored the dignity the SANLC soldiers who died in the two World Wars, a date that will be eternally recorded as the day on which black soldiers were given the recognition and appreciation that they were denied. Most importantly 12 July 2016 signified the act of reconciliation of a nation that was divided in the past.

President Zuma said: “We have
gathered to honour South Africans who sacrificed their lives during the Battle of Delville Wood, one hundred years ago, regardless of race, colour or creed. We are here to honour, in particular, black people who fell in this war, who were not accorded the respect and recognition they deserved, and which is equal to that of their white compatriots.

“The fallen black South Africans who served during World War I are buried elsewhere in France. The injustice that we have to redress is that the Delville Wood Memorial Museum in the past reflected a very biased South African military history. The representation of Africans during the war was very minimal and it distorted the important role they played in various places during the war. The transformation of the Delville Wood memorial was therefore necessary to ensure that it would reflect an objective, just and authentic South African military history. It now portrays and honours all South Africans - regardless of race, creed or rank - who died for their country in World War I and World War II.”

Addressing the attendees, Maj Gen (Ret) Prof Solly Mollo, President of the Military Commission, went to great lengths to emphasise the necessity of preserving history, especially military history accurately. He further indicated that the injustice of the past needed to be corrected to avoid a repetition of the past. The President of the Military Commission said: “It is important that the story of the army be told by the army as the story of the tribe is told best by the tribe itself.”

The Delville Wood Centenary Commemoration was attended by various Cabinet ministers, including the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula. Senior SANDF personnel in attendance were Lt Gen Lindile Yam, the Chief of the SA Army, attending the ceremony on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, the Chief of Defence Reserves, and Maj Gen Louis Dlulane, a Trustee of the SA Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust, and Brig Gen Charles Schoeman, the Defence Attaché in France.

Among the many guests representing different governments and private sector organisations in attendance were the President of the Republic of South Africa and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Jacob Zuma (middle), the French Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance, attached to the French Minister of Defence, Mr Jean-Marc Todeschini (left), and their entourage.
ABOVE: Delville Wood Trust official guests, three young learners from three South African schools. Standing first in line, Meekael Shaik Latiff from Laudium Secondary School, second in line, Tyson Mtshali from King Edward VII School and third in line, Wendy van Wyk from Clarendon High School for Girls.

Organisation (UNESCO) who, with his daughter, Ms Refilwe Makatu, came to pay homage to their family member, Private Kleinbooi Makatu. Private Makatu perished in the sinking of the SS Mendi on 21 February 1917. Private Makatu’s memory is immortalised on the new Wall of Remembrance, together with thousands of other members of the SANLC, who lost their lives during the two World Wars. Other noticeable guests were three young learners from three different South African schools, Meekael Shaik Latiff from Ladium Secondary School, Tyson Mtshali from King Edward VII School and Wendy van Wyk from Clarendon High School for Girls. The Delville Wood Trust invited the three young learners to nourish and invigorate a passion for history in schools.

Learners from Hoërskool Bergvlam in Mpumalanga Province also visited the Delville Wood Memorial and Museum on the day. Asked what being at the historic ground meant to her Anuschka Erasmus (17) said she was overwhelmed to find herself and her schoolmates at a place where their forefathers were buried. It was exciting to share such a space with all these dignitaries and to feel that one was on South African ground, although in a foreign country.

ABOVE: The Delville Wood Cemetery.
Honouring our fallen soldiers by recognising their war efforts

Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

A century has passed since South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC) soldiers fought and died in World War I. The soldiers who perished in the two World Wars were buried in different war cemeteries in foreign countries where they were fighting at the time, for example at the Arques-la-Bataille cemetery (situated in the Archelles district southeast of Dieppe, 194 kilometres from Paris) and in the Delville Wood cemetery (situated east of Longueval on the Somme, 170 kilometres from Paris). In these two burial grounds black and white soldiers from South Africa that fought together in various battles in France, but were buried separately.

Arques-la-Bataille cemetery (later a memorial) has become the final resting place for black soldiers while Delville Wood cemetery (later a memorial) was only the burial ground for white soldiers. Every year two memorial services are held, one at Arques-la-Bataille and the other at Delville Wood. This year the Arques-la-Bataille memorial service was held, with the support of civic bodies at Dieppe on 8 July 2016.

On behalf of the Commander-in-Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), President Jacob Zuma, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, was the chief functionary. Minister Mapisa-Nqakula was accompanied by the South African Ambassador to France, Mr “Rapu” (Rapulane) Molekane, and various other dignitaries.

Director Defence Corporate Communication, Brig Gen Xolani Mabanga, presided at the occasion.

While this event commemorates South African soldiers who perished during their quest for...
LEFT: The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, arrives at Arques-la-Bataille cemetery. The Minister is ushered by PO Thokozile Molose.

LEFT: The Minister of Public Works, Mr Thulas Nxesi, lays a wreath at the French memorial at Dieppe.

ABOVE: The South African Ambassador to France, Mr “Rapu” (Rapulane) Molekane, addresses the guests.

ABOVE: The Sub-Prefect of Dieppe, Ms Martine Laquieze, addresses the guests.

ABOVE: 2Lt Simamkele Ntlombe from Cape Garrison Artillery Unit at the grave of his great-great grandfather, Private Seventeen Tuse.
peace a hundred years ago it also acknowledges that our country has emerged from a history of divisions and conflicts, but now celebrates the progress made in forging unity, common purpose and patriotism. It is during events such as this one that one fully appreciate and celebrate the patriotism, camaraderie and valour of the SANLC during World War I.

Members of the SANLC were not allowed to carry arms in war. Their responsibilities were mainly to work in the dockyards and at railheads, to dig behind the lines, manhandle munitions and supplies and fell trees. In such perilous circumstances men from the SANLC did what needed to be done as soldiers.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “The total losses of the SANLC in Europe amounted to 1120 men, 260 of whom lie in the Arques-la-Bataille cemetery. It is unfortunate that based on the policies at the time none of these men were accorded the honour and recognition they deserved for their contributions. The SANLC hardly received any mention in South African history books. Here lie black soldiers who were buried away from their countrymen. Although they served together, in death they were separated.”

The Minister was quite saddened by the words: “To the memory of those Natives of the SANLC who crossed the seas in response to the call of their great Chief, King George V, and laid down their lives in France, for the British Empire, during the Great War 1914-1918, this Memorial is erected by their comrades” inscribed on the memorial at Arques-la-Bataille cemetery. It was in her opinion not respectful of SANLC soldiers and lacked genuine appreciation of the black soldiers’ war efforts, which led to their demise in a foreign country.

In a reconciliatory tone Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “It is necessary that the historical role played by black South Africans in the Great War is accorded the recognition it deserves in the same spirit as that of the white South Africans who were buried at Delville Wood.”

The Minister emphasised that the injustice that the then black South African soldiers endured should never be repeated. She urged that this commemoration should serve as a lesson of past wrongs and that we should commit ourselves never to allow it to happen again.

In the same spirit of paying homage, honouring the fallen and in recognition of his ancestors, one of the maternal great-great grandsons of Private Seventeen Tuse who died on 17 August 1917 and was buried in Arques-la-Bataille cemetery 2Lt Simamkele Ntlombe from Cape Garrison Artillery Unit was one of the guests attending the commemoration. His presence brought back the past into focus and is indicative of the pain that the contemporary generation endures owing to the injustice that their family members suffered in war and even in death. Lt Ntlombe said: “I am particularly happy that my great-great grandfather is now getting a proper hero’s recognition for his war efforts as a South African black soldier. It is indeed humbling that the current South African government is genuinely taking corrective measures to redress the wrongs of the past.”

**ABOVE:** After the ceremony the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, took the opportunity to greet and hug the children of Dieppe who came to support the event.
Good afternoon teachers and students. This year marks the historic 40th anniversary of one of the most important events in our country’s history. The repression by one section of society on the basis of race, gender, religion and even political affiliation is guaranteed to weaken that nation.

