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FRONT COVER: The Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, and the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, attending Armed Forces Day. (Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano)
On 21 February, Armed Forces Day was celebrated in Port Elizabeth to honour the role that members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) play in safeguarding our country and protecting the nation.

In 2012, the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF and the President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, declared that 21 February would be observed and commemorated as Armed Forces Day. The date coincides with the commemoration of the fateful sinking of the SS Mendi. The sinking of the SS Mendi resulted in the death of 600 black soldiers who had enlisted as a labour corps in World War I. During this year’s Armed Forces Day, President Zuma said: “Our Armed Forces Day celebration takes place on the anniversary of the sinking of the SS Mendi in 1917. Next year, we will mark the hundredth anniversary of its sinking. In this way we recognise our history as well as the future of the National Defence Force.”

On Armed Forces Day the President laid a wreath during the SS MENDI Memorial Service in New Brighton to pay tribute to our fallen heroes. Thereafter President Zuma proceeded to the military parade at King’s Beach where he conferred medals to deserving SANDF members. About 1 000 SANDF members and over 100 vehicles and aircraft participated in the march and fly-past. Thereafter a capability demonstration by all Services of the SANDF followed. It included a live demonstration of anti-piracy operations by the SA Navy, beach landing by the SA Army, the release of “hostages” by the SA Special Operations by the SA Navy, beach landing by the SA Air Force, and a demonstration on the beach, a military static display of the SA Army, the SA Air Force and the SA Military Health Service.

During the SS MENDI Memorial Service in New Brighton, President Zuma proceeded to the military parade at King’s Beach to pay tribute to our fallen heroes. Thereafter President Zuma proceeded to the military parade at King’s Beach where he conferred medals to deserving SANDF members. About 1 000 SANDF members and over 100 vehicles and aircraft participated in the march and fly-past. Thereafter a capability demonstration by all Services of the SANDF followed. It included a live demonstration of anti-piracy operations by the SA Navy, beach landing by the SA Army, the release of “hostages” by the SA Special Forces and the extraction of “injured” personnel by the SA Air Force and the SA Military Health Service.

Armed Forces Day was preceded by a week-long programme packed with activities aimed to educate and raise awareness among the members of the public about the role, functions and capabilities of the SANDF. These activities included open days to view naval ships, free sports clinics to learners, free military bands concerts, a night shooting demonstration on the beach, a military static display and arena events, the handing over of the Legacy Project where three old age homes have been repaired and refurbished by the SANDF. The Armed Forces Day celebration was the ideal platform to unite South Africans behind the SANDF as it allowed the SANDF to interact with members of the public.

Furthermore, the celebration provided an opportunity to the SANDF to showcase its latest military equipment, hardware and technologies used to protect the nation, including demonstrating the military combat readiness against threats to the sovereignty of the Republic of South Africa.

Enjoy reading the ten-pager insert from pages 14 to 23 on the celebration of this historical day.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor 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 Mahlomola 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.
WE MADE IT

Since the beginning of the year we made resolutions and promises to ourselves to achieve more throughout the year. We strived and persevered and the trials and tribulations we came across only because we wanted to pull through and say: “We made it”.

Last year was a very good year, and today you and I reading this are so proud of ourselves, we made loved ones proud and to top it all we are still healthy.

Oh, will I be wrong if I say: “If it was not for the Man above” (“nkabe rele mobitla”) - I guess not. He has carried us through and saved us, and loved us unconditionally to have given us this life we are living.

We thank Him because without Him we are nothing. Pte Victoria Mathibela, Phalaborwa

CASTLE OF GOOD HOPE COMMEMORATES 350 YEARS

Cape Town marked the 350th anniversary of the Castle of Good Hope with a ceremony on 2 January 2016. The Castle has partnered with the Cape Town Minstrels (Kaapse Klopse) who also hosted their annual Tweede Nuwe Jaar event on the same day as the commemoration of the Castle.

The commemoration featured 100 Minstrels who led local dignitaries to the cornerstone site where a bench made from the building’s original support beams was unveiled. Organisers hope the event will be the beginning of a new chapter of “inclusion, healing, hope and nation-building”.

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, led the Minstrel Parade which started at the Castle. Speaking at the event, Deputy Minister Maphatsoe says history would be rewritten to include all South Africans.

The Spokesperson of the Deputy Minister, Mr Sonwabo Mbananga, said the Department of Defence (DOD) was the custodian of the commemoration. The DOD is also the Castle’s custodian, with an oversight role over the Castle Control Board, he said.

