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Be proactive in fighting cancer

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International cricket test in honour of our Armed Forces

A woman after God’s own heart

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COPYRIGHT: No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced without the written consent of the Editor.
As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the iconic 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings in Pretoria this year, SA Soldier dedicates this month’s edition to all our women.

The articles relating to women published in this special edition of SA Soldier reminded me of a few quotes regarding women.

An old tracker in the hunting grounds of Africa, Kalimbo, once said:

“For a woman to be beautiful her heart should be three things:

• It should be like grass grazed off by animals, but should always grow back. No hurt must kill it.

• It should be like a fountain that animals have sulfied, but it should always clear up again. No man must leave his muddy steps behind.

• It should be like daybreak always triumphing over the dark night every morning. No difficult times must kill it.”

Eleanor Roosevelt once said: “A woman is like a tea bag. You never know how strong it is until it is in hot water.”

I am proud to be a South African woman and very positive and excited to see how far we as women have progressed over the past 60 years in our beautiful country.

“Wathintha Abafazi Wathintha Imbokodo”
You strike a woman you strike a rock

Viva Women Viva!

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

Aangesien ons die ikoniese 1956 Vroue-optog na die Uniegebou in Pretoria se 60ste herdenking vanjaar vier, dra SA Soldier graag die maand se uitgawe op aan al ons vroue.

Die artikels oor vroue wat in die spesiale uitgawe van SA Soldier gepubliseer is, het my aan ’n paar aanhalings oor vroue laat dink.

‘n Ou spoorsnyer in die jagveld van Afrika, Kalimbo, het op ‘n keer gesê:

“Vir ‘n vrou om mooi te wees, moet haar hart drie dinge wees:

• Dit moet wees soos die gras wat deur die diere afgevreet word, maar altyd weer groei. Geen seer moet dit doodmaak nie.

• Dit moet wees soos ’n fontein wat deur die diere vuil getrap word, maar daarna altyd weer helder word. Geen man moet sy modderspore agterlaat nie.

• Dit moet wees soos die rooidag wat elke more die donker nag oorwin. Geen swaarkry moet dit kan doodkry nie.”

Eleanor Roosevelt het op ‘n keer gesê: “‘n Vrou is soos ‘n teesakkie. Jy weet nooit hoe sterk dit is voordat dit in die kookwater is nie.”

Ek is trots om ‘n Suid-Afrikaanse vrou te wees en baie positief en opgewonde om te sien hoe ver ons as vrouens oor die afgelope 60 jaar in ons mooi land gevorder het.

Wathintha Abafazi Wathintha Imbokodo
(As jy aan ’n vrou slaan, slaan jy aan ’n rots)

Viva Vroue Viva!

Nelda Pienaar
Redakteur SA Soldier
Described by many colleagues, family and friends from the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) fraternity, as a man of wisdom, great calibre and a visionary who was mostly respected for his kindness and generosity, a valiant soldier with a high degree of military discipline. On 17 October 2015 hundreds of SANDF members and the local community gathered at Pabalelo community hall in Upington in the Northern Cape to bid farewell to the late Private Toto Tom "Lunchboy" Malashe who was buried with full military honours.

Private Malashe was deployed to the Darfur Region in the Sudan, under the auspices of the United Nations – African Union Mission in the Sudan (UNAMIS), Operation CORDITE XX, when he died after displaying unflinching gallantry when members of the SANDF repelled a deadly ambush by the heavily armed rebels in the Sudan on Sunday morning of 27 September 2015.

He joined the SANDF in January 2005 and did his basic military training at 3 SA Infantry Battalion in Kimberley. Thereafter he went to do Infantry Corps courses at 1 SA Infantry Battalion, home of mechanised units. He was then transferred to 8 SA Infantry Battalion in Upington. Private Malashe was a Mechanic by profession in the SANDF when he met his untimely death.

The General Officer Commanding of the SA Army Infantry Formation, Maj Gen Lindile Yam on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, while delivering his eulogy at the funeral service, said: "It is with heart wrenching sorrow that I pay tribute to one of my infanteers who courage and assist my comrades in arms, even at the risk of my own life", Private Malashe did exactly that.

The Acting Officer Commanding 8 SA Infantry Battalion, Maj Mahломola Motaung, said: "We have adopted the family of Private Malashe to be part of the 8 SA Infantry Battalion family. The memories we have shared with Private Malashe will be cherished and remembered. He will forever live in our hearts. Pte Malashe was known as a disciplinarian who was committed to a disciplined SANDF guided by strict military discipline."

Private Malashe is survived by his wife, Ms Florence Malashe, daughter Busisiwe Malashe, three sons: Kamvalethu, Thembisile and Lungelo, as well as his four sisters and three brothers.

Durban will host Armed Forces Day 2017
THE MAN I BECAME

I left home when I was 18 years old to join the army. I learned how to kill another person even before I learned how to do my taxes. I have learned how to take care of someone’s life, yet I could not take care of my own. I wrote my will when I was 19. I do not get enough time to sleep. I have friends at university and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Sudan. My friends at university have a chance to laugh and enjoy life with their families, but my friends in the DRC and the Sudan are faced with tears and blood. I do not get paid much; I do not know when I will see my family again. I do not know much, but there is one thing for sure: I have thousands of brothers and sisters in East and North Africa and they are doing very well, that’s the man I became. Rfn Serame Mooki, 1 Parachute Battalion Tempe Bloemfontein

I AM A FIGHTING WOMAN

I am a fighting woman. I fight for nothing but peace. I am trained to fight the enemy. The stars are my candles, the moon is light. I share water with elephants. The rock is my pillow, the grass is my bed. The sun is my compass. If I could get shot in the battle, I will continue fighting. Before I take my last breath I will take as many enemies as I can. Together we will be layed in the dust. Do not cry for me because I am not just any woman. I am a fighting woman … Pte Victoria Mathibela, 7 SA Infantry Battalion

SURGEON GENERAL AND SPOUSES FORUM GIVE TO 1 MILITARY HOSPITAL PAEDIATRICS

Christmas came early for the Paediatrics Section at 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria. The Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, recently presented a R10 000 cheque to the ward. This amount was raised during the last SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) Prestige Charity Golf Day. The money was specifically donated to the Psychiatric Paediatrics.

Lt Gen Sedibe emphasised that the money donated should be used to refurbish the paediatric (especially psychiatric children’s) ward. The Surgeon General was warmly welcomed by the General Officer Commanding 1 Military Hospital, Brig Gen Peter Maphaha, together with some of the top management of the hospital. The Paediatrics staff, comprising Dr Chevaun Beddy, the matrons and Ward 5 personnel also welcomed the whole team to Ward 5.

The Surgeon General did not come alone, but was accompanied by his wife, Ms Julia Sedibe, the Chairperson of the SAMHS Spouses Forum. They also donated a lot of goods to refurbish the ward. Ms Sedibe was accompanied by Ms Anne Masuku (former Surgeon General’s spouse) and Ms Noleen Maphaha, both members of the SAMHS Spouses Forum. They also donated a lot of toys, children’s books and clothes.

Capt Sizakele Malope, 1 Military Hospital

MPUMALANGA WOMEN’S DAY MARCH

The female members of Army Support Base Mpumalanga participated in a march initiated by the Area Military Health Unit Mpumalanga in Women’s Month. The aim was to bring women in uniform and other stakeholders together by reaching out to the community at the same time. It was also to prove that women in the security forces are just as good as men in a traditionally male-dominated environment.

The march took off in Tekwane, passed through Kanyamazane and concluded in Msogwaba. The march symbolised the events of 9 August 1956 when 20 000 women made their way to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the pass laws. Women from other military units in Mpumalanga as well as from different government departments, including the SA Police Service, the Correctional Services and the Fire Department were invited to join the march.

Lize Pienaar, editor

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.

letter of the month

SERVING OUR SCHOOL LEARNERS

I am Scout Simon Moela, an SA Army Intelligence Corp member based at 2 Tactical Intelligence Regiment in Potchefstroom. I initiated a programme of buying uniform for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. I challenge all public servants to support our learners. Education is liberal. Having said that, we know what torn, faded school uniforms can do to a learner’s self-confidence and belief in self. As a Reserve Force member who never even got to serve on a medium-term contract, I guess this is the little bit I am doing to thank the SA National Defence Force for the life skills and experience I have acquired so far. Scout Simon Moela, SA Army Intelligence Corps member

of the SAMHS Spouses Forum. Ms Sedibe was accompanied by Ms Anne Masuku (former Surgeon General’s spouse) and Ms Noleen Maphaha, both members of the SAMHS Spouses Forum. They also donated a lot of toys, children’s books and clothes.

Capt Sizakele Malope, 1 Military Hospital
PROUD WOMEN IN UNIFORM

During Women’s Month women from Area Military Health Unit Mpumalanga met with other military units around Mpumalanga along with the South African Police Service, Traffic Officers, the Correctional Services, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire-fighters and companies from the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) and the Gender Commission. All security clusters around Mpumalanga Province came together.

During the first event held at Nutting Lodge near Nelspruit, which was sponsored by a company called MMI Holdings, various speakers advised the women on how best to use their income. The first speaker was Ms Paseka Mthombeni from MMI Holdings. Dr Thembi Matsine of the Mpumalanga Department of Health taught women a lot of things concerning money. She advised: “As a person, you must be honest with yourself, have a financial mentor and a mentor for everything. Visualise where you want to go, have a plan for your life and budget for everything. Make do with what you have and stop being jealous of your neighbours.”

Ms Immy Serakala from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism in Mpumalanga did a presentation on starting up a business and how to get a company registered. She said: “Your Company must build a relationship with other companies in order for your business to be well known”.

The last speaker was Mr Frank Magwegwe from MMI Holdings who spoke on how to have a good relationship with money as people lack confidence when it comes to money and need to be a good example to the young generation by helping them to set goals and have dreams for the future. The second event was held at Orion Hotel organised by the Correctional Services, which was sponsored by Old Mutual Nelspruit. The event honoured women doing great things for the community. Col (Ret) Sebone Phalafala, a former Officer Commanding of Area Military Health Unit Mpumalanga 10 years ago, is one of those women who serve the country with honour, dignity and integrity. She was a good example to the community and got an award of appreciation.

The last and third event was organised by Area Military Health Unit Mpumalanga. The women in the Mpumalanga security clusters marched for the community in Tekwane South, Kanyamazane and Pienaar. Other women followed in a convoy of ambulances, Samil 50 trucks and fire-engine trucks. The last pit stop was to Hillaria Mthethwa High School in Pienaar. All the Departments encouraged learners to study hard so that they could have a brighter future. The learners received information about career opportunities as soldiers, policemen, traffic officers, etc.

Being a woman means being at the centre of this world. A woman is submissive, creative, strong, smart, passionate, courageous and generous. Women do not think only of themselves but for the community.

On 9 August every year, we always remember and celebrate the great women who helped to shape South Africa. We celebrate the trailblazing women who continue to lead the country forward. “Wahtinta Aalofazi, Wahtinta Imbokodo” (meaning “You strike a woman, you strike a rock”).

1 Cpl Mavis Skhosana, email

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

If you hear this question, it can mean a lot. As a matter of fact, it could be a question that a few people ask themselves on a daily basis. If you sit down for a moment and really think about it, the answers to this question can be spine chilling. We serve in the Department of Defence (DOD) with loyalty and pride.

This is what our Code of Conduct says. We signed our Code of Conduct, which means we pledge to uphold it. We are volunteers in the DOD. You decided to become a soldier and by becoming a soldier it means that you will comply with all rules and regulations.