The attempt at recolonizing black members of our society through Afrikaans was a desperate attempt at social engineering which the students of Morris Isaacson High School took in their strides. In fact, June 16 created awareness in the country and around the world and was a game-changer that led to 1990 and 1994. I am able to talk about June 16 without fear of contradiction. This is because the events of 1990, 1994 and June 16 were momentous. In 1990 political prisoners were released, the repressive government of the day recognised them as political prisoners and no longer as terrorists. Political organisations were unbanned and the path to democracy was paved.

That was the fight then. It was a fight for our country not to undermine and mistreat part of its population. It was indeed a fight for South Africa to join the nations of the world to interact and compete on an equal footing. It was a fight so that every child born in South Africa should have the opportunity of success commensurate with his or her application and talents, not to be artificially held back by the colour of their skin or the part of the country in which they were born.

As we commemorate June 16 forty years down the line, 22 years into our democracy, it is fair and indeed appropriate that we ask: “Are we succeeding in our pursuit of the ideals that so many selflessly sacrificed for, including paying the ultimate price - through their lives”. I came here today, excited, because I get excited each time I get an opportunity to talk to the youth. You have the opportunity to give meaning to what the students of June 16, Tsietsi Mashinini, Barney Mokgatle, Murphy Morobe, Tsietsi Malego, Khotso Seatlholo, Hasting Ndlovu and many others initiated to the benefit of our nation. They freed blacks as much as they freed whites. They saved our country from its myopic inward looking obsession with itself. They set us on a path that led to democracy. But democracy is not and cannot be our end game. A prosperous society is. In my address before Gen Solly Shoke, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, on 11 October 2013 I said: “We live in a generation particularly special to our nation. Ours is not a generation that divided the country and by so doing we weakened its strength as a nation. Ours is also a generation charged with laying the foundation and values to ensure our unified nation fires on all cylinders. We have avoided a path of war and self-destruction. If you doubt the enormity of this success, tune in to any of the 24-hour news channels when you arrive home later and you will realise just how much turmoil engulfs the world over challenges much smaller that we have had to overcome.

Future generations will refer to us as the torch bearers. I regard this as a fine privilege. They will evaluate, with the
The Delville Wood Story – SA Schools’ Essay Competition 2016

By Maj (Ret) Dr Terence Milne, Deputy Chair South African Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust

The Battle of Delville Wood, fought during World War I in July 1916, plays an important role in the rich and diverse heritage of South Africa. Many of those brave young men, fighting for freedom far from home in northern France came fresh from South African schools and joined up as young men.

The South African Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust has had a programme over the past three years to engage schools across South Africa to instil awareness in the youth of the sacrifice young South Africans of all races made in World War I, focusing this year on the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme, Arques-la-Bataille, and the upcoming Centenary of the sinking of the SS Mendi in 1917.

A portion of all the costs of the programmes was borne by the Ashworth family, who had two brothers fighting at Delville Wood. The aim of the programme was to have three young South African learners, selected on the basis of an essay competition, attend the Centenary commemoration in July 2016.

The three essay competition winners joined their Chaperone, Col (Padre) Addie Burt, and some of the Trustees for the flight to France. For some of the learners it was their first experience of international travel.

The learners attended the official South African ceremony at Arques-la-Bataille on 8 July 2016, and the Centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood on 12 July 2016. In addition, tours were arranged to visit special places, significant memorials and museums depicting the Battle of the Somme, so that learners could get a feel of what fighting conditions were like in the trenches of World War I, the sacrifices of the 1st South African Infantry Brigade and the South African Native Labour Corps, along with other South African contributions such as the South African Artillery Regiment.

The learner’s itinerary included a day and night in Paris, at Vimy Ridge, Albert, Thiepval, Arques-la-Bataille, Dieppe, Arras, Longueval and Delville Wood. The inserts below reflect the experiences of the three learners selected to join the Centenary. Reading their experiences, one can see how the lives of our soldiers are still remembered by South African youth, including the experience of walking in Delville Wood itself, to seeing the destruction of the battlefields fought over, and the personal effects of the soldiers that still remain, to the final resting place of many, and the names of those still missing.

ABOVE: The three South African learners, from middle to right, Wendy van Wyk, Meeka’eel Shaik Latiff, Tyson Mtshali, with the winners of last year’s Australian essay competition, at the Centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood.
“MY EXPERIENCE IN FRANCE”

It is one thing to hear and read about the Battle of the Somme, but quite another to physically walk in the trenches and stand across from the sea of gravestones. Seeing the remains of the soldiers made everyday objects such as a watch, shoes, belt made one realise that these were everyday people, teenagers like myself.

It was a heavy day going from memorial site to memorial site and coming to terms with the history of my ancestors, the horror of their youth. I personally have always felt somewhat disconnected from my heritage, but visiting the Delville Wood forest and seeing the beauty that pays tribute to so much pain and suffering helped make me feel more secure not only in who I am as a person, but also my role as a young person in our country; that it is important to remember, embrace and learn from history’s injustice and to create something that is worthy of their sacrifice: to honour them. I am incredibly grateful to have been chosen to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime journey, to have had the opportunity to learn and experience so much and to be able to contribute to a wiser future.

Wendy van Wyk
Clarendon High School for Girls
(East London, Eastern Cape)

France, a country associated with history and romance, a place people dream to visit. It is a place where fashion, money and tourists all come together as one. With some of the most notable buildings and famous monuments. However, people only see the glamour and good things about France but seldom the struggles deep in the depths of France. I may not have been there during the battle, but yes, I have witnessed the results of one of the bloodiest battles in World War I.

During my short trip we visited the various historical sites. I discovered that when you hear and talk about it it does not have as much effect as seeing it personally. I personally have experienced some of the deepest emotions and have the upmost respect for the brave men who sacrificed their lives for freedom. Just witnessing the memorial sites of all the soldiers was breathtaking. The saddest part was that many soldiers were buried without having been identified. It was truly humbling to view the number of soldiers that died for the freedom of France. As we walked through the trenches at Vimy, it dawned on me how many people fought and lived in the trenches. We walked through one of the new monument sites where the names of at least 580 000 soldiers who died in battle are inscribed I was touched as I came to the realisation that people died at the actual place where I had been walking.

We also had the pleasure of visiting a famous restaurant where a man dug his own trenches to depict the actual trenches of the war to show how the men lived in the trenches. Seeing the actual items of the soldiers which were dug up, items such as hairbrushes, shaving blades, shoes and many other items showed that these were normal people just like us that went to sacrifice their lives in the bloody battle.

This truly has been an experience to witness and a lifetime opportunity and I would like to thank everyone for making this possible.

Meeka’eeel Shaik Latiff
Laudium Secondary School

It is said that soldiers bring honour and glory to their country and are willing to lay down their lives to fight for freedom and justice. The men who died are seen as making a noble sacrifice for the good of the world. The wars fought are written in bold and big letters as the proud legacy of the country.

During the trip I did not see glory. I did not see honour. I saw devastation caused by a horrific war. I saw the final resting place of thousands of men, the majority of them a long way from home and who died like pawns on a chessboard. I saw the scars on the earth that remained from the destruction. Walking through the graves, I did not feel pride.

I felt death. I felt the presence of ghosts. They were the ghosts of men who should have had lives outside of war, men who should’ve been with their wives and children, some who don’t even have their names on their graves. Die for your country and get a nameless grave. Either that or share a grave with four others, stacked on top of one another like discarded laundry. What an honour.

To think of how peaceful Delville Wood and the towns around it are now, it’s painful to think that about how a 100 years ago it was all dust, bullet holes, twigs and bodies.

This begs the question: what did they die for? World War I was not the last global conflict. Terror rages on today. Deaths occur daily. Must people die? Why? For whom? Why do countries look at winning a war as a good thing? Why must there be a war in the first place? Over disagreements? No disagreement deserves millions of deaths.