A traditional ceremony brought together various indigenous people which took place at the place at the site of the first cornerstone which was laid at the foot of the Leerdam Bastion of the Castle of Good Hope. The first foundation stone was laid on 2 January 1666.

The Castle was built by craftsmen from many European countries working with the Khoi Khoi, slaves in Africa and from the east and housed the first formal seat of government until 1811. It also has four museums, hosts indigenous language classes, skills development classes and had 169 084 visitors in 2015.

Originally built along the coast of Table Bay, the fort is now located inland following land reclamation. Currently an asset of the Department of Defence, the Castle was restored in the 1980s and is classified as a provincial heritage site.

The Castle Control Board Chief Executive Officer, Mr Calvin Gilfellan, says they are continuing with efforts to have the historical building declared a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage site. The building is undergoing refurbishment and restoration of about R108 million. Although a painstakingly slow process, Mr Gilfellan says they are optimistic that they will succeed.

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 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.

SOLDIERING AS A WAY OF LIFE

When you take the decision to join the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and your family approves they must be prepared to let go of you for the sake of the National Flag. That is a painful experience for any family to absorb. The reality of life is that soldiering was never a career, but a calling and a way of life.

Families should be prepared psychologically to allow their sons and daughters to join the military. We often hear that soldiering is a calling. Indeed it is a calling because only a few members of society can complete basic military training.

The life of a soldier depends on the objectives of his or her government and the value put on the sovereignty of his or her country. Capt Mpumzi Munyai, email

The Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, addressing the guests after he unveiled the plaque to commemorate the laying of the first foundation cornerstone of the Leerdam Bastion of the Castle of Good Hope 350 years ago. (Photo by Sgt Reynier Kotze)

At the ceremony, religious leaders from the various faiths practised in South Africa addressed the guests and traditional leaders from African and Khoi cultures conducted a healing
Arguably, the most critical end state is the total rejuvenation of the human resources of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) is playing a key role in achieving this goal. Every year young people with the right profile are trained and equipped with skills so that they can be placed in appropriate posts.

The MSDS is a government initiative that was instituted to rejuvenate the Department of Defence (DOD). It was implemented in 2003 to empower youth with specific military formative and functional skills. The MSDS was designed as an objective of the Ministry of Defence to implement the core growth “One Force” concept by adequately resourcing and utilising both Regular and Reserve components, as well as by rejuvenating and rightsizing the human resource composition with fit, young and healthy members who meet the requirements for operational utilisation.

The Infantry School, as a centre of excellence, is to conduct education, training and development to empower and qualify Infanteers as well as members from other Services and Divisions in Infantry related training on behalf of the SA Army Infantry Formation.

“We have been receiving and training thousands of recruits since the inception of the MSDS in 2003. Some of these are today officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks in the military. The vision of the SA Army is to enhance its mission and combat readiness through the systematic rejuvenation of its human resources. Infantry School provides a complete soldier with an unquestionable patriotism through the MSDS.”

The SANDF is competing with the private sector to attract skilled employees, but it is imperative for our leadership to harness talent at a very young age. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, said: “It is essential that the DOD, particularly the SANDF, should approach the institutions of higher learning to recruit from there and market the SANDF to these young skilful minds.” MSDS members should be vigilant and versatile as they are the backbone of the country and the vanguard in the making. The SANDF is in dire need of highly skilled soldiers to enhance the capabilities of this organisation.

Pte Kabelo Tsogang, Logistics Division

“A Colourful parade of music and dance by the Cape Town Minstrels (Kaapse Klopse) to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Castle of Good Hope. (Photo by Sgt Reynier Kotzé)”

A colourful parade of music and dance by the Cape Town Minstrels (Kaapse Klopse) to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Castle of Good Hope. (Photo by Sgt Reynier Kotzé)
Courageous, Flight of the Phoenix and Battleship. In addition they were exposed to two documentaries and a lecture on the SS MENDI, a careers evening and had fun competing against each other in a scavenger hunt mystery exercise. None of the Sea Cadets will ever forget Petty Officer Ndlovu’s lecture on the “donkeys” and how important fitness is in accomplishing tasks at hand.