Then why are we stealing our own equipment? Why are we stuffing our own pockets? Have you ever thought what the consequences are for my fellow soldiers, my Department, my Service and, at the end of the day, my SA National Defence Force? If I have to go to the sickbay, there is no medicine. If I have to go to hospital, there are no doctors, just to mention a few possible consequences. I cannot perform my daily tasks, because I do not have equipment. I cannot clean my unit, because there is no cleaning material or transport for daily tasks, because there is no fuel.

Small theft has a huge impact on other people. Measures have been implemented to prevent people from committing fraud. These measures are “killing” our units, because the process is so long and the paperwork is endless. People are becoming negative; commanders have a difficult task to perform their daily tasks.

Soldiers are stealing from one another. Soldiers are committing fraud. Soldiers are supposed to be honest, act with integrity, be responsible, and show respect. I ask the question again, where are we going?

To be honest, some might say that we are going nowhere slowly. Maybe one must sit down and re-evaluate the reason why one is a soldier. Be honest with yourself and you might realise that it is time to become a real soldier again. Maybe then we will go forward as proud soldiers and not as headlines in the newspaper or on television as a Department that is crippled by its own people. WO2 Jolene van den Bergh, Caterer: National Ceremonial Guard

FOCUS ON NO ACCOMMODATION CERTIFICATES

Have you ever imagined how much you could save on accommodation, meals and transport if you use accommodation available in military bases? VIP accommodation is cheaper and is situated at walking distance. Requesting or demanding a no accommodation certificate while there is accommodation in a unit is fraud. We must travel to other units to work, not to commit criminal deception intended to gain money or personal advantage. If you need luxuries you must go out in your own time and at your own expense. Pte Victoria Mathibela, Phalaborwa

letters to the editor
FOUNDATION MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Foundation Management Development Programme (FMDP) is a learning programme to assist civilians to acquire skills in management and leadership. Every year Chief Directorate Human Resource Development (CD HRD) sponsors one Foundation Management Development Programme (FMDP) consisting of 20 slots with the objective of capacitating civilians with the skills to perform their duties effectively.

The FMDP covers the basic principles of management with the objective of introducing sound management principles to first line supervisors in order to “grow” good managers for the future. Furthermore, it develops competence in support services and self-management to ensure career progress.

CD HRD coordinates this programme through the National School of Government as the service provider. Upon successful completion of the programme and portfolio of evidence, learners receive a Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority accredited certificate from the National School of Government.

Services and Divisions responded to the call for nominations. However, owing to limited slots, only 20 civilians were selected to attend. During the recently held FMDP learners demonstrated an exceedingly vibrant enthusiasm during class discussions. Credit should be given to the facilitator for motivating the learners. This will also surface in the comments made by the learners when asked to provide their experiences of the programme.

When asked of their experience of the programme, this is what some learners had to say:

“After participating in the programme, I feel ready to face and contribute to the world of leadership and make a difference with the knowledge and skills that I have acquired. The training was an excellent learning opportunity. My inner-self and my being part of the Department and its management functions have been accentuated.” - Ms Sofia Lidker, Defence Policy, Strategy and Planning Division

“I have learnt that it is important to know myself and to find a personal purpose for my life. I have further learnt that it is important to understand the Department I serve, its policies and procedures, vision and mission, and the need to practise the Batho Pele principles on a daily basis. I now feel ready to unleash the potential in me and make a difference in other people’s lives.” - Ms Ruth Lewela, Defence Legal Services Division

“During the FMDP, I learned that a leader without a spiritual gift for guidance is like a road without road signs. I learned about conflict management and ways to create and sustain good staff morale as a supervisor, because a team with a positive attitude and good morale will ensure excellent service delivery.” - Ms Angela Kutu, SA National Defence Force (SANDF) College of Educational Technology (COLET)

“I thank all parties involved in making this programme possible and the brilliant facilitator we had. She was an expert in the subject and inspired us with her love of the Public Service. I will practise all the skills I received from this programme every day and share the knowledge I gained with others.” - Ms Tsoakifo Khoali, Defence Intelligence

“I would firstly like to thank the National School of Government for the FMDP and for choosing Ms Nomlamli Mahanjana as our facilitator. The FMDP empowered us with knowledge regarding effective resource management, planning, communication, principles of Batho Pele, accountability, and other functions of management. The course was a tremendous success. I also learnt a lot about the link between spirituality and leadership.” - Ms Betty Dos Santos, 7 Medical Battalion Group

“The programme was an eye-opener as it equipped me with tools to discover myself and about the purpose and need for leadership. I will use the knowledge and skills I acquired from this programme in my department as well as my personal life to be a better person and better supervisor. I am proud that I now know my department better and I will follow up on policies to better equip myself.” - Ms Gabaikitsi Nkabinde, 35 Engineer Support (Army Logistics)

“The programme was very well organised. The manuals of the programme were user-friendly, but most importantly the facilitator was exceptional. The programme was delivered in a very interactive manner and this helped us to be attentive throughout. The FMDP transformed me in a manner that I did not expect. I thought that I was only going to learn about what first-line managers do, but then because the facilitator was an expert on the subject and had a passion for sharing knowledge, my expectations were exceeded.” - Ms Velly Maribe, Human Resource Division

“I have gained knowledge on living a balanced life by effectively managing my finances, continuous education, maintaining my health and beauty, taking care of my family and socialising with others. Lastly, I would like to reiterate my appreciation for this programme and thank all parties who worked hard to make it possible. The facilitator is a holistically experienced person who has enlightened and motivated us a lot.” - Ms Rebecca Nyathi, Chief SANDF’s Office

One can conclude that the programme was a success, based on feedback from the learners. It is clear that the facilitator had a positive impact on the learners by the comments they made. The Department would greatly benefit from this programme if the learners plough back what they have learnt and continue with the positive energy that they displayed during class.

Ms Eugenia Motshodi Ngwepe, Defence Civilian Education, Training and Development

SA NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE WENT VIRTUAL

The General Officer Commanding of Training Command, Maj Gen Gordon Yekelo, officially launched the website of the SA National Defence College (SANDC).

Maj Gen Yekelo stated it is all part of the process of rejuvenating education in the Department of Defence. He also emphasised the importance of focusing on education and training in the Department.

He added that the SANDC is now boasting with its own website and people all over the world will now have access to knowledge about the College. Maj Gen Yekelo concluded: “SANDC is now online!”

Sgt Ronald Knight, Pretoria
More than 300 learners taking maths and science, particularly those in Grade 12 in the area of the Botlokwa community, Limpopo province, attended a career day held at Fedile High School (Matoks) community.

The career day was recently held for the learners to explore the various career options in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) so that they could make informed decisions based on their educational and career choices.

Four schools attended, namely Fedile High School, Rampo High School, Kgarahara High and Mamokutupi High School. The day was intended to benefit the learners by introducing them to various careers presented by different speakers.

The relevance of schoolwork where learners observed how English, maths, science, problem-solving, team work and other basic skills learned in the classroom are used in the workplace, and creating a career pathway where learners discover which college majors or technical programmes fit into different career paths was shared.

The following institutions provided sound knowledge by offering career guidance to the learners: Unisa, the University of Johannesburg, Transnet, the University of Pretoria, the SA Maritime Safety Authority, Molemole Municipality, the University of Venda, Ekurhuleni College, Capricorn Further Education and Training (FET), Absa and the SA Air Force.

Chaplain Rebecca Simons led the aviation team of Air Force Base Makhado and opened the sermon with Scripture reading and prayer. She told learners not to look down on themselves. She urged them to respect one another, love each other, respect parents and teachers and every elderly person within the community. She said this would help them to become more disciplined.

Chaplain Simons added: “Focus on your studies and refrain from doing things that will distract you in life. Work hard to achieve your dream. South Africa needs you and your knowledge. It is expected of you to do well in order to change the situation at home for the better. The future is in your hands.”

The Mayor of Molemole District Municipality, Ms Pauline Makgato, echoed the same message with other guest speakers that learners should work hard in order to achieve their goals in life. She told the learners that no one could abuse them if they were well educated. The Mayor told the learners that her office currently had a programme offering bursaries to needy students. In order to qualify for bursaries one needs to work hard.

Miss Limpopo Province 2016, Ms Ntsakelelo Mkanzi, also attended the career day to encourage the learners. She hailed from Nkowankowa in Giyan. Ms Mkanzi said: “Education is important in life. If you need prosperity in life and change your lifestyle, you need to focus on education.”

Ms Mkanzi gave an example of herself as a role model who achieved her dreams simply by studying. She gave the learners her secret on how to become successful in life: “Have a dream that will scare you; push that dream. Work hard to achieve that dream. Achieve and enjoy the dream!”

17-year-old Raphasha Daphney from Mokomene (Botlokwa) shared her feelings regarding the career day. She said: “I am joyous to be part of this event. I learnt a lot about various careers available in the SA Air Force. When I finished my studies, my desire was to join the SA Military Health Service as a social worker. I enjoyed the presentation by members of the SANDF.”

Masilompana Veronica (20) commended the presentation by members of the SA Air Force. She mentioned that her wish was to become a legal officer in the SANDF.

Lt Thomas Mulaudzi, Air Force Base Makhado

WOMEN’S DAY GALA EVENT

The School of Artillery ladies organised a gala event for the Potchefstroom Artillery ladies at the Potchefstroom Town Hall to celebrate Women’s Day.

Chaplain Spannenberg opened the function with Scripture reading and prayer. (The programme directors for the event were Capt Crystal Titus and Bombardier Karabo Thlapi.) The first speaker, Adv Miliswa Mokoteli, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Her Voice Foundation and author of the book “Where is our daughter”, gave a powerful speech about womanhood, our purpose and the order of the design that God, has for us. Her emphasis was on the fact that we are the King’s daughters and He loves us and has a great purpose in putting us on the earth. Adv Miliswa interacted with the crowd during her talk, which moved the crowd.

The second speaker, Ms Belinda Tredoux, talked about her journey in life. Her story was about finding her purpose in life, doing what she loves as a businesswoman and that family is the best treasure in a woman’s life. The third speaker was WO2 Elsabe Erasmus, our very own Human Resources Chief Clerk at Artillery Mobilisation Regiment. Her life story was very moving and it taught us to accept life’s challenges, to give of self and love even in situations that do not permit giving and loving.

After the meal, the programme continued under Ms Africa, Ms Janet Potgieter, who is the Executive Director of the Ms Africa Pageant and the Head of the Ms Africa Foundation. She talked about giving, emphasising that we need to give the little that we have because although it might be nothing special for you, to someone it might be life changing.

The last speaker was Ms Jennifer Kalanko, the Ms Africa finalist 2016. She told the ladies about her journey as a finalist and the projects she was involved in to uplift the community.

After enjoying a three-course meal the ladies enjoyed the music played by the DJ while interacting with each other and the speakers. At the end of it all, the ladies agreed that the event was an experience that brought us together as the Potchefstroom Artillery ladies and it got us in touch with our femininity. Capt Tumi Chabala, email
As part of ploughing back into the community and the SA National Defence Force’s rural development efforts and social responsibility, Joint Tactical Headquarters Free State and 10 SA Infantry Battalion (10 SAI Bn) with their partners recently handed over a house in Manyatseng Location, Ladybrand in the Free State, to Mr Piet Mosenye who was 106 years old. The house was built through a partnership between the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the private sector.

The President of the RSA and the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Jacob Zuma, committed the Government to making today better than yesterday, hence the immediate task the SANDF embarked upon to attend to the dire situation of the Mosenye family. Handing over this house symbolised the dignity of our families and manifested the notion of poverty reduction and the elimination of inequality in the society.

10 SAI Bn is deployed under the auspices of Joint Tactical Headquarters Free State as part of OPERATION CORONA to safeguard the borders and quell cross-border crime along the South African border with Lesotho. Social responsibility is one of the objectives of the Battalion during their deployment period.