It was an honour to be chosen to go on the trip. I learned things and heard stories that I never would’ve in a history classroom.

South Africans of all races were finally honoured and families can now try to make peace now that South Africans have been acknowledged for their contribution to the war efforts, but I left with dread filling my heart.

The deaths cannot be forgotten, but they were ones without glory and that brings on a dark cloud over the whole experience.

Tyson Mtshali
King Edward VII School
It was my privilege to join the Centenary Commemorations in France at the Somme in July of this year. Our visit and participation at the Delville Wood Memorial site made me realise that this was a war of attrition.

Amidst all of the heroic deeds of many South Africans during that battle, the one that stood out for me was the story of someone who shared my calling - Padre Eustace St Clair Hill, a Chaplain to our Armed Forces. Upon my return I was duty-bound to share a bit of his ministry, respectfully, through my perspective relating to the present generation of South African soldiers.

In 1922, after being appointed as the Headmaster of St John’s College, Fr Eustace Hill must have stood before many young boys looking over their faces, eager to be here at St John’s College, expecting wise words from a proud master, but he having flashbacks of similar young boys caught up in the trenches and turmoil of Delville Wood a mere six years before.

I can but imagine this unique, but somewhat eccentric Headmaster as a result of his war experience, standing in the Chapel at St John’s College in Houghton. (The chapel was dedicated as a war memorial and contains one of the five crosses made from the remains of the trees at the battle of Delville Wood). One looks at the crucifix that came from the remains of the wood and reminisces about the valuable lives lost in this horrific battle.

Fr Eustace Hill served as chaplain to the SA Brigade at Delville Wood. His gallantry and fervour as a chaplain made him popular with the soldiers. I can envision his effort to minister by his physical presence to tired, battle weary and afraid young men. “Keep it up chaps, we’re all in this together.” “Let’s pray together and ask the Lord for protection, cuppa char lads?” I can hear him encourage the lads! Not just spiritually, but also physically. Being there with them made the difference.

The opportunities are legion to be a good chaplain in times of war. A whole new emotional experience is encountered, by himself and by his “flock” of young soldiers.

Padre Hill was one of the first to volunteer his services as a military chaplain at Delville Wood. He was one of the first military chaplains in the world. His ministry to the troops was a great help to them in their hour of need.

The cemetery at Longueval, where South African soldiers lie buried, is a fitting memorial to those who gave their lives for their country.

ABOVE: The cemetery at Longueval where South African soldiers lie buried.
chaplain in 1914. On the Western Front he was legendary for standing up and moving around the battlefield dodging artillery shells and machine gun bullets in pursuit of his ministry. Padre Hill spent considerable effort exhorting his men to do their Christian duty under fire. He didn’t question the purpose or shy away from the danger but rather exhorted the soldiers with words such as “Men, they may kill your bodies, but they cannot destroy your souls”. He was awarded the Military Cross in late 1916. (1)

Physically walking in the Wood on the Centenary commemoration day this year, 2016, I could but try to understand the circumstances then. Close combat, artillery shells bursting in the trees, mud drenched trenches … What goes through your mind? As a chaplain, I’ve always wondered, if in similar circumstances, what my response would be? Looking at the remains of the trenches here in the Wood, I imagined Padre Hill busying himself with the “tasks” of the day, oblivious to the danger all around: “My flock needs me”.

“In a way by standing still and paying quiet tribute to these men who died in brutal chaos, even if just in our own minds, we, for a moment, restore their “dignity and their individuality” to quote poet Walt Whitman. He spoke of the “untold and unwritten history of war” and of the countless men who suffered and died anonymously.

“They are not just names on memorial plaques gathering dust – for someone out there that was a father, a husband, a lover, a son, an uncle, a friend, a brother. The tragedy of such loss can echo through a family for generations.

“We cannot change history, and we cannot stop it from being repeated, but we can acknowledge what we think these people went through.

“In honouring these soldiers, we honour life, what we have now, and pay some tribute to the society in which we would like to live. And in which they never would. ‘We will remember them. And we should’.”

Padre Hill served as an example for every Chaplain that is called to this very unique ministry. The contrast is between his real vocation for the priesthood and particularly for the pastoral side of ministry, and his keenness to participate in any military adventure. In particular, his very real concern for the suffering of the soldiers was clearly evident. It’s not easy to put aside your own fears and feelings and focus on the needs of your fellow soldiers. You need to be strong in reputation and know that your courage and vigour, even under fire, is the example that the soldiers will draw strength from to “go over the top” when called upon.

To all Chaplains serving soldiers everywhere, past and present, hold your calling dear to your heart and your service to soldiers at hand. Be present in all circumstances, your ministry by presence is what distinguishes you as a CHAPLAIN.

References:
2. http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/delvillewood.htm#sthash.LSCyRFZt.dpuf
The South African National Memorial, commonly known as Delville Wood, is situated in France, about 170 km north of Paris. The 63 hectare Delville Wood was purchased by the South African government in 1920 from the French government with the objective of erecting a National Memorial for South African soldiers who died during World War I in various theatres of war in Africa, the former German South West Africa (Namibia), German East Africa (Tanzania), Egypt, Europe (France and Belgium) and the Middle East (Palestine).

The Memorial was inaugurated in 1926. In 1952 an altar stone was added to commemorate South African soldiers who died during World War II.

The majority of white soldiers are buried at Delville Wood and the rest are in various cemeteries in France and Belgium. Only white South African soldiers are buried at Delville Wood while the fallen black South Africans who served during World War I are buried elsewhere in France.

It is important to note that more than 90 000 black South Africans served during World War I. They were enlisted to serve in the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC). They participated in various campaigns in Africa, the former German South West Africa (Namibia) and the former German East Africa (Tanzania), Europe (France) and Middle East (Palestine). Of the 90 000 men, more than 21 000 served in France. They formed a significant proportion of the labour force that was available in France at the time.

In general the role played by the SANLC has received hardly any attention in South African military history. They were not allowed to carry arms. Their duties were to work in the dockyards (Dieppe, Le Havre and Rouen) and at railheads, to dig behind the lines and manhandle supplies and munitions and do tree felling. They were considered unfit to serve as combatants.

One of the disqualifications for combat troops was the wrong skin colour.

For nearly a hundred years the Delville Wood Memorial and Museum reflected a very biased South African military history. The representation of Africans during the war was minimal, which distorted their role in various theatres of war. It was in this context that the transformation of the site was necessary for an authentic South African military history.

The Transformation Concept

The concept was to redesign the entire museum so that its contents should
include the narratives of all South Africans who were involved in all theatres of World War I.

Objectives of the Transformation Project

The South African Government undertook the process of transforming the museum for several reasons, including the following:

- To address the under-representation of non-white combatants in World War I and memorialise the experiences of all South Africans during the war.
- To present different historical approaches, such as military history, personalised history, the War and Society approach.
- To highlight the many gaps and absences in the material (to balance information and imagination in the layout of narratives).
- To respond creatively to the building’s political symbolism, rigid geometry and restricted access, through the use of innovative memorialising strategies and design.
- To create a user-oriented Museum to evoke a range of moods and interactions and to stimulate critical reflections on the history, heritage and memorialisation of World War I.

Phases of the Transformation Project Phase I

This Phase was finalised by 30 June 2014 and its launch coincided with the 98th Anniversary of the Battle of Delville Wood.

Reinternment of the first SANLC member to perish during World War I

The first SANLC member to perish during World War I was exhumed and reinterred in the courtyard of the South African War Museum at Delville Wood. This member was buried at a civilian cemetery in the Seine-Maritime region and his details are:

- 3009, Private, Mbengwa Beleza, Died 27/11/1916, Bleville Communal Cemetery (Seine-Maritime) near Le Havre.