Throughout the programme the Sea Cadets learnt teamwork and their leadership and self-confidence were enhanced. Many shared their dreams of a career in the SA Navy or related maritime occupations. These lessons, along with the theory and practical skills, will be taken back to their units where they will be shared with others. This transfer of skills will assist in creating hope in their families and communities.

It was fulfilling to witness the enthusiasm of the instructors and Sea Cadets, discipline and focus. Thank you to the SA Navy staff and instructors and adult Sea Cadet instructors who made the annual camp possible which was thoroughly enjoyed by the youth. Lt Cdr Glenn von Zeil, email

**“ANIMALS” ASSIST THE SEA CADETS WITH TEAMWORK (continued)**

I felt the need to let the military personnel know that there are civilians out there who appreciate all they do for us, especially the ones who feel they have lost love and lead a lonely life due to their absence from home for months on end … but this is not so! God touches lives everywhere and anywhere as I have discovered!

**There is something I have to say …**

I am in love with a military man …

I hold no recognition with the defence force or am in any way involved with his career …

I hold no military ID … I am at the bottom of the chain of recognised people in his life … I am not a dependent or a parent …

The man I love may face unspeakable dangers and I am at the mercy of those possessing this recognition because I have immense love for this man … and respect this dedication to his career. His career takes him to various and vast places in the country. I will not make him choose as he loves being a soldier … not that he has said so … I see it in his eyes, the way he wears his uniform, with pride! I love his commitment. People say I am insane for making such a commitment with no guarantee, but I hold on to his words and have faith that God will give me my heart’s desire … bringing him back safely … be it to his home elsewhere or to me. I know very well that my love for him fuels him at the worst of times … an odd song or words of love sent at random times will mean so much to any lonely soul no matter where in the world he may be. I hope every day that he will be able to call because a simple 30 second phone call or a little message can result in the greatest spectrum of emotions … smiling with tears in my eyes from much joy … and pain.

My relationship is based on a brief communication where “I love you” and “I am okay” speaks volumes and gives me strength to keep going … I take no moment spent together for granted … I hold on to every touch … caress … kiss … every word … I have memorised the feel of his skin, his smell, the sound of his voice … and I play it over and over in my mind so that I will not forget. I cry myself to sleep some nights … because missing him hurts so badly … but I wake up the next morning … brush myself off and start a new day. The events of the next several months hold my life, my love and my future in the balance … when you watch the news reports or hear of happenings affecting the defence force … you may turn away and go about your business … relatively unaffected … when I watch the news I DO NOT see nameless soldiers many miles away … I see individuals who will be FOREVER changed by war. News of every casualty … causes me physical pain and deep sadness and tears beyond my control … be it here in South Africa or anywhere in the world … a military man is a military man! I am in love with a military man … I am not his spouse or family member … When you say your prayers for the fathers and mothers, wives and children … please do not forget about me … I am a person with a warm tender heart … same as in the case of this military man. He has given up his entire being to defend us all … walking away from the daily love, material comforts and ordinary jobs we hold to “belong to the country”, working every day, all day … he does not have the pleasure of owning himself as ordinary people do … he guards and protects us day and night, enduring all the elements of this world … military personnel face the harshest life ever yet are never acknowledged for this. Name calling and insults are thrown around and their reputation is not good … military men are human and not robots, they hurt and bleed too! Defending the country he loves so much has hardened him and may have ravaged his very soul to see and know what had to be done to protect his country. I say to each and every military person out there in this world “thank you from the depths of my heart. Your career choice is a calling … a special calling and always hold your head up high and like the military man I love so much, wear your uniform with pride and dignity. You are ambassadors of your country as I am an ambassador of my love for him”.

Shaz Greenland, Musina

**“It floats!” - Raft building at the sailing centre.**

*(Photo by Lt Cdr Glenn von Zeil)*
Every institution in life, and I guess in private life, cannot be effective without discipline. Discipline is the key to everything, whether dead or alive. Families, communities, countries, organisations, etc have their own discipline. Each one of these entities has an obligation to keep and maintain discipline within its own system to function effectively. Likewise the Military as an institution or organisation has its own discipline, viz military discipline. Military has a huge challenge in terms of inculcating discipline, because all other institutions and organisations are watching from a distance and benchmarking the result. They expect the best from the members of the SANDF, then failure to do that does not constitute self-control. The member without self-control is therefore a disgrace.

Although self-control sounds soft, it directs an individual to blame “the self”. This is because naturally people could not be harsh on themselves. They can softly and carefully deal with harsh matters in their lives by trying to avoid the blemishes that could dent their image. We would not like to dent the image of our own SANDF because we are the SANDF and the SANDF is us.