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Battalion Commander under whose directive all Civil-Military Cooperation or Social Responsibility activities are entrusted thus requested the Chaplain of the deployed Battalion, Chaplain (Cpln) Rufus Maruma, to establish a Social Responsibility Committee to ensure extensive civil-military engagement in their area of operations.

Cpln Maruma, with the aid of a Social Worker of the Department of Social Development, Ms Pontsho Siqwele, found Mr Mosenye and his family in dire need of a proper house. Mr Mosenye and his family had been staying in a shack for several years until their plight was identified by the Social Worker, after which the SANDF intervened.

The SANDF members responded positively to the project and donated funds to build the house. The Battalion continues to be involved in the project with great enthusiasm and regards it as a step in the right direction as it will have a positive impact on the community. The aim of the project is to maintain good working relations with the community where they are deployed.

The project commenced in June 2016. Cpl Motseotsili Koagile, a signaller and radio operator at 10 SAI Bn, designed, planned and built the house with the help of Cpln Maruma, L Cpl Makungu Nyati, Mr Thabo Kometsi and Mr Thabiso Kometsi. SANDF members built the house while they were performing their normal duties. The house is of a decent standard.

LEFT: Mr Piet Mosenye (106) could not hold back his tears when the General Officer Commanding Infantry Formation, Maj Gen Rudzani Maphwanya, handed him the house.

LEFT: The house was designed, planned and built by Cpl Motseotsili Koagile with the help of Cpln Maruma, L Cpl Makungu Nyati, Mr Thabo Kometsi and Mr Thabiso Kometsi.

The success of this project illustrates how, through meaningful...
partnerships, government can achieve more towards improving the lives of people. The partnership with the Ladybrand Crushers, Cashbuild Ladybrand, the staff of the Senorita Ntlabathi District Hospital and community members to provide shelter for the family is indeed a great milestone for the SANDF.

The General Officer Commanding Infantry Formation, Maj Gen Rudzani Maphwanya, took the opportunity to engage with members of the community and called on the private sector to reach out to previously disadvantaged communities. Maj Gen Maphwanya said: “It is through your tireless efforts that we are today handing over this house to the family of Mr Mosenye. We are very grateful for the role they have played in their various capacities in ensuring a better life for this family.”

He said the project was part of the SANDF’s efforts to bring about sustainable and positive change to people’s lives. Maj Gen Maphwanya said: “The SANDF will continue to bring these projects to the rural community as they play a pivotal role in rural socio-economic and infrastructure developments. This is because infrastructure development is a key priority for government and the need is most evident in the rural communities.”

We will always admire and respect our fellow female Operational Emergency Care Practitioners (OECP) who are serving the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) with loyalty and pride as South African citizens and volunteers, as stipulated in our Code of Conduct. They are the women whose military careers have had an impact in the lives of so many and have inspired our fellow members and their dependants, South African citizens and members of our continent at large.

You have always provided professional medical care and support by protecting the sick and injured during peace and war, during internal and external deployments, safeguarding South Africa’s borders on peacekeeping missions, providing humanitarian support and in relief operations.

Your bravery, unselfish behaviour, professionalism, contribution and fearless attitude in a challenging military career previously mainly reserved for men is really admirable. The “Imbokodo” (as used to describe the powers and strength of women) is not just an ordinary stone but is strong, powerful, hard and very important in many ways.

It is true that out of one’s comfort zone is not something easy to adjust to with ease. You have been prepared to make the sacrifice of leaving your loved ones, family members and friends behind when duty calls. In all that you do, whether involving operational matters or family matters, remember that God wants us to be true and obedient through our minds, hearts and actions at all times.

Thumbs up to the Geneva Conventions and all other related international treaties governing the utilisation and protection of our health care workers. It is an interesting fact that the utilisation, deployment and execution of all military activities are in accordance with the South African Constitutional Imperative.

You should always remember that life is a world of abundance. There is an incredible amount of variety and diversity in this world. God gave us intellectual abilities. What are you doing with those abilities? The choice is yours. It is up to you whether you fill your mind with positive or negative information. You should always remember that when you have a positive mind you will have positive results in life and be able to do good.

Remember that you are unique, special and, most importantly, loved by God our Creator. You have got different thoughts, actions and emotions. God took personal care when you were created. Understand that God created you as a worthy representative of Himself. Take control of your life: “Yes you can”.

“In reality, improving lives has to be geared towards women. Once this is done you improve everybody’s life. Women do not just improve their own lives, but the entire family and the community,” said the African Union Chairperson, Ms Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, in her closing speech at the five-day AfriCities Summit in Sandton (as published in the Sowetan, dated 4 December 2015). WO2 Johanna Mavuso, email...
Honouring eleven fallen SA National Defence Force heroines in Women’s Month

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight

Today marks a sad day in the history of our SA National Defence Force! The loss of one member is one too many, but the loss of almost a dozen, eleven of our members, is too much to bear. The tragic accident that occurred reminds us that life is short, just too short and we need to cherish every moment as long as we live - live every day as if it’s our last.” These were the opening remarks of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, during the Memorial Service.

The Memorial Service for these victims was held on 24 August 2016 at the Christian Revival Church in Bloemfontein.

In his address to the families, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, assured the bereaved families that he would personally see to it that each family received the necessary support through the Human Resource Division in accordance with the policies and procedures of the SANDF relating to benefits accruing to deceased members of the SANDF. Gen Shoke said: “We in

ABOVE: Photos of the eleven female members of the SA National Defence Force who perished on 19 August 2016 while travelling on the R712 to the Basotho Cultural Village to celebrate Women’s Day.

of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, during the Memorial Service recently held for the eleven deceased female members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in the Christian Revival Church in Bloemfontein.

While travelling on the R712 on 19 August 2016 to the Basotho Cultural Village to celebrate Women’s Day, women from the DOD Demobilisation Centre at De Brug near Bloemfontein were unfortunately involved in an accident. Their bus overturned resulting in the deaths of eleven people. The other passengers, including the driver, were seriously injured.

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“We trust in God through all these times. It is difficult for the family, but by God’s grace here we are standing and talking, whereas we should have been rolling. We should be in hospital, we should have been anywhere else, but God has given us the strength,” said Ms Masango Macala, a relative of L Cpl Sharon Nosiphiwe Macala.

His sentiments were echoed by the Minister in her speech when she said: “As we prepare for their last journey, we must be mindful that these gallant women of our National Defence Force died in the line of duty, and must be recognised for this. We must pay a fitting tribute to them, and ensure that their legacy in our National Defence Force is an everlasting one”.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Let us ensure that there is a wall of remembrance in the units they come from as a stark reminder of them as members of their units.”

The deceased members

1. Chaplain Phumza Teledimo (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
2. Sgt Matseko Josephine Madimabe (Signals Unit, Bloemfontein)
3. Cpl Akhona Tshoni (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
4. L Cpl Sharon Nosiphiwe Macala (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
5. L Cpl Cheena Roberta Jonkers (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
6. L Cpl Maditsietsi Constance Morotolo (Signals Unit, Bloemfontein)
7. Pte Maserame Dorcas Molibeli (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
8. Ms Portia Palesa Ramabodu (Demobilisation Centre [SA Military Health Service: Pharmacist], Bloemfontein)
9. Ms Alice Thakanyane Masilo (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
10. Ms Maria Jacobs (Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
11. Ms Cynthia Lesego Rasethunsha (Civilian, Demobilisation Centre, Bloemfontein)
A look back at the historical Women’s Charter

By AB Samuel Ramonyai and Mr Brilliant Molobela, Interns at SA Soldier
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight and Pte Paul Mpangala

Women from across the country celebrated Women’s Day on the Union Buildings South Lawn in Pretoria with the theme: “Women united in moving South Africa forward”. Women from all parts of the country marched along the streets of Pretoria to the seat of government to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the iconic 1956 Women’s March.

The first National Women’s Day was celebrated in 1995. After South Africa had become a democratic country, the day was declared a national holiday. Since then there have been annual celebrations of the day throughout the country. It has become a national holiday in which activities are organised with prominent women speaking at different venues across the country.

ABOVE: The Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, escorted by two aides de camp of the SA Air Force, Col Selina Toodi (right) and Col Christina Make.

country. August has since been declared National Women's Month. The month of August reminds us all of the resolve made by South African women in 1956 to ensure a peaceful South Africa.

The main objective of the occasion was to commemorate the date of 9 August 1956, when 20 000 women of all races marched to present a petition against the carrying of passes by women. The march against the pass laws was organised by the Federation of South African Women.

The day began with various female singers cheering the crowd. The formal programme commenced with the SA National Defence Force’s (SANDF) National Ceremonial Guard Band ushering in the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, and Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The programme directors were the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, and the Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Ms Suzan Shabangu.

The first speaker was struggle stalwart, Ms Sophia de Bruyn, one of the women who led the 1956 Women's March. She said it gave her great joy to see how far women had come in advancing their rights. Ms De Bruyn added: “Today when I see what they’ve achieved, they’ve achieved a lot. They can choose their own professions; they can choose anything they want to do. I often say to them that it is no longer a case of the sky being the limit. But you can go beyond the sky because you can even become an astronaut.”

The Minister of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, remarked: “This day is also the opportunity to remember the many heroines, who not only brought about freedom and democracy in our country but also ensured that the fruits of our liberation are today enjoyed by all. We are paying tribute today to these women of calibre, women like Ms Charlotte Maxeke, Ms Lilian Ngoyi, Ms Helen Joseph, Ms Rahima Moosa, Ms Bertha Gxowa, Ms Albertina Sisulu, Ms Dorothy Nyembe and Ms Sophia Williams de Bruyn who is still here with us.”

Ms Dlamini added: “We are blessed as South Africa that we still have four of those women who led the march in 1956. We also appreciate the presence of other women who are here today and were part of that march. We are also paying tribute to women in business, academia, in religious fraternities, sport and government.”

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, said: “We celebrate an event that is not only historic for South African but for the African women across the continent on this day 60 years ago. South African women from across the country from all national groups and all walks of life took a stand and said: ‘Wathinta Abafazi, Wathinta Imbokodo’ (meaning: You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock).”

Dr Dlamini-Zuma also highlighted that women should not forget to continue with the struggle. They must take the baton and continue with the struggle for the right of their children’s education.

The event concluded with female artists, Deborah Fraser, Dorothy Masuka, Abigail Kubeka, the Muses, Nothembi Mkhwebane, Babes Wodumo and Busiswa on stage.
Defence Intelligence
Women’s Day Celebration

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight and Mr Witney Rasaka

The women of Defence Intelligence Division, headed by Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, used the last day of Women’s Month to celebrate their Women’s Day in style with the theme: The overcoming strength of women” at the SA Defence Intelligence College (SADIC) in Pretoria.

The celebration drew strength from the heroism of the women of 1956 who fought the injustices of the past. It was celebrated with an exciting and diverse line-up of guest speakers, such as Ms Tobeka Madiba Zuma, one of the First Ladies of South Africa and founder of the Tobeka Madiba Zuma Foundation, Maj Gen Olga Nodola, Chief Director Transformation Management (CDTM), two Honorary Colonels: Col (Dr) Gwen Ramogopa, the Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology and Col (Dr) Yvonne Chaka Chaka Mhinga, a renowned South African singer and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), together with various stakeholders from the Defence Industry, executives and entrepreneurs.

Ms Zuma said that women and young girls were often vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. She gave a health talk on cancer to raise awareness and encourage women to be tested before it was too late. She said that if cancer was detected early, it could be successfully treated. In conclusion she called on women to work together, mentor each other and collaborate to help revive the spirit of UBUNTU. She called on women to advocate the rights of vulnerable groups, including children and orphans.

Below: WOMEN’S DAY CELEBRATION: Ms Tobeka Madiba Zuma, one of the First Ladies of South Africa (left), escorted by Col Petronella Nkambule, Senior Staff Officer Defence Intelligence Plan, during the Defence Intelligence Women’s Day celebration.