The exhumation and reinterment of Private Mbengwa represented a powerful message of reconciliation and restoration of the dignity of all members of the SANLC. It provided some redress that gave further impetus in consolidating the South African nation’s diversity.

Phase II

The launch of Phase II coincides with the Centenary Commemoration of the Battle of Delville Wood.

Garden of Remembrance

The Garden of Remembrance is dedicated to the approximately 600 soldiers whose bodies remain unburied at Delville Wood. Erection of a Memorial Wall to honour all South African soldiers (members of both the South African Infantry Brigade and the SANLC) buried in France and elsewhere in the world during the Great War.

Upgrading of the Museum displays and sections relating to the two World Wars.

Phase III

The upgrading of the displays, museum artefacts and exhibitions relating to the sinking of the SS Mendi. This Phase will be launched in February 2017 to coincide with the Centenary Commemoration of the SS Mendi.
Personal reflection on the centenary of the Battle of the Somme

By Maj (Ret) Dr Terence Milne, Deputy Chair South African Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust

I have been fortunate to attend the Commemoration ceremonies at Arques-la-Bataille and Longueval over the years, sometimes in the uniform of an infantry officer of my Regiment, the Witwatersrand Rifles and more recently in the blazer of a veteran. This year I attended as Deputy Chair of the South African Delville Wood Commemorative Museum Trust, representing our Chairperson, Chaplain General, Brig Gen Andrew Jamangile, who was officiating at the Centenary commemorations at Arques-la-Bataille and Delville Wood.

This year was, however, different for me, for a number of reasons, the foremost being the Centenary. The commemorations were on a national scale, and our Ministers of Defence and Military Veterans, Arts and Culture, and Public Works were in attendance. At Delville Wood our Commander-in-Chief joined the pilgrimage, veterans and National Ceremonial Guard to unveil the new Commemorative Wall, which has the names of all South Africans who gave their lives in World War I. I was also accompanied by my son, which was special, as I had promised Michael we would do the Centenary together.

The third special reason was that we had initiated the pilot Guides programme at the Delville Wood Museum, where specially selected Reserve junior officers joined the Museum Director’s team at the Visitors Centre and Museum as guides to the Museum and battlefield. This initiative had

ABOVE: The Wall of Remembrance, Delville Wood.

LEFT: The Chapel of Rest, where the French Unknown Soldiers of four conflicts lie.

ABOVE: The Chapels, the Ossuaries and military cemetery of Notre Dame de Lorette.
been in the planning stage since its inception in 2011 during the 95th commemorations, where I was attending with Dr (Col) John Job, and the late Col Errol Richardson of Durban Light Infantry. We had been supported by the Reserve Force Council, Dr (Col) Job, the Chief of Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, and the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) which approved the pilot programme for this year.

The Guide programme follows the model developed by the Canadian Veterans Affairs for its memorial sites in Europe. We were supported by Defence Attaché Colonels Hatton and Milot over these years at Vimy with Gregg Kenney and Arlene King. Gregg and Arlene’s teams hosted our guides during a week’s mentorship at Vimy and Beaumont Hamel. The guides deployed were Lieutenants Ntlombe, Nethononda, De Vries and Mpolweni of the University Reserve Training Programme (URTP), selected by the Reserve Force Council.

As trustees we have been busy since July 2015 with our support of the SANDF and veteran groups. Part of the preparations saw the Trust compile a commemorative booklet that highlighted the diverse contributions of South Africans in World War I, and we remembered the comrades of that time who did not come home, having been buried on foreign soil, or are listed with the thousands of missing. A Centenary Commemorative Coin for all attendees of the Centenary at Arques-la-Bataille and Delville Wood was made, and this will also be available for issue on the Centenary of the sinking of SS Mendi next year.

But my thoughts go back to a visit we made to the French National Memorial at Notre Dame de Lorette, which I visited between the ceremonies at Arques-la-Bataille and Delville Wood. Notre Dame de Lorette, also known as Ablain St-Nazaire French Military Cemetery, is the world’s largest French military cemetery. What is sadly striking is that the devastation of the trench type warfare is reflected in the five ossuaries, where bones of soldiers are buried – remains of those known only unto God. Nearly 40 000 soldiers’ remains lie in this cemetery.

One of the ossuaries is at the Chapel of Rest, which includes a tower and an ossuary-crypt containing the remains of 6 000 soldiers. There are 32 coffins located in the Chapel of Rest in four groups of eight coffins. Three coffins contain the remains of an unknown soldier from World War II (laid to rest here in July 1950), a soldier from the Algerian War (laid to rest here in October 1977) and the remains of a soldier from the Indochina War (laid to rest here in June 1980). Inside the Chapel of Rest one can feel the sadness of a lost generation of soldiers, which made me think of all soldiers lost in that war, including the South Africans we had recently honoured at Arques-la-Bataille, and thinking of the Centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood, the day after my visit here.

Across the road from the Chapel of Notre Dame de Lorette and the Chapel of Rest is the ring of remembrance, a modern structure with the names of ALL soldiers, friend and foe, all listed, German, South African and French … ALL nations who fought in that war, listed alphabetically, Privates with Generals.

Here we traced some South African soldiers whose names we had seen at the new Wall of Remembrance at Delville Wood, our brothers of a previous generation.

To me, the worry over the order of wreath-laying, what banners to take on parade, the red carpets at the ceremonies, etc all faded in view of the sadness there, a reminder of why we were there this 100th year later. It’s actually about the comrades buried in the war graves, missing at sea, listed on the various monument walls as missing in the battlefields. It’s actually about them, not us. We are privileged to be able to honour those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

And this year it was a privilege to see the unveiling of the Wall of Remembrance at Delville Wood and being part of a growing unified military tradition, something we as a country should be so proud of. And remember those who did not come back. For them, we should wear our uniform with pride, whether as a service dress of a serving member, or the blazer of a military veteran.
Many elderly people have to shoulder the responsibility of raising grandchildren. They suffer a heavy load as they are the sole breadwinners for their families. They rely on their pensions.

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, accompanied by the Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, recently visited the Happy Times Elderly Care Centre in Atteridgeville. Gen Shoke gave blankets to more than 120 elderly people. This was part of honouring 67 Minutes in Atteridgeville. Gen Shoke gave blankets to more than 120 elderly people. This was part of honouring 67 Minutes

ABOVE: GIVING WARMTH: The elderly were excited and overwhelmed at the opportunity to receive blankets from the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

for the late struggle icon, former President Nelson Mandela.

Gen Shoke gave a message of hope to the young people and the broader community. He said that the elderly are neglected and abused. He stressed that it was in our hands to make this world a better place and made a call for community involvement in protecting the elderly, embrace them

and contribute to their well-being. The elderly were overwhelmed at the opportunity to receive blankets.

The Chaplain General shared the Scripture reading from 2 Corinthians. He said that it is the hour to receive God’s favour and finding God in unexpected places. Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile thanked all the people who made the visit possible and mentioned that the SANDF continued to explore avenues to get involved within communities so that soldiers could get involved and help in making a meaningful contribution to the community we serve.

Ms Lindiwe Choenyane, the Founder of Rose Happy Times Elderly Care Centre, said that the project (centre) was established in 2009 to address the needs of elderly people, many of them neglected and unable to take care of themselves, living in poverty and some being abused. She further mentioned that the project provided services such as day care and home-based care. She expressed gratitude for the Chief of the SANDF’s gesture and said that it gave the elderly hope that the SANDF was reaching out to them.

LEFT: Col (Past) Malcolm Pillay, Senior Staff Officer Communication and Liaison Chaplain Service, hands over a cheque to Ms Lindiwe Choenyane, the Founder of Rose Happy Times Elderly Care Centre.

BELOW: The elderly of the Happy Times Elderly Care Project (Centre) in Atteridgeville was delighted about the Chief of the SA National Defence Force’s visit which coincided with the birthday month of the struggle icon and champion of the rights of humanity, former President Nelson Mandela.