On the contrary discipline is also known as punishment or even correction. This meaning is a bit harsh and sounds unacceptable. It also drives and tasks someone to act against the other. When this takes effect, it means that an external source is involved to ensure compliance. Although this is harsh, it does not take away its similarity to self-control, but allows commanders at all levels to enforce discipline through the application of punishment or correction using the standards set.

We cannot speak of discipline and exclude punishment and reward. Punishment is designed such that an offender should feel it in the body. Imposing punishment or correcting an individual also constitutes discipline. The opposite is also the case in this regard. Failure to punish or correct is ill-discipline. So the one reporting ill-discipline should be asked the question: what have you done? The conclusion that one can draw is that if there are no measures to inflict pain whenever ill-discipline is encountered, military discipline in the SANDF would remain a subject FOREVER.

Imposing monetary fines cannot discipline an individual or a soldier. In my opinion a fine is a civilian way of trying to bring a person to order by using the courts. In the Military, the skin should feel it and, once felt, there is no deliberate repeat. Although a fine as a punishment is once off, its impact on an individual is not the same.

The Military is a unique institution with its own set of rules and in my opinion nobody should be begged to carry out their responsibilities. This institution is joined voluntarily and members should not mistake it as a job providing institution. We ought to remember that we are serving the Republic of South Africa as citizens and volunteers as declared by our Code of Conduct.

Why struggle with discipline problems when members are volunteers? This might sound harsh, but contesting the truth about discipline is ill-discipline. In my observation very few defence forces in the world speak of discipline. In most countries, discipline is non-negotiable and I guess that it is because soldiering is seen as a sacrificial kind of service and not a job where one works for pay. If you mess up you are out, and no court will entertain your dismissal or threaten the institution. I guess that countries requiring the military to exercise and enforce discipline know that without a disciplined defence force they cannot be defended.

Note: If you cannot drill, you are ill-disciplined. If you hate drill, you are ill-disciplined. If you cannot keep your surroundings clean, you are ill-disciplined. If you report late for duty, you are ill-disciplined. If you knock off earlier than the prescribed time, you are ill-disciplined. If you refuse orders, you are ill-disciplined. If you cannot do weekly inspection in your section, you are ill-disciplined. If grass grows and enters your office, you are ill-disciplined. If you hate PT, you are ill-disciplined. If you do not pay the regimental fund, you are ill-disciplined. If you do not play or participate in military sport, you are ill-disciplined. All of these examples are linked to self-control and if you worry about it, you are as much ill-disciplined.
Chief Joint Operations visits soldiers in the Sudan

**Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe**

Twelve months’ deployment in a foreign country away from one’s loved ones is an exercise that tests one’s resilience and combat-readiness. Deployment can take its toll on some members after a few months if this is undertaken without proper training. This is heightened during festive seasons when most deployed soldiers are overwhelmed by a feeling of nostalgia.

Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi, former Chief of Joint Operations (now Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), recently visited the Operation CORDITE XX Deployment in the Sudan under the auspices of the United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in a concerted effort to boost the deployed members’ spirits over the festive season. In addition, Lt Gen Mgwebi wished to discover first hand the concerns of these deployed members regarding the execution of their tasks and how best the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) could give assistance to these South African soldiers deployed in the Sudan.

It soon became apparent that different cultures and dialects of the Arabic language were just as difficult to speak as it was to understand them. This posed a unique and real challenge to the majority of the deployed members in the Sudan. The delegation found that the Sudan’s climate was harsh, as it is a desert where it can be extremely hot during the day and then extremely cold during the night, regardless of the season.

On a tight schedule, Lt Gen Mgwebi and his delegation visited the Republic of South Africa Battalion 15 (RSA BATT 15) troops in Kutum, where the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Tello Moiketsi, gave a presentation on deployment activities in their area of responsibility and their challenges.

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On a tight schedule, Lt Gen Mgwebi and his delegation visited the Republic of South Africa Battalion 15 (RSA BATT 15) troops in Kutum, where the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Tello Moiketsi, gave a presentation on deployment activities in their area of responsibility and their challenges. In all three main areas visited where SANDF members are deployed namely Kutum, Melitt and Malha, Lt Gen Mgwebi interacted with the troops and asked the different
section heads about challenges in their areas of responsibility that they saw as hindrances to the effective execution of the battalion’s missions. Given the limited time he had Lt Gen Mgwebi tried, without making unrealistic promises, to answer the many questions of the troops. These ranged from leave allocation, new cooking equipment, new vehicle spare parts and new gym equipment to South African food brought in by scheduled sustainment flights.