The two Honorary Colonels, Col (Dr) Ramogopa and Col (Dr) Mhinga, shared their motivational tips and appealed to women to play their part in addressing social ills in the communities and across our country, especially in townships and historically disadvantaged rural areas and to support the struggles of women and children.

They shared ideas on how to unlock opportunities that could benefit them by creating a sustainable livelihood and be agents of social change. Women were urged to offer mentorship and coaching and stop the “pull her down syndrome” because it is only when they work together that they can make an impact.

Maj Gen Nodola pointed out that the achievement of the women of 1956 had paved the way for women to enter...
various sectors and spheres. She added that gender equality and gender representation was a fundamental policy of government.

Speaking to SA Soldier Maj Tsholofelo Ramapulane, SO2 Health Intelligence, a Scientist at the Pathology Laboratory with a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA) said that they had gathered to reflect on the lives of the women of 1956 who fought against the injustices of the past. She said that a woman is a homestead champion, pillar of strength, doctor, teacher, leader, mentor, nurturer, advisor and soldier. Despite the challenges she is confronted with she still stands strong with confidence and smiles. “You strike a woman, you strike a rock”.

Ms Pretty Nyembe, wife of the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, welcoming guests to the Defence Intelligence Women’s Day celebration.

Col (Dr) Yvonne Chaka Chaka Mhinga, a renowned singer and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), sharing some of her motivational tips.

Ms Pretty Nyembe, wife of the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, welcoming guests to the Defence Intelligence Women’s Day celebration.

Col (Dr) Yvonne Chaka Chaka Mhinga, a renowned singer and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), sharing some of her motivational tips.

LEFT: Col (Dr) Gwen Ramokgopa, the Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology, pointed out that the rights of women and children are protected by the Constitution.

Maj Gen Olga Nodola, Chief Director Transformation Management, urged women to study as there are opportunities for people with education and skills in the Department of Defence.

ABOVE: Ms Pretty Nyembe, wife of the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, welcoming guests to the Defence Intelligence Women’s Day celebration.

ABOVE: Col (Dr) Yvonne Chaka Chaka Mhinga, a renowned singer and Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), sharing some of her motivational tips.

LEFT: Col (Dr) Gwen Ramokgopa, the Chancellor of the Tshwane University of Technology, pointed out that the rights of women and children are protected by the Constitution.

RIGHT: Maj Gen Olga Nodola, Chief Director Transformation Management, urged women to study as there are opportunities for people with education and skills in the Department of Defence.
1 Military Hospital celebrates Women’s Day

This year South Africa commemorates the 60th anniversary of the 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings. 1 Military Hospital fully participated in the Women’s Month celebrations.

The day was graced by the presence of Ms Bongi Ngema Zuma, wife of President Jacob Zuma. The country’s First Lady sat at the table with two of our very own SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) “first ladies”, namely Ms Anne Masuku, wife of the former and late Surgeon General, and Ms Noleen Maphaha, wife of Brig Gen Maphaha. All three First Ladies spoke as mothers to the women of 1 Military Hospital.

The General Officer Commanding 1 Military Hospital, Brig Gen Peter Maphaha, opened the celebrations with words of wisdom to all women. The celebrations started off with a movie in the Auditorium of 1 Military Hospital, organised by the Chaplains.

The 2014 Queen of 1 Military Hospital, Capt Jacky Skosana, kept the women on their toes as a programme director for the day. The first speaker of the day was the Head of Dermatology, Lt Col (Dr) Dimakatso Mahapa, who spoke intensively on self-grooming as women. She also guided women concerning the maintaining of beautiful, blemish free faces.

The Head of the Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) Section, Dr Glen Monama, was the second speaker of the day. He spoke not only as a Doctor, but as a Pastor and motivated the women to know their rightful positions and capabilities. He spoke especially about the unique feature of the womb, which imparts strength to women.

Another speaker, Dr Makgomo Leope, a Medical Officer at 1 Military Hospital, motivated all women to carry each other as sisters, but not to pull each other down. Two other dynamic programme directors, Lt Col Betty

ABOVE: One of the country’s First Ladies, Ms Bongi Ngema Zuma, addresses the women of 1 Military Hospital.

LEFT: Ms Anne Masuku, wife of the former and late Surgeon General, addresses the audience.
away with the title of Miss 1 Military Hospital 2016. The first princess was our Chef, Miss Ncebakazi Gamntu and Miss 1 Military Hospital 2016 went to Miss Nomthandazo Sabela who also happens to be a chef. Owing to work commitments the 2015 Queen could not be there to hand over the crown, but nevertheless the 2014 Queen, Capt Skosana, who is also a theatre professional nurse, handed over the crown.

The women were overwhelmed by the humble spirit of one of South Africa’s First Ladies, Ms Bongi Ngema Zuma, who in her busy schedule had made the time to take “selfies” with all the women. One must say that Women’s Month was a huge success.

Mathaphuna and Maj Theo Phenyenye, shared the stage to make sure that the day was a success.

We must mention that it has become the norm every year for a final celebration, namely the women’s parade in which the women wear their best outfits for the crowning of the Queen of 1 Military Hospital. This year the competition was very tough, thus there were two winners that walked away with the title of Miss 1 Military Hospital 2016. The first princess was our Chef, Miss Ncebakazi Gamntu and Miss 1 Military Hospital 2016 went to Miss Nomthandazo Sabela who also happens to be a chef. Owing to work commitments the 2015 Queen could not be there to hand over the crown, but nevertheless the 2014 Queen, Capt Skosana, who is also a theatre professional nurse, handed over the crown.

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**ABOVE:** The women of 1 Military Hospital wear their best outfits to participate in the Queen of 1 Military Hospital Competition.

**ABOVE:** Women of 1 Military Hospital celebrating Women’s Day in style.
Krotoa remembered and honoured at the Castle of Good Hope

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight

Since its first construction between 1666 and 1679, the Castle of Good Hope over history has seen changes of custodianship. For 350 years ago the Castle has had a completely different meaning for people in South Africa and in the Cape, and it was a place where slaves and common prisoners of the time were kept. The changing custodians of the Castle symbolise the journey that South Africa as a nation has travelled. It is a journey that the military has travelled as an indisputable and integral part of a progressing nation.

The progress celebrated and milestones reached by blacks as natives of the country remain mostly untold to this day. The narrative of South Africa’s key events, progress and milestones has undoubtedly been characterised by the heroism of our kings who, with their soldiers, is to a certain extent still unrecorded. It also includes the history of Krotoa, a Khoi woman born in 1643. She was a member of the Goringhaicona (Strandlopers) and the niece of Autshumao, a Khoi leader and trader whose history is misrepresented. Her role as a woman is rarely told. Colonial history chooses to portray Krotoa as a drunkard and a prostitute of very little significance.

As the nation progressed over the years the military took over the custodianship of the Castle. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, as custodian of the Castle of Good Hope, an entity of the Department of Defence, recently led a solemn ceremony for the symbolic repatriation of the spirit of Krotoa from the burial grounds of the Groote Kerk in Church Square, Cape Town, where her bones were interned in an unmarked grave after being removed from the grounds of the Castle nearly a century after she was buried there.

The ceremony to repatriate Krotoa’s spirit took place at a time the Castle of Good Hope was celebrating its 350 years of existence, and significantly during the Women’s Month of August. This occasion marked a milestone in the pursuit of women’s universal suffrage, women’s empowerment, national reconciliation, healing and nation-building.

It was therefore fitting that when the woman’s parade was held at the Castle the story of Krotoa should be told, a tale that without her the story of the Castle would not be complete. It is a story that signifies the uncelebrated role of women in shaping events that have crafted the destiny of the South African nation.

From the age of 10 Krotoa worked...
as a servant in the household of the Dutch commander, Jan van Riebeeck, and is credited with being instrumental in working out terms for ending the first Dutch-Khoi-Khoi War. She demonstrated an aptness for languages, and later established herself as a reliable interpreter between the Dutch and the Khoi tribes.

Having foreseen the inevitability of change, following the arrival and settling of the Dutch in the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, Krotoa acted as facilitator between the Dutch and the Khoi, resulting in her being ostracised by the Khoi people. Also known as Eva, following her being baptised as a Christian, Krotoa was married off to a Danish surgeon called Pieter van Meerhof, in what was the first recorded official mixed race marriage in South Africa, and had several children with him.

When Van Meerhof was killed in a slave hunt in Madagascar, Krotoa’s status in the Dutch colony declined. She was later banished to Robben Island and her children sent to Mauritius, only to return to South Africa after their mother’s passing. Long depicted as a controversial figure caught between the two competing worlds of the Dutch and the Khoi, Krotoa is also credited with being among the chief architects of the Afrikaans language.

Krotoa (Eva) is a mother of the South African nation. Though many of European descent dislike the facts and choose to deny it, indigenous history tells us that Krotoa was a matriarch, and it is inferred that many statesmen like Paul Kruger and FW De Klerk are descended from her. There has also always been great speculation among the Khoi tribes that Jan van Riebeeck fathered Krotoa’s first child called Anthony, but the archives have very little to say about it.

In an elaborate traditional event Krotoa’s spirit was cordially persuaded to return to the grounds of the Castle of Good Hope, where Minister Mapisa-Nqakula unveiled a monument in her honour. In the Khoi and isiXhosa languages her spirit was informed why she was brought back to the Castle and apologies on behalf of those who took her away in the first place.

During her keynote address Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Today, in accordance with our traditions we have come here to pass peace upon her spirit, to let her know that we acknowledge her, that we now know what she did for our country and our willingness to take her work forward, thereby releasing her to eternal rest. “After three and half centuries of the Castle standing as an immovable fortress of colonial majesty, we have come here today to present this place as a monument of hope. We draw strength from the life of our mother Krotoa who, through her life here, continues to teach us that our circumstances of life, including those imposed on us by others, do not determine our destiny.”

Krotoa’s spirit was returned to the Castle because it was her home. A young Krotoa, of about 10 or 11 years old, was taken in by Jan van Riebeeck during the first few days of Dutch settlement in the Cape. She worked as a servant for the Commander’s wife, Maria van Riebeeck. From that tender age, the Castle was the only home she knew.

The members on parade were all female representatives of the four Services of the SANDF. The parade was in Company form. The Company Commander was Lt Cdr Seipati Tshabalala and the Parade Warrant Officer was WO1 Lydia Monaisa, both from the SA Navy. Music was offered by the SA Navy under the direction of Cdr Kenneth Leibrandt and Drum Major, WO2 Nombali Magubane. The Salute Flight was performed by the Oryx and Lynx aircraft of the SA Air Force.
focus on women

The SA National Defence Force honours its fallen heroines

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, accompanied by the Chief of Staff of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, Chiefs of Services and Divisions and senior officials from the Department of Defence (DOD) recently commemorated the SANDF’s fallen heroines who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty and who had dedicated their lives to serving and protecting our nation. Among those specially remembered were eleven female members of the DOD who lost their lives following a tragic bus accident near Clarens in the Free State in August 2016.

The Women’s Commemoration Parade was held at the Tempe Military Base in Bloemfontein. It was a day to remember, reflect and honour these women. They lived to make a difference in this world, and died as they lived, safeguarding our

RIGHT: Cpl Phindile Ndlovu from 44 Parachute Regiment delivering a scroll with a tandem jump to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula.
nation, defending our freedom and preserving our liberty.

These women were true professionals bound by a common vocation, which was more than a job, or a career, or a profession. They chose to serve as agents of peace and guardians of freedom. They came from different backgrounds, but were bound by common values: COURAGE, SACRIFICE and SERVICE.

Their deaths remind us that we must never take our lives for granted and that our cherished freedom comes with a price. The sacrifices of these women are the reasons we continue to live in a country of freedom and opportunities. The SANDF remembered these fallen heroines and recognised their contributions towards nation building and which ensures a strong national defence force.