ABOVE: The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, handing over blankets to the elderly.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

The Military Command Council attends to military facilities on Mandela Day

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano and Pte Paul Mpangala

The Defence Works Formation supported International Mandela Day when they invited members of the Military Command Council to view some of the revamps at 1 Military Hospital and the Pretoria Military Sports Club (PMSC).

The General Officer Commanding Defence Works Formation, Maj Gen Joseph Ledwaba, said the Defence Works Formation had units in all the nine provinces, as well as the Works Training School and the Construction Unit.

ABOVE: The General Officer Commanding of the Defence Works Formation, Maj Gen Joseph Ledwaba, said they would continue to assist communities; however they had to focus on some SA National Defence Force facilities that needed attention.

He mentioned that each year the Defence Works Formation contributes towards Mandela Day by visiting orphanages and homes for the elderly, among others. Maj Gen Ledwaba said they refurbish facilities and assist with the construction of new structures, which is the primary function of the Formation.

Maj Gen Ledwaba said: “You will recall that last year we fixed an old lady’s house...”

ABOVE: The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke (front), painting the floor at the Pretoria Military Sports Club which the Military Command Council members had visited on Mandela Day.

ABOVE: The Defence Works Formation supported International Mandela Day when they invited members of the Military Command Council to view some of the revamps at 1 Military Hospital and the Pretoria Military Sports Club (PMSC).
ABOVE: The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke (middle), visited 1 Military Hospital on Mandela Day where he also met with members upgrading the hospital.

in Cape Town which was burnt down and we refurbished it in collaboration with other sponsors that contributed some of the building material.

“Last year during the address of the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) at the sport grounds (PMSC), Gen Shoke said that it was a good thing for us to participate in various projects that assist society during Mandela Month, but that we must also consider our own facilities.”

He mentioned that for the 2016 Mandela Day they felt that they needed to focus on SANDF facilities, some of which are falling apart. He said the SANDF had also called on all members to be active in sport.

Maj Gen Ledwaba added: “Since members of the Military Command Council where joining, we thought we should take them around some of the projects they have approved.

We also showed them what we had done in fixing defence facilities.

“We are fixing facilities using our own resources, meaning SANDF members who have been in the SANDF for many years and may no longer be able to perform core military duties are the ones that improve these facilities. These members are reskilled in other expertise, including construction and artisan work.”

Maj Gen Ledwaba said they continued to assist the communities they had adopted; however the focus this year had to be on SANDF facilities. He said: “The Defence Works Formation is an institution that will continue doing this kind of work. We want to improve our facilities to boost the morale of our soldiers.”

The Chief of the SANDF said it was important to understand and interpret the objective of Mandela Day. He mentioned that it was expected of people to give themselves sometimes to lend a helping hand to others less fortunate.

Gen Shoke said: “The sports grounds was a symbolic thing, however, we still need to give to communities. We should also give ourselves time to be selfless and contribute towards building the nation. So let us make everyday a Mandela Day, and not only do things symbolically.

Last year when I spoke to Maj Gen Ledwaba and others, I told them that we cannot do well for others when we do not start with ourselves. Let us make sure that wherever we work we give our facilities some attention.”

Gen Shoke said the appearance of facilities reflected the type of people that live there. He said the first thing that came to mind when he saw such facilities was a lack of leadership. He said the leadership had the responsibility to ensure that military bases were maintained.
The joy of making someone happy

By AB Samuel Ramonyai and Ms Lesego Moropane, trainees at SA Soldier
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

When you were a child there was nothing better than receiving a gift. A wrapped present was a mystery story with an ending that was guaranteed to be excellent. You did not know exactly what was inside, but you knew it was for you, and it was probably something you wanted.

You grow up to find that the joy of making someone happy is more powerful than you could have possibly imagined. At the same time we find great satisfaction in giving back to the world around us. Many of us are more privileged than others, and when we become aware of this we often have an innate desire to help the less fortunate.

On Mandela Day members of Defence Inspectorate Division, under the leadership of Maj Gen Mxolisi Petane, devoted 67 Minutes to getting their hands dirty by clearing away invasive alien vegetation at the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria.

The late former President Nelson Mandela has been making an imprint on the world for 67 years, beginning in 1942, when he first started to campaign for the human rights of every South African. His life has been an inspiration to the world.

By devoting 67 Minutes of their time – one minute for every year of Mandela’s public service – people can make a small gesture of solidarity with humanity and take a step towards a global movement for good.

The
Celebrating International Mandela Day

for Mandela Day. We are extremely proud of the legacy that Madiba left and that you are giving something back to the community. To show you our gratitude we have arranged a cable car ride for you to the top station. You can view the zoo and the city from the roof of the cable station.”

The task that he envisaged for Defence Inspectorate Division was the removal of alien vegetation. Invasive alien plants are plants imported into an ecosystem which is not their natural habitat. They proceed to grow prolifically, threatening the indigenous plants and animals. They tend to utilise more resources, in particularly water.

This can seriously deplete soil moisture and reduce groundwater levels, the base-flow of springs and ultimately the flow of rivers and streams. In catchment areas which are infested with such plants, the eradication of invasive alien plants can often lead to a significant increase in the water available for other uses and may offer an alternative to traditional engineering solutions such as the construction of reservoirs and dams. Invasive aliens include a variety of plants, for example aquatic weeds such as Water Hyacinth and trees such as eucalyptus and wattle. Such plants in their native ecosystems do not constitute a problem as they have natural enemies and are of no harm, but when introduced into foreign habitats can cause enormous damage.

After the welcoming speech by the Manager, the members of Defence Inspectorate Division worked for two hours with their children in nine groups of five members each and showed their dedication by clearing away these invasive alien plants. The day ended with a cable car ride in which the members enjoyed a view of the animals and the city from the top, followed by a braai and refreshments.

Take action, inspire change, make every day a Mandela Day. Tata Madiba said at the time of the launch of the campaign that he would be honoured if such a day could serve to bring together people around the world to fight poverty and promote peace and reconciliation.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

1 Military Hospital Youth Forum visits Leamogetswe Safety Home

Article and photos by Maj Sello Segone, SO2 Corporate Communication 1 Military Hospital

The Youth Forum of 1 Military Hospital visited Leamogetswe Safety Home in Atteridgeville in dedicating their 67 Minutes for Mandela Day. They did not go there empty handed as they had groceries and vegetables. These were intended to bring relief and assistance to the volunteer workers at the Home. The relief was in the form of a hearty warm meal. Some youth members took the opportunity to interact with the children residing at the Home. They played with the children, read stories, put together puzzle pieces and even sang with them.

The other group was in the house cleaning up and making up beds and even doing the laundry. The heart of the operation was in the kitchen where the members were preparing a hearty lunch for the children, much to the delight of the children and the staff members of the place.

Ms Caroline Seshoka, a caregiver at the home, expressed her joy at the assistance 1 Military Hospital Youth Forum was offering for the day. Such acts make the work at the home so fulfilling and motivates them to see that members of the military value and appreciate what they are doing and are willing to swap places even if it's just for a day.

Another volunteer at the centre was Ms Josephine Dube who has been at the home for over a year and has never seen such kindness in action. She explained that their home can take care of up to 22 children. She works 12 hour shifts, which at times can take a toll on her, hence such assistance is always welcome. Her daily routine starts at about 06:45 with a morning service followed by breakfast, Bible studies, tea-time, plays inside or outside and other fun learning activities. What excite the children are the violin classes they receive on Wednesdays and Thursdays from the nearby University students.

Leamogetswe Safety Home is a registered NPO/Child and Youth Care Centre situated in Atteridgeville.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

Leamogetswe Safety Home is currently registered to service the needs of 82 orphaned and vulnerable children from the ages of 1 day to 18 years. Leamogetswe Safety Home also offers direct and indirect services to needy families around the community. In addition, the organisation offers a range of services, including residential care for homeless children and young people, irrespective of colour or creed in need of care.