RSA BATT 15, under Operation CORDITE XX area of responsibility, covers Kutum (the battalion headquarters), Melitt, and Malha. Kutum comprises a population of 209 000 people from the Fur, Tunjur, Zaghawa, Mahameed and Melitt tribes farming in 134 villages. Mellit comprises approximately 200 000 farming communities from the Berti, Zaghawa, Zayadia, Midob, Jawamah, Fur, Tunjur, Beni Omran, Falata, Harawa, Rezigat, Kunuz and Musabaat tribes in 253 villages. Malha comprises a population of approximately 60 600 people from the Midop, Berti and Kobe tribes farming in 104 villages. The core mission and responsibilities of Operation CORDITE XX is protection of civilians, UN personnel, equipment and property. Ultimately this is to create favourable conditions for uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid, providing security for voluntary return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and mediation.

The Company Commander in Melitt, Maj Daniel Joubert, the Intelligence Officer, Capt Mxolisi Halom, and the Company Commander in Malha, Capt Ephraim Nambane, respectively gave presentations to acquaint Chief Joint Operations and his delegation with the security situation in their areas of responsibility and to give an overview of the Mellit and Malha team sites in Sector North in the Darfur region.

Operation CORDITE XX has experienced a few attacks by various rebel groups. These rebels’ mission is to plunder UN resources. The rebels have therefore engaged our troops, however, they have successfully retaliated as the rules of engagement permit. On 27 September 2015 the South African convoy was ambushed at Melitt, and unfortunately Rfn Toto Malashe from 8 SA Infantry Battalion lost his life. Subsequently, a memorial was built at the Melitt parade ground in his honour. Overall, the battalion experienced two attacks at Kutum and five at Melitt, including one ambush at Melitt. The battalion is constantly facing the possibility of an unpredicted ambush as they perform their tasks, besides direct attacks by different Northern Darfur militias. The battalion is compelled to share its own resources in the form of medical assistance with community members who seek refuge and medical attention at the base.

Lt Gen Mgwebi had his last official meeting in El Fasher UNAMID HQ, where he met the UNAMID Acting Force Commander, Maj Gen Mohammad Maksud of the Bangladesh Army, and Ms Bintou Keita, Deputy Joint Special Representative. During the meeting, Lt Gen Mgwebi discussed the future of UNAMID assistance in the Sudan and a possible exit strategy once ideal peace conditions are realised.
As the custodian of the sovereignty of South Africa, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) annually gives undivided attention and unwavering support to the opening of Parliament. The Parliament is the highest representation of our ideology and sovereignty as a state. Since 1994, the opening of Parliament popularly has been referred to as the State of the Nation Address (SoNA).

The sitting Commander-in-Chief and President of the country, Mr Jacob Zuma, presented his SoNA to a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament (the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces) at 19:00 on 11 February 2016. In the SoNA the President gave direction and insight on his future plans and where he wished to see the country moving politically, economically, socially and militarily.

During this time, he had the opportunity to tap on the pulse of the nation as the highest political leader of the Republic of South Africa (hence the name “State of the Nation Address”). Not only does the President guide the country during this time, but he also allays fears of citizens and investors alike (if the nation is in fear of something). In the SoNA the President encouraged, appreciated or reprimanded the nation and/or government departments or private entities when it was warranted to do so.

The SANDF takes pride in offering support to this prestigious annual occasion. To the SANDF, the SoNA presents an opportunity to display its discipline ethos through drills and the National Ceremonial...
Guard. This support to the SoNA is something that is never taken for granted by relevant authorities and task executors in the SANDF. The planning takes no less than seven months, which will culminate on the predetermined date of the SONA.

All four Services (the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service) avail their members to participate during the SoNA. During the 2016 SoNA, 440 street liners from the four Services were made available to make this annual event successful.

In his speech, the Commander-in-Chief, President Zuma, acknowledged and congratulated the SANDF on the sterling job it had done in executing its mandate in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations.

The Commander-in-Chief said: “The SANDF represented the country bravely and remarkably well in peacekeeping missions on the continent. We are truly proud of our soldiers. They will be showcasing their capability in Port Elizabeth from 13 to 21 February 2016 during the celebration of Armed Forces Day.”