In paying tribute to these women, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said that families, friends and colleagues had gathered to commemorate their commitment, devotion to duty, their loyalty and the ultimate sacrifice they made in serving our communities.

The Minister said: “Therefore today gives us an opportunity to publicly acknowledge all our women in the DOD, both serving and non-serving, who have passed on. It is important that we honour these fallen heroines and remind ourselves of the sacrifices they have made in laying down their lives for the betterment of our country and in contributing to a better Africa and a better world. For many of us the security challenges of today further underscore the importance of the SANDF and its ongoing commitment to protecting us all, despite the inevitable risks faced on a daily basis.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added that it was quite symbolic that the tragic bus accident happened to women who were deployed at the DOD Demobilisation Centre at the De Brug Training Centre, a centre that epitomises the SANDF’s readiness for deployment in many theatres.

The Defence Minister said that these women would never be forgotten adding: “through us their exceptional legacy will always be remembered”. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Today we are indeed honouring all women who have died while on service. They were daughters, mothers, wives, lovers, friends, colleagues, providers and care takers. These heroines chose to stand beside us; we will always remember them and be inspired by the example they have given us. Their spirit remains, like a handprint on our hearts.”

LEFT: The parade consisted of female soldiers from all Services of the SA National Defence Force.

RIGHT: The SA National Defence Force held a parade recently to commemorate the fallen heroines who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.
It is international practice to find both military and civilian personnel serving side by side in Defence establishments. Although their service conditions are governed by different Acts, it is interesting to note how these Acts complement each other. For example, the military Code of Conduct stipulates that members must commit to serve in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) with loyalty and pride, as citizens and volunteers; respect the democratic political process and civil control of the SANDF; not advance or harm the interests of any political party or organisation; accept personal responsibility for their actions; obey all lawful commands and respect all superiors; refuse to obey obviously illegal orders; carry out their mission with courage and assist their comrades-in-arms, even at the risk of their own lives; treat all people fairly and respect their rights and dignity at all times, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, language or sexual orientation or disability; respect and support subordinates and treat them fairly; not abuse their authority, position or public funds for personal gain, in pursuit of political motives or for any other reason; and report criminal activity, corruption and misconduct to the appropriate authority.

The civilian Code of Conduct also requires that an employee should strive to achieve the objectives of his or her institution cost-effectively and in the public interest; is creative in thought and in the execution of his or her duties; seeks innovative ways to solve problems and enhances effectiveness and efficiency within the context of the law; is punctual in the execution of his or her duties; executes his or her duties in a professional and competent manner; does not engage in any transaction or action that is in conflict with or infringes on the execution of his or her official duties; will recuse himself or herself from any official action or decision-making process which may result in improper personal gain, and this should be properly declared by the employee; accepts the responsibility to avail himself or herself of on-going training and self-development throughout his or her career; is honest and accountable in dealing with public funds and uses Public Service property and other resources effectively, efficiently, and only for authorised official purposes; promotes sound, efficient, effective, transparent and accountable
administration; in the course of his or her official duties, shall report to the appropriate authorities the occurrence of fraud, corruption, nepotism, mal-administration or any other act which constitutes an offence, or which is prejudicial to the public interest; gives honest and impartial advice based on all available relevant information to higher authority when asked for assistance of this kind; and honours the confidentiality of matters, documents and discussions, classified or implied as being confidential or secret.

It is further important to note that our country’s Constitution requires all and sundry to be on the same page in respect to the fact that we are governed by democratic values and principles and are expected to maintain and promote a high standard of professional ethics, including efficient, economic and effective use of resources; are orientated towards development; deliver services impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; respond to people's needs and encourage public participation in policy matters; accountable for its actions; transparent by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information; cultivating good human resource management and career development practices into maximise human potential.

Furthermore, one of the key requisites for defence civilians to function optimally and effectively within the military milieu is for them to understand the rank pyramid as well as the distinctive mandates of the Services and Divisions within the Department of Defence (DOD). This also includes the adoption of self-discipline and an appropriate personal dress code for work purposes and all corporate events.

More often than not, members of the general staff are under a lot of pressure depending on where they are deployed and, as a result thereof, the calibre of our support staff must be such that they share the same passion and commitment to the task at hand.

Ms Amanda Smit has been exactly that to me!

Furthermore, a pre-requisite for a conducive workplace is the understanding of personalities and acceptance of our superiors’ work ethics, and the right approach to given tasks. Amanda has risen to the occasion in this regard. She has served loyally with pride and honour for over three decades within the DOD in the capacity of an Administration Clerk and Senior Secretary.

She currently serves as my aide de camp and I am very chuffed with the support provided by her in pursuit of my responsibilities as the Deputy Chief of Human Resources (HR) in the DOD. For example, realising that I am a morning person she decided to report to work just as early as myself so that we could tackle administration and governance issues in the quiet offices at Defence Headquarters. What I appreciate most about her calibre is the fact that she takes the initiative and understands the passion that I have for my work. For example, Amanda completes all her daily activities irrespective of the knock-off time. Her mantra is: “General, we must complete today’s work today, because tomorrow has no guarantees.”

Ms Amanda Smit is always proactive in her approach to issues and she is also not afraid to bubble with new ideas that would promote efficiency and effectiveness in the Deputy Chief HR’s office. I have come to enjoy serving with Ms Amanda Smit by my side and am thus very grateful that our paths have crossed at this juncture in my life. Last but not least, we both trust that the disparities in the conditions of service for defence civilians and military personnel can be bridged as much as possible in our lifetimes as we undertake to arrest the decline within the SANDF and ensures a world-class military service in a developmental state. I thank Amanda Smit for being one of my best support staff members!
**Women of SA Air Force Headquarters honour the fortitude of 1956 protagonists**

By CPL Tebogo Kekana,  
Journalist at Ad Astra,  
Photos by WO2 David Nomtshongwana

On why she took part in the talent show, Sgt Thabitha Manamela from Directorate Human Resource Services said: “Kofifi as a theme for our dance item made sense. We wanted to embody the times and styles of our torchbearers. As women, when you are out there, deployed, being scared of not coming home, we do not know if we are going to see tomorrow.

“We have to be brave, not only for ourselves, but for our comrades in arms. Our different talents keep us sane, songs keep us highly motivated and unity is achieved because we sing in all languages. When I felt scared, music was there; that is why I entered the SA Air Force Headquarters Got Talent Competition, organised by the Ladies Forum”.

The SA Air Force Talent Show that was recently held at SA Air Force Headquarters in the Sir Pierre van Ryneveldt Hall was held to celebrate Women’s Month. The day sparkled with different performers who made the audience stand on their feet and dance. The winners who got gifts sponsored by Nedbank were: DIVA and REABETSWE in the first place, Kofifi in second place and MARY AND ALBEN in third place.

This, as a tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the pass laws to women. The South African government declared August as Women’s Month and 9 August is commemorated annually as Women’s Day.
Col Faiza Jacobs who handed the reigns over to Lt Col Nocwaka Ramfolo as the new Chairperson of the Gender Committee welcomed the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, and said: “The aim of the Talent Show is a drive to collect money for a nationwide campaign to buy sanitary towels for poor girls who usually miss classes because their parents cannot afford to buy these items”.

The Chief of the SA Air Force acknowledged the strides made by women in uniform and recognised the strength and zeal of the women who contributed to making him the person he is. Lt Gen Msimang said: “The women of 1956 made a mark; they liberated all of us, we salute them. You are as capable as we men are, and maybe even stronger. Your contribution to this organisation is commendable as there are women right beside me in many of the battles I fight today. Never again shall a girl child be denied education because of a call of nature. Help us to give them back their dignity, donate to this cause, I have.”

Brig Gen (Ret) Claire Bless, one of the guest speakers, highlighted the biased power relations that usually cloud production in multicultural workplaces. She tackled the battle of equality that she said South African society was still trying to deal with.

“How could a woman be as good as (sometimes, better than) a man in military activities, command or control or leadership,’ they say.

“In other words, how could a woman give orders to a man? How often have we heard: ‘A woman can never tell me what to do!’ Added to these ‘traditional principles’ is the men’s perception that men are stronger and thus have to protect the ‘weak’: children and women. This again means that men’s perception comes down to: women are more of a liability than a support, e.g. a comrade-in-arms, in a dangerous situation.”

Brig Gen (Ret) Bless wondered if this was still the case, especially during international deployments. She remarked: “Do women still feel as though men want to babysit us. They say they cannot concentrate on their military duties because they also have to protect us!” Is it true? If yes, the change has to be done on both sides! Believe me! It was worse some years ago! We are progressing --- and the ball is in your hands.

“Women, become role models especially in deployment: one cannot babysit role models! Men, look at the emancipation of women as a gain for all, as your contribution to a better, more equal society in your professional and your family life! Would not it be wonderful, this feeling of togetherness, solidarity, trust and mutual support? Imagine that.”

Ms Sharon Stobia, a life coach, shared tips on how to design a happier life for oneself, and ultimately for one’s surroundings. She said: “When you give, the thanks that you get make you a fulfilled person. Exercise regularly that is what investing in oneself is about. Protect your mindset, have power over your thoughts and broaden your horizons, learn to see the positive in everything.”

Lt Col Arnold Seloane from Directorate Transformation Management spoke at length about sexual harassment and why it should be uprooted. He also read the pledge that was to be signed by men and women in uniform. He said: “To date, women have shown great leadership in portfolios such as the Commissioner of Police, the Public Protector, Chief Executive Officer of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the Independent Electoral Commission, Governor of the Reserve Bank, the South African Law Reform Commission, and the first female Deputy Auditor-General, among others. We have women Generals in our midst: it shows that shoulder-to-shoulder, we are an Air Force that inspires confidence.”
Joint Tactical Headquarters Mpumalanga hosted its Women’s Day celebration in honour of female soldiers deployed as part of OPERATION CORONA. These women are safeguarding our country’s borders and performing border patrol duties in order to fulfil the SA National Defence Force’s Constitutional Mandate of defending the territorial integrity and people of the Republic of South Africa.

This year South Africa commemorated the 60th anniversary of the 1956 iconic Women’s March when 20 000 women of all races marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the discriminatory pass laws which had restricted the movement of black people in the country. During Women’s Month our nation recognises the important role of political activism by women during the struggle for liberation against apartheid.

The event was used to recognise and give tribute to the female soldiers for their contribution and good work done during OPERATION CORONA and for their selfless efforts to serve the country with dignity and honour. The sterling job that they continue to perform validates the 1956 Women’s March. These women were characterised by a resolute spirit that sought equality, justice and freedom for all and they embodied the bravery and determination of all our women who have inspired our nation with their heroism.

It afforded the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) time to reflect on the gains they have made since 1994 in advancing women’s empowerment and rights. Our SANDF has made significant inroads in so far as gender parity and women empowerment are concerned. We have made great progress in ensuring that women enjoy the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts in relation to career opportunities, promotion, employment, health and education.

It was also an opportunity to honour and celebrate the many women in uniform who have successfully

ABOVE, LEFT and TOP RIGHT: The celebration was preceded by OPERATION VAVASATI which was conducted jointly with the South African Police Service, the Department of Home Affairs, the Mpumalanga Traffic Department, the South African Revenue Services and other stakeholders.
Women entered a predominantly male dominated field and who put their lives at risk for the safety of fellow citizens. It was also a time to display the legacy of every woman who has stepped forward to expand freedom throughout our history.

SANDF women serve in the front line to safeguard our borders. They also support other government departments in times of need, and they are there for communities that are hit by natural disasters. They have even taken on multifaceted responsibilities in peace support operations in the severe environment of the African continent. Many women in uniform have faced down the enemy abroad and fought discriminatory barriers within.