The primary purpose of Leamogetswe Safety Home is to provide residential care (housing), food, education, health care and a safe environment for children in need of care. The children are also given the opportunity to receive counselling and therapy, interact in life skills, including outreach which enables the children to heal and reintegrate in society.

Programme

This programme offers accommodation and cares for children and young people (under 19 years) and women (mainly young mothers) living in abusive situations and provides them with the skills, confidence and ability to take part in the community. Currently the home accommodates 50 children, 49 of whom are subsidised by the Department of Social Services and the remaining one is helped by the means of donations.

Leamogetswe Safety Home has a specific approach to these two service user groups: For homeless children and young people the aim is to reconcile them with their families (where appropriate) within a short period. Where this is unsuccessful or inappropriate, other options are pursued. The options include foster care, adoption and referrals to other services. Accommodation may become long term if suitable arrangements are not feasible. However, ideally clients are supposed to stay for up to six months. Children below seven years old attend a crèche while those above seven years are linked with local primary schools to ensure that their educational needs are met. This is done with assistance from the Department of Education and in close collaboration with school principals.

For women living in abusive situations trauma counselling and mediation between women and their partners (where appropriate) are provided in the hope that they are reconciled. Women are then referred to shelters that accommodate them for up to three months, during which time their cases are resolved or alternative support systems are sought. Many of these clients come along with their children, who are also catered for by the programme. In addition to the above residential service users, the programme also caters for needy children from the local community through a feeding scheme. About 50 needy children are offered meals on a daily basis. These children are identified through their teachers and the cases are confirmed through outreach and home visits. This programme forms the core of Leamogetswe Safety Home's work.

Background information

Leamogetswe Safety Home was founded in 1994 by a dedicated woman who has passion for children and abused women. She was influenced by her own background. Ms Matlakala Makhubela started this organisation on her own without any financial assistance, but donations came from individuals and wellwishers, including Spoornet which donated containers that she used to accommodate the abused women and children.

This was after she had taken the initiative to give them food, clothing, comfort, and care on the streets of Pretoria. Ms Makhubela continued her care by accommodating children and abused women for years until the Department of Social Services intervened in 2002 to register the organisation legally.

Ms Makhubela was taking care of 32 children and 12 abused women in her own home and in containers with the meagre income she was earning from her part-time jobs.

The fact that she managed to take care of orphaned and vulnerable children for seven years without any financial assistance from anybody indicated the love and care she had for abandoned, abused and homeless children that most other people did not want to be involved with.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

Human Resource Development officials rolled-up their sleeves in honouring Madiba

By Ms Velly Maribe, Secretary to the Director Education, Training and Development: Systems Integrity

Chief Director Human Resource Development, Maj Gen Ansuyah Fakir, together with members of her Directorate recently made their 67 Minutes contribution in honour of the United Nations International Mandela Day by visiting the Kungwini Welfare Organisation (KWO). The day’s activities proved not only to be a day of giving and receiving, but of joy and self-reflection for all Human Resource Development officials.

The team arrived at KWO around 10:00 and were warmly welcomed by the management of the organisation. The KWO staff explained to the Chief Directorate Human Resource Development (CD HRD) team that KWO is a non-profit organisation served by passionate individuals with a desire to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities,
Celebrating International Mandela Day

Members of CD HRD were then divided into various work teams with a view to making a meaningful and purposeful contribution to the different projects of Kungwini Welfare Organisation (KWO). Some members of the team, strategically selected according to their personal qualities, spent the day at KWO’s Paul Jungnickel Home. The home provides a residence for 140 adults with varying disabilities.

At this home members of CD HRD team spent quality time with the individuals with disabilities and giving members of staff foot massages and other personal attention while conversing and listening to those who needed someone to talk to. Other members spent time with the creative team of the organisation in making items that KWO will sell at the 2016 Nickel Xmas Market. Others worked in the kitchen preparing food and helping to cook lunch for the residents.

The organisation also believes in the importance of education: as former President Nelson Mandela said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. So KWO has two early learning centres in Lethabong and Zwavelpoort and provides the service for children whose parents cannot afford conventional preschool fees. A separate small CD HRD team with several members, led by Brig Gen Carel Laubscher, Director Education, Training and Development (ETD): Systems Integrity, were dispatched to the Lethabong Learning Centre, which has 108 children.

At the Lethabong Learning Centre the team sandpapered and repainted the playground equipment, such as metal and wooden jungle gyms. Other members interacted with the children and staff, assisted in serving lunch and put the children to sleep during nap time. Members also cleaned windows and left the centre looking bright and welcoming.

The CD HRD team left the members of KWO very happy after they donated knitted gloves and a gazebo. “We are so proud of our National Defence Force, we did not expect to meet such caring South African soldiers”, said the members of KWO with tears in their eyes.

Maj Gen Fakir thanked the KWO management for giving her team an opportunity to spend the day honouring Madiba at their wonderful organisation. “Be good South Africans, know that together we can make a difference and make our country great”, said Maj Gen Fakir as she encouraged her team to continue doing well for the country and making each day a Mandela Day.

CD HRD’s message to the team corroborated the message of the United Nations Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, on 18 July 2016: “Let us all continue, each day, to draw inspiration from Nelson Mandela’s life-long example and his call to never cease working to build a better world for all”. 

ABOVE: Members of Chief Directorate Human Resource Development and staff members of the Kungwini Welfare Organisation. (Photo by Maj Adéle Harmse)
On International Mandela Day the members of Military Academy dedicated 67 Minutes in order to make a change for the better in the Saldanha Military Area and for the Saldanha Bay community. This year the Military Academy collaborated with members from Arcelor Mittal under the guidance of Ms Lebo Mokete. Under the leadership of the Military Academy Sergeant Major, Master Warrant Officer Cedric Abrahams, the students and staff members were divided into teams and given various tasks.

In the Military Base the two children’s playgrounds were cleaned and the equipment repaired. Another grouping cleaned the beach at North Bay, including the braai areas in the area. Members also cleaned the historical graveyard of the Sadie family at the base.

Three day care centres were attended to during the day. At Hopland Day Care Centre, members cleaned the yard by cutting the grass and cleaning the premises. The mess personnel of the Military Academy under the leadership of Warrant Officer Class 1 Gordon Phongolo provided soup and bread for the children and staff of the centre.

At the Albertina Sisulu Day Care Centre the Military Academy members planted tyres along their pathway and cleaned the whole area. They used paint donated by Arcelor Mittal to paint all the outside play equipment. The Military Academy also donated carpets for the classes. At the Mfesane Day Care Centre, members cleaned the play area, fixed their fence and donated carpets to the centre.

Through collaboration with Arcelor Mittal, the Military Academy was able to turn its attention to a household full of young children, of whom the oldest was 20. Bedding, food, etc were donated. Arcelor Mittal will replace their house in the near future and the Military Academy student community interaction group (Masiza) will visit them regularly and act as mentors to these young people.
Another group lent their support at the Anglican Church in Saldanha, where the walls were scrubbed, gutters cleaned and shrubs and rubbish removed. The trees and shrubs around the church were also trimmed. The last group assisted the West Coast Association for Persons with Disabilities to clean the area and establish a vegetable and herb garden with plants donated by Arcelor Mittal.

Although this day was about giving, the Military Academy members had some unforgettable moments by interacting with the grateful people. It also reflected the Military Academy’s commitment to the community and the overall aim of 67 Minutes.
Defence Corporate Communication becomes a hand for those in need

By Ms Lesego Moropane, Intern at SA Soldier
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight and Mr Witney Rasaka

Even in Madiba’s absence, initiatives like Mandela Day, an international day in his honour, promote the idea that each and every individual has the power to transform the world. It is the idea that each of us can truly make an impact in the communities we live in, like the late former state icon did. And so it is that each year, on 18 July (on Madiba’s birthday), we try to uphold the values Madiba brought to this world and give 67 Minutes of our time to help those in need.