ABOVE: The Cape Town Highlanders marching towards Parliament.

ABOVE: The National Ceremonial Guard and the SA Military Health Service Band stand on attention in front of the Commander-in-Chief and President of the country, Mr Jacob Zuma, and the podium group while taking the National Salute during the Opening of Parliament.
South Africans from different backgrounds visited the Fan Park from 13 to 21 February 2016 to witness the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in action while celebrating Armed Forces in Port Elizabeth. During this week that culminated on 21 February on Armed Forces Day the SANDF was engaged in various community upliftment projects to raise awareness of the fact that the SANDF was not only about “guns and shining boots”.

Africa announced that annually 21 February would be observed and commemorated as Armed Forces Day. This day was specially allocated to create an opportunity for South Africans of all demographic categories and all spheres of life to honour the men and women of the SANDF by showing their support and gratitude to the SANDF for doing a sterling job in safeguarding the Constitution, defending the country’s territorial integrity and protecting the citizens.

The main purpose of the Armed Forces Day is to pay homage to all serving members of the SANDF and those who perished in defence of South Africa’s territorial integrity.

Concise history of Armed Forces Day

In 2012 the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF and President of South
military and view its latest military hardware and technology. The SANDF also demonstrates to the public its combat readiness against threats and showcase its capabilities to assist Government when the need arise. Consequently exposing and expanding the public’s perception of the various military roles and its purpose in society in peacetime in a democratic state.

It has been through a concerted effort that the annual Armed Forces Day is held on 21 February to coincide with the commemoration of the sinking of the SS MENDI on 21 February 1917. This has been one of the worst disasters recorded in South African military history as more than 600 South Africans lost their lives on that fateful morning when the SS MENDI sank within 20 minutes after being rammed by the SS DARRO in the English Channel.

**2016 Armed Forces Day Celebration**

Though planning for Armed Forces Day is a collective responsibility of all four Services of the SANDF, namely the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service, it has become the norm to give the opportunity to one Service every year to lead in planning the day. This year the SA Navy was charged with the responsibility to plan, coordinate and oversee the execution of Armed Forces Day.

Under the flagships of the SA Navy the 2016 Armed Forces Day celebration was held for the first time in Port Elizabeth. The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, went the extra mile to ensure that the 2016 Armed Forces Day celebration was a monumental success. South Africans of all ages, genders and races in Port Elizabeth were given the opportunity to see what the SANDF was made of.

SA Navy ships were open to the public and communities were treated to free concerts by different military bands, local learners...
were offered free sport clinics, a military exhibition, a night shoot, a capability demonstration, the launch of the Legacy Project and a wreath-laying ceremony.

EVENTS

Fan Park

The Port Elizabeth community descended in numbers on the King’s Beach Parking area which from 17 to 21 February 2016 was transformed into a Fan Park for the Armed Forces Day activities. For the week-long Armed Forces celebration, approximately 55 schools were invited to the Fan Park and Arena. At least 26 buses were made available to transport learners; this was a morale booster for most of the rural and previously disadvantaged schools. Inviting learners to the exhibitions had a positive outcome as learners from a tender age were exposed to various professions in the SANDF.

The exhibition comprised various weapon systems, armoured vehicles, radar systems, artillery cannons, ships, a diving tank, helicopter, a medical display, sports display and an extensive recruitment section.

Visitors to the Fan Park were given ample opportunity to interact with SANDF members at various exhibition tents. The public further was allowed to get onto and into the various vehicles on display to have a real-time feel of what it meant to be a soldier.

In addition to the interaction and various SANDF displays, the community were treated to watching an SA Navy sword drill display, a Military Police hostage release demonstration, an SA Army dog show, SA Army Engineer bridge building demonstration and precision drill displays by both the SA Navy and the SA Army.

Night shooting demonstration

The G1 and the 155 mm G5 Artillery piece fired illumination shells and flares were released from aircraft during the night shooting demonstration on 18 February. This was one of the most exhilarating moments of the week-long celebrations in Port Elizabeth. In the evening excited people patiently gathered long before the time to witness the night shooting at King’s Beach.

The Gripen fighter jet, a C-130 cargo plane, an Oryx helicopter and two Rooivalk combat helicopters were responsible for the action during the night shooting. The King’s Beach area “became a war zone” when the supersonic Gripen fighter jet flew at supersonic speed, followed by a big bang.