The celebration was preceded by OPERATION VÁVASATI, which was conducted jointly with the SA Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Home Affairs, the Mpumalanga Traffic Department, the SA Revenue Services (SARS) and other stakeholders. The concept of OPERATION VÁVASATI was derived from OPERATION CORONA as it focused on border safeguarding and cross-border crime as a component of the defence of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of South Africa under the auspices of the National Border safeguarding strategy.

The women manned the first of many vehicle checkpoints in the Macadamia area, focusing on hot spots. They executed border patrol duties during the night and encountered a number of illegal activities along the Mozambican border, including human trafficking, vehicle hijacking, smuggling, drug smuggling, undocumented persons and cross-border crime. Several successes were registered during the operation which was indicative of their commitment and dedication to ensuring the safety and security of the country.

When asked what value the attached to celebrating Women’s Month, the attendees were unequivocal in their response: Women’s month is a celebration of women’s rights, including being fully fledged citizens who are free to realise their full potential without prejudice and without fear or retribution. On the other hand, though, it is also a reminder that society should not turn a blind eye towards women the world over who are still being exploited, abused and denied their right to be treated equally and with respect.

Speaking to the attendees, Acting Officer Commanding of Joint Tactical Headquarters Mpumalanga, Lt Col Elaine van Staden, said that the SANDF was proud of the contributions that women made towards the Constitutional Mandate and democracy in the country. This is evident from various internal operations that seek to support the people of our country. She said that over the years women have become part of decision-making bodies in the Department of Defence.

Lt Col Van Staden said: “As we salute those women and thank them for their contributions in the SANDF, and in order to claim our rightful place within the defence force, we need to play a meaningful role and inspire society and the country in general so as to make a better life for the people of South Africa. We are fortunate enough in this country as gender equity is regarded as a key aspect of its transformation agenda. I would urge all women to have self-esteem so that they can express themselves with great courage and consideration, without fear of being victimised. “This will ensure that women claim their rightful place in the defence force to help South Africa as a developmental state, reduce poverty, crime, and corruption and provide basic health care and education, all with the participation of women. If we forge ahead as a united force with this in mind, there is no mountain too high to climb, no river too deep to cross, no jungle too dense to negotiate, no desert too dry to bear and no reactionary force too strong to break.”

ABOVE: The Acting Officer Commanding of Joint Tactical Headquarters Mpumalanga, Lt Col Elaine van Staden, honouring female soldiers who are deployed as part of OPERATION CORONA.
focus on women

Security Cluster in the Northern Cape celebrates Women’s Month

By Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The Security Cluster in the Northern Cape organised a Joint Women’s Parade at Galeshewe in Kimberley at the Yorkshire Cricket Club to honour female law enforcement officers during Women’s Month.

The Cluster Commander of the Francis Baard Cluster, Maj Gen Jean Abrahams, said she was pleased to be part of such an auspicious occasion that was aimed at celebrating and supporting female officers in security and law enforcement.

Maj Gen Abrahams said: “As we are holding the annual Women’s Month celebrations, I am humbled as the Francis Baard Cluster Commander to welcome everybody present. The programme of the day gives everybody an opportunity to reflect on the value of a woman and what it is that she represents in society. This Joint Female Parade once again defines the strength of a woman.”

She said the purpose of the day was to celebrate Women’s Month as an annual event that is meant to commemorate the women who marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on 9 August 1956. As part of the 44th anniversary of women in policing the Women’s Network and Men for Change was re-launched on 9 May 2016 to champion the rights of vulnerable groups in society.

Maj Gen Abrahams said these programmes were established in order to eradicate gender based violence and forge partnerships with various stakeholders with the aim of educating men and women about social ills. She indicated that in celebrating Women’s Month they are calling on all departments to pursue organisational development programmes to empower women through career developments, transformation and mentorship.

She said: “We as women can and do make a big difference in our communities by showing determination and the will-power to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. The strength of a woman is not measured by all the hardships she has in her life, but by her refusal to allow the hardships to dictate who she becomes.

“We remain a symbol of hope regardless of any challenge or difficulty which we may face. We always demonstrate endurance and determination. I salute all the women in the law enforcement fraternity.”

The SA Police Service (SAPS) Provincial Commissioner of the Northern Cape, Lt Gen Ramasithi Shivuri, commenced his address by delivering a message of support to the families of SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members who recently lost their lives after the tragic bus accident in the Free State.

He said that he was honoured to address the women present. Lt Gen Shivuri said the day marked an important calendar event for women in the law enforcement agencies as part of Women’s Month. He said that the month of August was a time of celebration for all women in South Africa. He said that they had come a long way in the 60 years since the 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings.
Lt Gen Shivuri said: “Empowering women remains an integral part of development in the country. Women play an important part in our growth and development. They remain the symbol of hope regardless of any challenges or difficulties which they may face. They demonstrate endurance, determination and courage in difficult situations.

“In transforming organisations, men are also important as they form part of the much needed transformation agenda. They have to be part of these programmes to understand that transformation is not meant to replace them, but to highlight the power of combined capacity and strength when men and women work together for a noble cause.”

He cautioned the women to be alert and vigilant at all times, even in their homes, saying that violence against women committed in their homes should be reported to reduce the scourge of domestic violence.

The Parade Commander, Lt Col Katrina Absalom, said the Joint Law Enforcement of the Security Cluster in Kimberley had decided that they should come together and represent female law enforcement officers by celebrating Women’s Month. Lt Col Absalom said the SA Army started preparing for the parade after meeting with the SAPS in the province. She explained that the SANDF was to orchestrate the parade side of the event while other cluster members would provide logistical support. She indicated it had been an exciting task from the beginning when they started the planning and the members had worked enthusiastically.

Lt Col Absalom said: “For me as the parade commander it is exciting to lead women of the different law enforcement agencies in an event celebrating women. As women in uniform we should be proud of what we do as a profession and seek to do our work with integrity.”

The SANDF units that took part in the parade include the SA Army Support Base Kimberley, 10 Air Defence Artillery Regiment, Air Defence Artillery School as well as the Area Military Health Unit and the Regional Works Unit in Kimberley.
Being a female cleaner at SA Air Force Headquarters

By Cpl Tebogo Kekana, Journalist at Ad Astra
Photo by WO2 David Nomtshongwana

Ms Mary Masunyane, a 42-year-old woman from Mabopane, north of Pretoria, has worked as a cleaner for the past four years at SA Air Force Headquarters. She told Ad Astra about her work, which she says often goes unappreciated.

She says: “I started working as a toilet cleaner in 2012 and a typical day in my job at the SA Air Force Headquarters included waking up at 02:00, preparing my four grandchildren for school and making sure that I left the house looking neat.”

Ms Masunyane says confidently that she regards her job as being just as important as any other that pays more. She says: “I commute by train everyday and I am never late for work because I work with soldiers and they are never late. Their discipline has rubbed off on me and I am proud to wear my uniform next to theirs. I used to work at the Botanical Gardens before I came to the Headquarters. The first weeks were scary because I thought they would be walking around with weapons, so I feared for my safety. I warmed up to their kind yet decisive nature when they would greet me as if I were one of them.”

“I did not choose to be a cleaner, but it became my only option due to unemployment hitting me very hard. I could have become a social worker, which is still my passion, but money was very scarce at that time and I had to provide for my four children whom I mothered at a very young age. I have four girls of whom one is a hairdresser who does my hair. The second one graduated in June in Information Technology, and my youngest two are still in school.

“We toilet-cleaners do a remarkable job, but people seem to take it very lightly. I am however proud of my job as it is what enables me to feed my family. The most challenging part of my job is that I am not permanent, so contracts can be tricky because budgeting often becomes a problem because it is not guaranteed that long-term plans will be realised.” She mentioned that should she still be afforded a chance, she would go back and try to obtain a social worker’s qualification.”

Orphaned at the age of 15, she related how challenging it was growing up in a vibrant location like Mabopane. Ms Masunyane says: “I vowed to give my children a better future, which has motivated me to take my love for cooking seriously and attempt to perfect that skill. I am trying to spend time with positive-minded people, because I know how it feels not to have anything.”

“One day I would like to register a catering business and share my love for quality food with as many people as possible.” She shared fond memories of how her brother, who raised her and her other siblings would bring meat on his payday. She fought off tears relating how they would sing hymns and reminisce about their departed parents.

This explains how Col Faiza Jacobs from Directorate Education, Training and Development heard her sing while she was cleaning the toilets one day. She approached her and asked her to sign up for the SA Air Force Women’s Talent Show. Ms Masunyane did not hesitate; she and her singing partner, Sgt Eben Smith from Transito, rehearsed during teatime and lunch hours, then scooped third place. She says: “I felt like I had found a home in the SA Air Force after that loud applause when we got off stage and I knew that from that day on I was more than just a cleaner: I belonged to an organisation that cared about all its people.”

Ms Masunyane says: “I left school in Grade 10 because budgeting often becomes a problem because it is not guaranteed that long-term plans will be realised.” She mentioned that should she still be afforded a chance, she would go back and try to obtain a social worker’s qualification.”

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Ms Masunyane says: “I left school in Grade 10 because of my circumstances. Even without matric I never gave up. I still motivate others to stay strong, especially single parents like myself. Having worked here for so many years, interacting with people has become easier and they can now tell when I am not myself. I have become stronger through this experience. “I work hard and am financially independent. I love myself, so my spirit is always up and I stand tall regardless of what may try to bring me down.”

She calls herself an unre corded artist as it’s just a matter of time before she can look for a recording studio, she says. Ms Masunyane says: “My job has allowed me to provide for my children and their education, but I would really like them to have better choices in life and have few regrets.

“I am grateful to Masana Hygiene Services; they gave me a second chance in life and introduced me to the world of soldiers who serve with pride.”
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On the last day of Women’s Month the “Imbokodos” (as used to describe the powers and strength of women) of the Office of the Military Ombud took over the main boardroom of the Office to celebrate and commemorate the gallant women of 1956 who marched against the apartheid pass laws.

There was a jovial mood in the small boardroom as the women exchanged pleasantries in anticipation of the keynote address by long-time champion of social justice and women’s rights, Ms Suraya “Bibi” Khan, who is also a member of the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID).

Ms Khan shared with the women about the work of the SAWID. She said that the women of SAWID come from all walks of life. They understand and embrace being non-partisan and independent. The movement seeks to promote constant learning at all levels. She encouraged the women in the Office of the Military Ombud to stand and work together and celebrate each other. The 2016 Women’s Month commemoration was celebrated under the theme “Working together to enhance women’s opportunities to economic empowerment”.

Lt Gen (Ret) Temba Matanzima, the Military Ombud, delivered a message of support to honour and celebrate the women serving in his Office. This year also marks the 60th anniversary celebration of Women’s Day in the country.

The Military Ombud said the month of August gives the Office an opportunity to reflect on the efforts of leadership to ensure that women can play their rightful roles in the workplace and in society and enjoy a better life as part of the fruits of liberation and democracy. Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima urged the women to unite in advancing women’s emancipation in the workplace and in the country.

Lt Gen (Ret) Matanzima said: “It is our duty to support women and to make sure that Women’s Day remains one of the highlights of our calendar. We therefore need to make it our collective obligation to ensure that we build on the valuable work of our 1956 stalwarts.”

He further encouraged the women in the Office of the Military Ombud to serve the public wholeheartedly and to build their careers in the institution. In his closing remarks the Military Ombud said they had much to celebrate, but there was also much work to be done.
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Resilience is an integral part of combat readiness

By Col (Dr) Cynthia Pitse (PhD), Senior Staff Officer Social Work Policy and Plan

Deployments and separation are part of military life. Saying goodbye is challenging, but so is returning home. Separation is challenging, whether it lasts a week, a month or a year. Members and families react differently to deployments. Some are able to adapt to new circumstances while other families struggle. As a result, deployment brings about change, separation and loneliness (Flowers: 2003).