There is an intuitive connection between former President Nelson Mandela’s dream and our national effort towards national building and social cohesion. It is a significant achievement that within the same month we celebrate the selflessness of Mandela and encourage active citizenship among all our people.

In honour of International Mandela Day, Defence Corporate Communication recently visited the members of the Atteridgeville Association for People with Disabilities (Lebuwe Centre) to celebrate 67 Minutes in honouring Mandela Day. The ages of the members of Lebuwe Centre vary between 18 and 60 years.

Director Defence Corporate Communication, Brig Gen Xolani Mabanga, started by saying that he would like to thank the Atteridgeville Association for People with Disabilities (Lebuwe Centre) to present gifts to the Treasurer and Founder of Lebuwe Centre, Ms Lebuwe Emily Molefe.

He added: “As the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) our primary role is to defend the people of the
Celebrating International Mandela Day

In closing, Ms Molefe thanked Brig Gen Mabanga and staff members: “You have made us feel like one of you. My wish is that this relationship will stand the test of time and be a durable one. The humane element in the SANDF made us feel at ease – you are reachable and resilient, you have your foot on the ground. Above all I pray that God will bless the SANDF, and please do not stop here – continue the good work”.

Doing things for others - whether small, unplanned acts or regular volunteering - is a powerful way to boost our own happiness as well as that of those around us. The people we help may be strangers, but by reaching out to others we will be happy and content.

This day would not be possible without the support and generous contributions by the South African Army Foundation and Shereno Printers.

Republic of South Africa against any form of internal or external aggression. However, during relative peace in our country, members of the SANDF will participate in uplifting the standard of living of our people. Our presence here today is a clear indication of the SANDF’s intention of working with disadvantaged communities in our country.”

Brig Gen Mabanga then presented gifts to the Treasurer and Founder of the Lebuwe Centre, Ms Lebuwe Emily Molefe. He said: “The gifts are a symbol of the relationship we have with you.”

The Entertainment Band of the National Ceremonial Guard enchanted the members of the Lebuwe Centre with their beautiful music and voices. The Band members created an atmosphere that spoke to every heart through their music. Their performance was followed by the harmonious voices of the Lebuwe Centre Choir which proved music to be a universal language.

Members of Defence Corporate Communication then dedicated 67 Minutes of their time by first forming three groups. Some cleaned the Centre, while others played soccer and netball with the members with disabilities. The day was filled with joy and positive energy emanating from the Lebuwe Centre members.

Above: Director Defence Corporate Communication, Brig Gen Xolani Mabanga (middle), flanked by Ms Nelda Pienaar, the Project Coordinator and Editor SA Soldier, and Ms Lebuwe Emily Molefe, the Treasurer and Founder of Lebuwe Centre, the Lebuwe Centre Board members and Defence Corporate Communication members after dedicating 67 Minutes to the Atteridgeville Association for People with Disabilities - Lebuwe Centre.

Above: Defence Corporate Communication gents playing soccer with the Lebuwe Centre gents.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

Military spouses honouring Madiba at Kiddy College

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Pte Paul Mpangala

On International Mandela Day citizens dedicated 67 Minutes of their time to a good cause as part of showing UBUNTU that former President Nelson Mandela embraced.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Spouses Forum and the spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps (MAAC) marked International Mandela Day with a visit to the Kiddie College in Tek Base to engage in activities aimed at honouring the legacy of Tata Madiba. They donated toys, tables, chairs, stationery and groceries.

It was a hive of activity as they interacted with the children, drew and painted with them. They rolled up their sleeves to paint a three-classroom facility donated by the Department of Defence Logistic Support Formation to allow for a more conducive learning environment.

The Principal of Kiddie College, Ms Lilla Kobbie, expressed gratitude to the SANDF Spouses Forum and spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps for their generous contributions and efforts which will have a huge positive impact on the young ones as there is nothing better than love.

LEFT: The Chairperson of the SA National Defence Force Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke, lauded the late former President Nelson Mandela’s enduring passion for education. Here she is giving attention to a little one.

RIGHT: The greatest gift to a child is love.

ABOVE: The SA National Defence Force Spouses Forum and spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps shared their love with the children of Kiddie College at Tek Base as part of their 67 Minutes for Madiba.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

The Chairperson of the Spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps (MAAC), Ms Loveleen Lassa, wife of the Defence Advisor of Nigeria to South Africa, pointed out that this was a collective action as we are united for the common good and every one of us had a role to play in bringing about the change we were seeking.

The Chief Defence Foreign Relations lauded the SANDF’s gallant men and women who sacrifice and devote the lives to serve both internally and externally, leaving their children behind. Brig Gen Mxakato added that we honoured the legacy of a man who, more often, put the needs of others before his own and championed social justice. As part of celebrating Tata Madiba’s legacy in our own small way we can make a difference to the lives of others and, fittingly, Mandela Day is a call to action to work together and recommit our efforts for social change and build a caring society.

Ms Shoke expressed appreciation to the Chief Defence Foreign Relations, Brig Gen Talita Mxakato, and her staff, the MAAC Spouses, Ms Lisa Mitchell and Ms Morakane Mosupyoe, the Speaker of the City of Tshwane, who is also the custodian of military children in Tshwane for taking time off from their busy schedules to make a worthy contribution and spend time with the children at Kiddy College. She urged them to continue showing UBUNTU and doing good.

The Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum and wife of the Chief of the SANDF, Ms Charlotte Shoke, said that the late former President Nelson Mandela fought for social justice for 67 years. She added that he had an enduring passion for children and championed a better education for them. Ms Shoke expressed appreciation to the Chief Defence Foreign Relations, Brig Gen Talita Mxakato, and her staff, the MAAC Spouses, Ms Lisa Mitchell and Ms Morakane Mosupyoe, the Speaker of the City of Tshwane, who is also the custodian of military children in Tshwane for taking time off from their busy schedules to make a worthy contribution and spend time with the children at Kiddy College. She urged them to continue showing UBUNTU and doing good.

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ABOVE: The Principal of Kiddy College, Ms Lilla Kobbie, expressed her gratitude to the SA National Defence Force Spouses Forum and spouses of the Military Attaché and Advisory Corps and said that there was nothing as important as investing in the value of quality education.

ABOVE: The Chief Defence Foreign Relations, Brig Gen Talita Mxakato (right), presented a gift to the Chairperson of the SANDF Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke.

ABOVE: Cpl Mandla Mlisa from Thaba Tshwane Military Police (left) and Ms Vella Mapheto, painting a classroom facility at the Kiddy College to allow for a more conducive learning environment.
Celebrating International Mandela Day

The amazing power of the South African R5 coin

By Lt Col Virginia Vardhan, Project Coordinator
Photo by CO Menzi Cele

Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal once again went all out to improve the lives of the needy at Sinothando Creche and Pre-School in KwaMakhutha in the south of ETHekwini on International Mandela Day. A new Wendy House was donated by unit members. The facility is a registered community-based organisation catering for toddlers and pre-school children. Approximately 60 children receive care from these two institutions.

The coordinating committee visited the crèche where it was established that it urgently needed assistance. The existing facility at the crèche which is used for teaching purposes is a self-made wooden structure. It was found in a dilapidated state (leaking roof, broken windows and poor infrastructure). The need to provide the children with an alternate and safe teaching facility was identified.

Who would have thought that just by contributing R5 towards a fund-raising drive at Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal for the community outreach programme of 67 Minutes on Mandela Day could yield such an astounding success. Pride, patriotism and humanity were the appropriate way to describe the true spirit of UBUNTU that was displayed by the unit members, family and friends. The response was phenomenal. Members generously contributed R5 every Friday leading up to the programme as part of the fund-raising drive. In addition, the numerous fund-raising activities included the sale of bunny chows, coffee mugs and raffles.