Importance of Resilience

Because deployment and separation are part of military life, there is a need for members to be resilient. Deployment separates people who depend on one another for support and survival. Like any other organisation that employs human beings, members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) does not function in isolation, but in the context of other systems within their lives, of which the family is the most important. In addition, this implies that in order for the troops to be able to do their work in an effective and efficient manner, other systems within their lives need to be provided for.

Therefore, for members to be mission ready, they need to be resilient. The importance of resilience cannot be over-emphasised and is reflected by the nature of the problems (such as log requirements, lack of support, communication, marital, emotional, financial difficulties, death, illness, admission to hospital, inability to undertake home visits, termination of reintegration and mobilisation programmes and adjustments) that have been experienced by both the members and the spouses at home during deployment/separation internally and externally. Thus, a resilience programme that is aimed at assisting members in identifying and developing their strengths and skills in coping with the demands of deployment/separation in order to enhance combat readiness is a must. The Department of Defence (DOD) has a responsibility to ensure that members and their families are resilient in order to contribute to the realisation of organisational objectives.

Definition of the concept of Resilience

Resilience can be defined as the capacity of a person to bounce back after a period of stress or difficult times. It implies both the capacity to bend without breaking, and the capacity, once bent, to spring back (Goldstein, 1997:30). On the other hand according to Garmezy, 1994 in Saleeby (1996:298), resilience refers to the skills, ability, knowledge and insight that are accumulated over time as a person struggles to overcome difficulties and to meet life’s challenges. In essence, resilience refers to the capacity of a person to maintain healthy functioning in the face of stressors and to recover quickly from those stressors (Kaplan, Turner, Norman and Stillson, 1996:158). The emergence of resilience theory is thus associated with a reduction in emphasis on pathology and an increase in emphasis on strengths (Rak & Patterson, 1996).

In order to contribute to the realisation of the above-mentioned, the SA Military Health Service (Director Social Work) has been mandated by the Military Command Council (MCC) with the responsibility to manage the resilience of the DOD members and their dependants. This links up with the purpose of the Directorate Social Work which is primarily to promote the resilience of the DOD by maintaining a balance between the demands of the military system and the needs of its members, to ensure the mission readiness of the organisation. However, based on the fact that the field of resilience is broad and diverse, a multi-disciplinary approach is followed in addressing the resilience of members and families within the DOD.

Resilience Programmes

The mandate of the Directorate Social Work is to put the necessary support programmes in place to ensure that members are resilient enough to carry out their work obligations. These programmes are informed by both scientific and non-scientific research...
that has been undertaken within the DOD nationally and within the various units, particularly in deploying units. Programmes of this nature are undertaken with the members and families (where feasible) during the various phases of deployment such as:

- Predeployment services, including programmes such as the Concurrent Health Assessment. This is an assessment tool that identifies members with problems, e.g. marital, financial, stress, supervisory training (with specific focus on identification and referral of members with impaired work performance and provision of a healthy work environment), conflict management, work related problems, relationship problems, substance abuse.

- Mission readiness programme whose focus is on team-building/group forming exercises to enhance esprit de corps, leader group training, sensitisation of soldiers to the realities of deployment and risk behaviour, problem solving, conflict management, sexual harassment, hostage and kidnapping for ransom awareness, stress management, etc.

- Various programmes, such as substance abuse, supervisory training programme, stress management, parenting skills, conflict management, coping with deployment, support to families, home visits (though limited owing to lack of resources) and communication are also rendered during the deployment phase. Visits to deployed and deploying members are also undertaken by the Resilience Advisory Board which consists of representatives of various Services and Divisions in order to monitor, highlight and advise the MCC with regard to the management of resilience related problems experienced by deployed/deploying soldiers in order to promote the mission readiness of the DOD.

- In so far as the demobilisation phase is concerned, the focus is more on emotional debriefing programmes such as reintegration into the workplace and family, identification of post-traumatic disorders and devising applicable intervention measures in order to address identified issues. A multidisciplinary approach is followed in addressing this programme.

Role played by Officers Commanding

Officers Commanding (OCs) play a prominent role in ensuring that members are resilient. Commanders must utilise their multi-professional and multidisciplinary teams and the Military Community Wellness Committees (MCWCs) to plan and execute these activities in a consistent manner. In other words, the MCWCs should be utilised as tools to address the resilience of members within the DOD. The following are some of the initiatives that should be undertaken by the OCs in addressing resilience issues within their areas of responsibility:

- Creation of a Resilient Unit which includes aspects such as the training of all commanders and managers in the dynamics of military families, how families respond to the stress of deployments and what commanders and managers can do to reduce this stress, ensuring adequate time for thorough Concurrent Health Assessments (CHAs), conduct quarterly fitness tests, run interventions that develop the problem-solving skills of families and soldiers, encourage soldiers and families to participate in family enrichment programmes run by military health care providers, hold monthly MCWC meetings with unit management and the multidisciplinary (health) team, promote a common military/unit culture that transcends, but remains sensitive to and respectful of cultural diversity, develop the people-management skills of all leaders in the unit, especially at platoon level, what it means to be a member of the SANDF, the value of peace enforcement missions and to budget annually for the resilience activities described in the Military Community Wellness Policy.

- Preparation for deployment that includes aspects such as the training of all commanders and managers in the dynamics of military families, how families respond to the stress of deployments and what commanders and managers can do to reduce this stress, ensuring adequate time for thorough Concurrent Health Assessments (CHAs), conduct quarterly fitness tests, run interventions that develop the problem-solving skills of families and soldiers, encourage soldiers and families to participate in family enrichment programmes run by military health care providers, hold monthly MCWC meetings with unit management and the multidisciplinary (health) team, promote a common military/unit culture that transcends, but remains sensitive to and respectful of cultural diversity, develop the people-management skills of all leaders in the unit, especially at platoon level, what it means to be a member of the SANDF, the value of peace enforcement missions and to budget annually for the resilience activities described in the Military Community Wellness Policy.

- Resilience should form part of the OCs’ key performance areas. The importance of having the reviewed Draft Military Community Wellness Policy promulgated is critical to the successful implementation of wellness/resilience programmes within the DOD. Regular feedback presentations to MCC regarding the management of resilience within the DOD are advocated.
Menopause or the change of life is different for each woman. For example hot flushes and sleep problems may trouble your colleague. Meanwhile, you are enjoying a new sense of freedom and energy and your friend might not experience any changes.

It is a time in a woman’s life when her menstruation stops and she is no longer fertile (unable to become pregnant). In plain language, menopause is no menstruation for a period of 12 months. The average age is at 52 years. However, it can occur as early as from 40 years old.

Menopause is a normal part of life. Strange as it may sound, it’s a milestone, just like puberty. It is not a disease or a condition but a normal cycle of life. This is because of a decline in ovarian function. The hormones that are responsible for menstruation, estrogen and progesterone, start to decline in the 30s. As they decline, menstruations become irregular and this is called peri-menopause. This precedes menopause.

The following symptoms are associated with menopause:
- Hot flushes
- Irritability
- Mood swing
- Vaginal discomfort and dryness
- Sleep disturbance
- Urinary incontinence
- Weight gain
- Hair loss

The following are trigger factors for menopause symptoms
- Smoking
- Eating hot spicy food
- Hot beverages like caffeine containing drinks
- Alcohol consumption

How is menopause diagnosed?

Your health care provider at your sick bay can do a blood test if you have symptoms to check your Follicular Stimulating Hormone (FSH) and Thyroid Function Test (TFT). An underactive thyroid can cause menopause like symptoms.

Treatment for menopause

Most women do not require treatment since they are not experiencing any symptoms. As a result of this few women require treatment in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Most women are not aware of the treatment options available. However, should your symptoms affect your daily life, then you should present yourself at your sick bay. The kind of treatment that you would be advised to have, should depend on your symptoms, your medical history and your own preferences.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is very effective for many of the symptoms that occur during the menopause, including vaginal dryness, urinary problems, bone density loss, hot flushes and night sweats.

Note: As with many treatments, HRT has its risks and benefits.

Benefits of HRT

HRT effectively treats many annoying menopausal symptoms
- It helps to prevent osteoporosis
- It also lowers colorectal cancer risk (cancer of the colon or rectum)

Risks of HRT

HRT treatment increases the risk of the following:
- Breast cancer
- Ovary cancer
- Uterine cancer
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke risk

Note: The South African
Menopause Society’s position statement regarding menopausal HRT and coronary heart disease include the following:

- HRT significantly improves menopause-specific quality of life mainly through relieving the symptom of hot flushes;
- HRT appears to improve sleep quality and quantity in menopausal women;
- HRT is effective in reducing vaginal discomfort and dryness.
- HRT is also effective in reducing the chances of suffering an osteoporosis-related fracture.

It is therefore concluded that in women initiating therapy outside of the therapeutic window of opportunity have an increase in adverse events like heart attacks and strokes. The therapeutic window is women between the ages of 51 and 55.

Category of patients who should not use HRT

Contra-indications

HRT should not be prescribed in the following circumstances:

- Current, past or suspected breast cancer
- Known or suspected oestrogen-dependent malignant tumors
- Undiagnosed genital bleeding
- Untreated endometrial hyperplasia (irregular abnormal vaginal bleeding)
- Previous idiopathic or current VTE (DVT or pulmonary embolus)
- Active liver disease
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Thrombophilia

If you are on HRT, take note:

- When on HRT, it is important to visit the gynaecologist annually to review if treatment is still needed.
- The gynaecologist may decide to temporarily discontinue treatment to assess whether further HRT is needed.
- Long-term HRT is effective for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Note: There is currently no published data on the use of traditional medicines for the treatment of menopause.

Other treatments for menopause

Low dose anti-depressants. Selective re-uptake inhibitors have been shown to decrease menopausal hot flushes. These tablets include Venlafaxine, Fluoxetine, Paroxetine and Sertraline. These are not available over the counter and they have side-effects.

Clonidine (Menograine) tablets are prescribed for patients with risk factors or contra-indications for hormone replacement. It is not as effective as HRT.

Vaginal oestrogen may be applied locally using a tablet, a ring or cream and this effectively treats vaginal dryness and urinary symptoms.

General advice on menopausal symptoms management

Sleep disturbance. Exercise regularly but avoid doing it too late during the day. By exercising too late, it may keep you awake longer. Try to go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even during weekends. Cut out all drinks and foods that contain caffeine. Learn how to do deep breathing, guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation.

Moodiness. Make sure you do not get tired but get plenty of rest. Do regular exercise. If you can, do strenuous exercise. First check with your doctor and biokineticist whether this is fine for you. Practice yoga. Make sure you have a well-qualified trainer.

Vaginal discomfort and dryness. Get some over the counter (OTC) water-based vaginal lubricants and moisturisers.

Urinary incontinence

Practice pelvic floor exercises – Kegel exercises. If you practice three or four times a day you will most probably notice a difference after a few weeks. A review of studies explains that women suffering from urinary incontinence can benefit from pelvic floor muscle training.

Overweight/obesity and osteoporosis prevention

Eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, good quality fats, fibre and unrefined carbohydrates. Try to consume 1 200 to 1 500 milligrams of calcium and 800 international units of vitamin D per day. Do weight-bearing exercises, such as walking, jogging or dancing at least three days a week.

Take home message

Get regular pelvic and breast exams, pap tests and mammograms. You should also be checked for colon, rectal and for skin cancer. Contact your doctor right away if you notice a lump in your breast or a mole that has changed on your skin.
Be proactive in fighting cancer

Did you know? Approximately 8.2 million people die from cancer worldwide every year. The global number of deaths from cancer will increase by nearly 80 per cent by 2030, with most occurring in low- and middle-income countries (WHO - World Health Organization).

All South Africans need to become proactively involved in the fight against cancer and help reduce the global cancer burden. By making smart lifestyle choices and avoiding known carcinogens such as tobacco and alcohol, you not only improve your overall health, but also reduce your cancer risk.

When do genes play a role?

Some people have genes that make them more likely to develop breast cancer. The most common gene defects are found in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. These genes normally produce proteins that protect one from cancer. Women with one of these defects have up to an 80% chance of getting breast cancer during their lifetime. Women who have a first line relative, for example a mother, sister or aunt that have been diagnosed with cancer, are generally more predisposed to this type of cancer.

The Cancer Association of SA (Cansa) encourages all women to get screened regularly. All women should take hands in the fight against cancer by taking responsibility for their personal well-being.

The most common cancers among SA women

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers among South African women, with 1 in 33 women being diagnosed with it. Another of the most common cancers is cervical cancer, with 1 in 39 women being diagnosed. Cervical cancer is also the leading cancer among black women in South Africa. We, as women, need to take good care of ourselves. Cansa aims to inspire women to be educated about their cancer risk, encourage their families to lead a balanced lifestyle by eating healthily, doing regular exercise and managing stress, avoiding alcohol and tobacco and going for regular screening.

Top tips for women to reduce cancer risk

- Know your family history of breast cancer.
- Eat smart and healthily - be cancer-smart when choosing, preparing and enjoying food. Avoid processed foods and include lots of fresh vegetables and fruits in your diet.
- Exercise and manage stress - live a balanced, active lifestyle. Exercise is essential for building immunity and strength. If you’re fit, managing your day-to-day responsibilities will be less stressful.
- Limit the use of alcohol or avoid it completely and avoid the use of tobacco products.
- Do monthly breast examinations and go for regular clinical breast examinations. Symptom-free women should go for a mammogram at least every three years from age 35.
- Go for a regular Pap smear (screening test for early diagnosis of cervical cancer), at least every three years from age 25.
- Encourage your mother, daughter, sister and female friends to do the same.

Get in touch with Cansa

Cansa has nine Mobile Health Units that travel to remote areas throughout South Africa to reach people who would otherwise not have access to screening. These include breast examinations, a Pap smear screening test for cervical cancer, as well as other health tests such as for cholesterol.

Visit one of the Cansa Care Centres for more information or visit www.cansa.org.za or call the Cansa toll-free line on 0800 22 66 22 or send an email to: info@cansa.org.za
WATHINTA ABAFAZI
WATHINTA IMBOKODO

(YOU STRIKE A WOMAN, YOU STRIKE A ROCK)

AB Samantha Botha
SA Navy Diver
(Courtesy Navy News)
Aerobics in the
Department of Defence

By Capt Mieta Loff, Adjudant
Regional Works Unit Gauteng
Photos by Maj Sello Segone

Aerobics was approved by the executive committee of the Pretoria Military Sports Club as an official sport on 8 March 2016. Ever since its registration, aerobics has grown rapidly in the Department of Defence all over the country.

What is aerobics?

I discovered that aerobics is also known as cardio exercise. It requires pumping of oxygenated blood by the heart to deliver oxygen to working muscles. Martial arts, aerobics and dancing moves are fused into an easy to follow programme set to hip-hop music. A typical session consists of punches, kicks and steps choreographed in a series of eight-count combinations. Aerobics engages the entire body and therefore has more benefits than running or going to the gym.

What are the benefits?

It has been shown that members who are struggling with their BP levels benefit from aerobics. Regular exercise improves the health and physical functioning of the body and cardiovascular fitness by increasing the body’s capacity to use oxygen. The fitter one gets the easier it becomes to do certain exercises. It also reduces the risk of certain health problems and burns up calories, which can therefore be an important part of a weight loss or weight management programme. It also increases confidence, emotional stability and memory and is the most effective way of keeping fit and healthy and helps one lose excess weight that is normally difficult to shed. In addition it tones the muscles and improves posture.

Who can participate?

Anyone - male, female, young or old can do aerobics. You can start at your own rate and, as you build strength, you can gradually increase your level.

Taking care of our bodies is not a privilege, it is a must. If we take care of our bodies now, it will take care of us in the future.

Where does it happen?

Aerobics classes are currently presented at 1 Military Hospital while we await a permanent venue. The classes are presented by qualified instructors, Khomotso and Benedict Mthelebofu (Benny), who challenge us at every session and push us to do more then what we think we can do. Come join us. Let us burn those calories. #fatmustfall #summerbodies.
Demystifying pension benefits and retirement with 20 years experience

What the GEPF says:
“We recommend that you consult a financial advisor at least 5 to 10 years before you want to retire to ensure that your pension benefits will be enough to meet your need.”
(Page 17 GEPF Members Guide)

- We calculate your full pension value
- We can show you options before you retire
- We can make you and your family, own your own pension capital
- In case of death, spouse to own the full pension benefit.
- If spouse has passed on, your family or children or grandchildren, can own the same pension capital
- We will assist for you to pay nil or less tax when you retire.
- We ensure your dreams and legacy to be achieved by your family
- We offer professional advice

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“Never walk alone into Retirement, join hands with us, You need a Partner. If you think you don't, your family does, ask them.” Lazzy Mphasasne
International cricket test in honour of our Armed Forces

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Sgt Ronald Knight, L Cpl Jonathan Mogano and Mr Witney Rasaka

The Titans cricket franchise hosted the second cricket test match between South Africa and New Zealand at SuperSport Park in Centurion under the theme: “Honour our Armed Forces”.

These test matches have a special significance as they honour the patriotic service of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) men and women; pay tribute to the late Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Duma Mdutyana, and all the fallen heroes and heroines who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, officially opened the test match by ringing the official bell. Both the male and female SANDF cricket teams formed a guard of honour for the cricket teams of South Africa and New Zealand as they walked onto the field.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula expressed gratitude for the gesture by the management of SuperSport Park and Titans franchise to pay tribute to the SANDF men and women, the
The SANDF mounted a display of military hardware on the eastern embankment of the stadium to raise awareness among members of the public about career opportunities in the military and to expose them to the equipment and technologies used. SuperSport Park is celebrating its 30th year as an international cricket venue.

late Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Mdutyana, and the eleven female soldiers who recently lost their lives in a tragic bus accident in Free State.

The Titans cricket franchise hosted the second cricket test match between South Africa and New Zealand at SuperSport Park in Centurion under the theme: “Honour our Armed Forces”.

ABOVE: The Titans cricket franchise hosted the second cricket test match between South Africa and New Zealand at SuperSport Park in Centurion under the theme: “Honour our Armed Forces”.

BELOW: Paying tribute to our departed SA National Defence Force heroes and heroines.

BELOW: The second cricket test match between South Africa and New Zealand at SuperSport Park in Centurion.

LEFT: Members of the SA National Defence Force marched onto the cricket field.

LEFT: The SA National Cricket Team – the Proteas - walking onto the field.

BELOW: Paying tribute to our departed SA National Defence Force heroes and heroines.
A woman after God’s own heart

By Chaplain Elizna du Randt, Chaplain at SA Military Health Service Training Formation

I want to start by saying God does not make copies of other people. Every person is an original. Being a woman we come in different sizes, different shapes, different heights, different personalities and we have different goals in life. If we think of the women of the Bible there is Ruth the pagan or Deborah the judge and Esther the queen. There is Rahab the prostitute and Bathsheba the queen. There are so many women in the Bible that we can relate to, not one a carbon copy but all original from God. And it does not matter where you come from or what your past is, what is important is that God has a unique plan for your life and can turn every sadness to happiness, every weakness to strength. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV

The Scripture portrays different kinds of women, many of whom we can relate to. However they have something in common and that is “wisdom”. They did what God told them to do without trying to change who they were. Proverbs 31:26 “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

So if we look at “Proverbs 31 woman”, we can ask ourselves if it is possible to be so perfect. Let’s look what a woman of God looks like. There are 10 points that stand out if we look at Proverbs 31 that we can also relate to today.

1. **Faith**: We as women must serve God with all our heart, mind and soul. We must know that God is the author of our lives and that He has these big amazing plans for our lives.

2. **Marriage**: If you are married, respect your husband, be trustworthy and a helper. If you are not married, please be happy being single, and do not let anyone tell you there is something wrong with you. It’s your choice. Enjoy being a Godly single woman.

3. **Mothering**: Teach your children the ways of Jesus. Let them experience how you worship Christ. Nurture them with the love of Christ and do not be afraid to discipline them. They need you to show them the way. Maybe you do not have a child of your own. Do not be dismayed. You can be a mother as commander/section head or in a leader position where you “mother” your members. Apply the same rules.

4. **Health**: Ladies, please take care of your health. Eat healthy, exercise and rest.

5. **Service**: We need to serve. There are so many forms of serving in your household. Preparing food on a daily basis, helping with homework, cleaning the house, washing clothes.

6. **Finances**: We need to spend money wisely. Is it a need or a want, ladies? Use Godly wisdom when spending money, giving generously and helping others.

7. **Industry**: A “Proverbs woman” works willingly with her hands. As Proverbs 31:13 says: “She sings praises to God and does not grumble or complain in completing her task.” Do not worry, I am sure we all have done it. It is ok.

8. **Homemaking**: We as women must create a warm, loving and inviting atmosphere in the house. Ladies, we have to use hospitality to minister to our family and friends.

9. **Time**: Use your time wisely. Do not be so busy that you do not get to the things that matter most in life … Jesus Christ, your husband, your kids. Sometimes we are so busy with the things of the Lord that we forget the Lord of the things. Spend your time wisely.

10. **Beauty**: Real beauty is your inner beauty that comes from Christ. We must be creative to make both ourselves and our homes beautiful.

I want to tell you today that Jesus loves you, cares for you and has a plan for your life. Be an original (the best you can be) not a copy of somebody else. All of us are in this race of life and want to finish strongly. At the end of the day it is possible to be a “Proverbs 31 woman” … A woman after God’s own heart.
Military members celebrating Casual Day

By AB Samuel Ramonyai, Intern at SA Soldier
Photos by Pte Paul Mbangala and Mr Witney Rasaka

Military members celebrated Casual Day at the Pretoria Military Sports Ground in Thaba Tshwane. Units from Gauteng participated in supporting the event.

On this occasion members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) raise funds for people with disabilities by purchasing Casual Day stickers. This year the DOD celebrated 12 years of involvement in Casual Day. There was a great deal of support for the occasion by people who came in large numbers to show their care and appreciation to them.

Addressing the crowd, the General Officer Commanding Training Command, Maj Gen Gordon Yekelo, quoted Robert Hensel: “I have a disability, yes that’s true, but all that really means is I may have to take a slightly different path than you, and my disability has opened my eyes to see my true abilities”.

Maj Gen Yekelo remarked: “Today marks a very special annual event on our country’s calendar and that of the DOD. Once again, we have the privilege of celebrating Casual Day with colleagues and, most importantly, with our fellow disabled colleagues and friends around which the day revolves.”

He highlighted that it was an honour for the DOD to have Curamus as part of the special occasion to focus on the DOD’s abilities. He added that the DOD would like to celebrate Curamus and support it in every way. It also appreciated their efforts.

Maj Gen Yekelo gave thanks to all who had contributed to the lives of so many people in dire need through the purchase of tickets, T-shirts and caps.

After Maj Gen Yekelo’s address there was a fun walk on the sports field, a three-legged race, a blind obstacle race, an egg race, tug-of-war with the people with disabilities taking part in the wheelchair race.

Concluding the Casual Day programme, Quinton Prinsloo, the well-known South African singer, sang a song of the famous artist, Brenda Fassie – the people danced for joy to “Vuli Ndlela”.


ABOVE: The wheelchair and blind obstacle race.
Medicinal myths and a lack of care for our natural environment will be the forces behind the extinction of this magnificent animal.