The funds collected made it possible for the unit to purchase a two-room Wendy House for the children to use during their stay at the crèche. Unit members erected the Wendy House under the supervision of the service provider. This proved to be a quite humbling experience for all as staff at the crèche and local community members showed their excitement and appreciation for this new facility. The Principal of the Crèche, Ms Nonhle Dumisa, was emotional when she said: “Words will not be able to express my sincere gratitude for your contribution. You have today made me realise that there are people still out there willing to help”. She said that this new facility would definitely promote a better teaching and learning environment for her pre-schoolers and she was confident that the end of school results this year would be much better. She was therefore grateful to the members of Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal for their generosity in giving back to the community.

In addition to the erection of the Wendy House, curtains were provided. The Wendy House came standard with two windows and the members’ contributions allowed the provision of an additional two windows, thereby improving ventilation. The floor of the Wendy House will be fitted with vinyl tiles.

Mattresses, blankets, toys and party packs were also provided for the children. Preventative and Health Education presentations were made. The caregivers were given some valuable information and advice with regard to children’s dietary issues.

The focus was especially on menu planning. Nursing personnel educated the caregivers on infection prevention and control. The Oral Health Section undertook dental screening of the children. For most of the children this was their first dental check-up. There were some exciting fun-filled activities for the children, including face painting, singing and dancing.

The programme ended with the cutting of a birthday cake in honour of our late Tata Madiba whose legacy was celebrated by all at the programme. Hot meals, including a lunch and fruit juice were provided for all present.

The Project Coordinator, Lt Col Virginia Vardhan, thanked the crèche management for allowing the unit an opportunity to assist in improving the lives of the children and thanked and encouraged unit members to continue contributing in making a change for the better in the lives of needy communities, even beyond the 67 Minutes for Mandela Day.

“There is no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children” – Mr Nelson Mandela

ABOVE: Members of Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal singing with the Principal of the Crèche, Ms Nonhle Dumisa, and ready to cut the cake.
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The price of freedom

By Col (Padre) Addie Burt, Senior Staff Officer Religious Policy and Planning Chaplain General Division

We are here today because so many soldiers, (ordinary working people) stepped forward when the call was sounded announcing a threat to world safety and freedom. Freedom finds its foundation in brave people answering the call for justice. “This passion for freedom is probably the strongest drive for mankind. Nothing is more wonderful than securing gradual or immediate liberation” (Spurgeon)

The Battle of Delville Wood (and so many others) is a perfect example of the sacrifices made for freedom. Many of these battles are unknown to us (only names on a memorial stone); certainly those who fell at Delville Wood did not know us, but our freedom demands that we owe them the respect of their sacrifice and memory.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (New International Version) “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die … (v7-8) a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”

In the unrest of our current world with all its complex demands and human rights, its instability, its conflict between good and evil, between different religious convictions, it may NOW be the “time for peace”. Reading about Delville Wood I came across this comment of a mother concerning her son, one of the Battle’s victims:

“The dead lying in Delville Wood were still unburied. They lie in layers. Our gallant, splendid men reduced to a mere skeleton. They died, our noble South Africans, but they held the wood.

“And my splendid boy helped. I resign my dear son who was very, very dear to me, into the safe-keeping of my Maker, who gave him to me. It is very hard to part with him, but I glory in his glorious end, my splendid, chivalrous boy; and if his example inspires others, he will not have died in vain.

“… if his example inspires others, he will not have died in vain.”

What is the real price of freedom? There’s no freedom without sacrifice, there’s no freedom without accountability, and there’s no freedom without people standing for the value of peace. How do we cope with the problems which repeatedly confront us? The solution is never perfect. We all have to live a practical life. When times are hard and noticeably impossible, we have to work through the difficulties, and properly do our daily duty, we are all called to serve!

Col (Padre) Addie Burt.

What is important for us all is to realise that we cannot live independently: we need help. This will cause us to accept, with humbleness, the limits of our abilities and acknowledge God’s wisdom for us all. Christ has paid for our spiritual freedom. We need to seek the guidance of the Lord in whose hands these times and seasons are.

Our freedom comes with a sacrifice. Whether it’s personal, political or in general, someone has constantly to pay in order to maintain peace (think of your comrades currently deployed). Delville Wood serves as strong evidence of many sacrifices and lost lives to ensure physical freedom. Let us also seek for spiritual freedom, appreciating the Lord’s sacrifice which was planned for our freedom. What are you prepared to pay for freedom?
Mandela Day at Joint Support Base Garrison has become a 365 days affair

By Lt Col Solomon Moseka, Department of Defence Joint Support Base Garrison

The Mandela Day at Joint Support Base (JSB Garrison) was not only marked in a befitting manner, but also in a remarkably different way. Mandela Day is one of the most important events on the JSB Garrison calendar, which the unit observes and celebrates yearly.

This year’s Mandela Day celebrations at JSB Garrison took a completely different course. The event saw labour, career guidance, sporting activities and social responsibility projects being fused together. These activities took place over a period of two weeks: a visit was paid to Olivenhoutbosch Secondary School and Ya-Bana Orphanage respectively.

VISIT TO OLIVENHOUTBOSCH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Brig Gen Alfred Ndou, General Officer Commanding JSB Garrison, led the unit to Olivenhoutbosch Secondary School, a school adopted by the unit on Mandela Day in 2013.

The day before the visit, the Environmental Section, led by WO1 Tobias Tshemese and WO2 Simon May, exerted their efforts in cleaning the school surroundings and pruning trees. When inspection was conducted at the end of the day, the school looked completely different. Indeed, the surroundings were “clean shaven!” and ready for the following day’s activities.

Base Warrant Officer Ivan Keitsemore, with his team, presented the subject “Historical Background of National Flags” to the learners. The subject was so excellently presented that many of us (unit members) realised and acknowledged that we had been under the false impression that we knew a lot about ceremonial flags, when actually the opposite was true.

Soon after Base Master Keitsemore’s presentation, career guidance and different sporting activities got under way. The atmosphere was electrifying as the learner and teacher teams were up against the unit’s volleyball, basketball and football teams. Needless to specify what the final scores were and who won or lost, however the learners and the teachers were a better side on the day. As for the unit’s teams, thorough PT sessions and intense practice sessions are necessary to deal with “six packs” and other out of shape bodies.

The Principal, Ms Agnes Raboshakga, teachers, support staff and learners were happy and impressed by what they were experiencing on their school premises. The Principal was so excited that she even commented that the school had never, in all its years of existence, hosted any school or institution on its premises for sporting activities. Indeed the school and everybody present saw history in the making on this day.

VISIT TO YA-BANA ORPHANAGE

This year’s Mandela Day celebrations were rounded off by a visit to Ya-Bana Orphanage, a safe home for children in Winterveld, north west of Pretoria. Brig Gen Ndou led half of his staff officers and the unit’s Mandela Day organisers to the orphanage. Yes indeed, the day was well spent with the children. It is the belief of many that the longer the unit could have stayed the more effective the unit could have been in making the children happy.

The partnerships which JSB Garrison has forged with Olivenhoutbosch Secondary School and Ya-Bana Orphanage are partnerships of principle. They are partnerships of principle because they were formed around the name of an icon whose ideals, beliefs and wishes had always been to make a difference in the lives of those who cannot do that by themselves. It is therefore not by mistake or by default that JSB Garrison is committed to this cause. That is why Mandela Day at JSB Garrison has become a 365 days affair, as has been demonstrated. A case in point is the General Officer Commanding who is currently considering donating old, but serviceable IT equipment to the school, and inviting both teachers and learners to some unit activities. For now, let’s look forward to what Mandela Day in 2017 will have in store for us.
Medicinal myths and a lack of care for our natural environment will be the forces behind the extinction of this magnificent animal.