The Gripen fighter jet, the Rooivalk combat helicopters and the C-130 cargo plane deployed their flares that lit up ocean and sky over the King’s Beach area with their display of anti-missile flares. This was followed by live firing of mortars from artillery. The mortar flares emit light that makes everything visible even on the darkest night. Weapons from
the SAS DRAKENSBERG and SAS GALESHEWE fired tracer rounds at these flares.

The night shooting demonstration was an indication of combat readiness of the SANDF and its night-fighting capability. The Gripen fighter jet, C-130 cargo plane, Oryx helicopter and Rooivalk combat helicopter showed the military might and fire power that the SANDF possess.

Parade and capability demonstration rehearsals

From 18 to 20 February rehearsals were the most important part of the successful military parade. These cannot be underestimated as the parade forms the main event for the Armed Forces Day celebrations on 21 February. The rehearsals and the parade were held along Beach Road.

The public had a preview of the parade as the rehearsal was done as precisely as on the actual day that the parade was to be held. The rehearsal and the parade were comprised of three parts. The first part being a ceremonial parade where the National Ceremonial Guard marched to the podium and waited for the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Jacob Zuma. The ceremonial part of the parade consisted of a salute (including a 21 gun salute and a salute fly-past), an inspection, a medal ceremony, a formal address of the parade by the Commander-in-Chief and a flag ceremony.

The second part of the parade was a march-past of about 800 soldiers of the various Services. The third part of the parade was a drive-past of about 80 military vehicles and boats.

When the parade rehearsal was completed a capability demonstration rehearsal followed. The capability demonstration consisted of two parts, namely an anti-piracy display and a joint airborne and sea-landed rescue operation.

During the capability demonstration four Gripen fighter jets, four Hawk fighters, two Rooivalk helicopters, six Oryx helicopters, a Super Lynx
events

maritime helicopter, a C-130 aircraft, SA Navy boats and all SANDF Services and Divisions participated.

SA Navy ships open to the public

For the first time post 1994 South Africa has seen the largest simultaneous deployment of SA Navy vessels in one location away from their home port.

From 13 to 16 February, the public was given a rare opportunity of free access to SA Navy ships on certain days in the Port Elizabeth harbour. These ships included the SAS DRAKENSBERG (fleet replenishment vessel and the largest ship ever to be built in South Africa), the SAS AMATOLA (a Valour Class frigate), the SAS PROTEA (the SA Navy hydrographic survey vessel), the SAS GALESHEWE and the SAS ISAAC DYOBIHA (offshore patrol vessels), the SAS UMHLOTI (a River Class minehunter) and the SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I (a Heroin Class submarine). During the first few days of the opening it was estimated that approximately 25 000 people visited the ships.

Sports clinics

During the week-long celebration the SANDF deployed rugby, soccer, volleyball, cricket and netball professional players and coaches to Port Elizabeth. The Department of Basic Education assisted the SANDF in selecting the schools and learners who participated in the Sports Clinic. The deployed players and coaches from the Directorate Physical Training, Sport and Recreation (DPTSR) conducted clinics for about 1 100 children per day from 17 to 19 February. The learners were from local schools and sports clinics were held at the Despatch sports ground at the Galven Park Sports Complex over the same period.

Capt (SAN) Godfrey Daniels, Chairperson of the SANDF Rugby Association and chief event coordinator during the week-long Armed Forces Day celebration, said in an interview with SA Soldier that the DPTSR team with the assistance of the relevant stakeholders that sponsored the sports clinics donated sporting equipment such as sports gear and
LEFT: Fltr: The Chief of the SA Military Health Service, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, the Chief of SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, the Deputy Chief of the SA Air Force, Maj Gen Gerald Malinga, Chief of the South African Navy, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, and Lt Gen (Ret) Themba Matanzima, the Military Ombud, at Wedgewood Golf Estate where they played a game of golf consisting of a four-all alliance.

Above: The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, signing the memorandum of understanding with her Zambian counterpart, Mr Richwell Siamunene.

leader bottles. He said: “Without a doubt the highlight of the sports clinics was the clear excitement and satisfaction that the learners had and the appreciation from the Principals of the participating schools as they confessed that they never had had something like that in Port Elizabeth.”

On 19 February, the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Kebby Maphatsoe, officially closed the sports clinics. Addressing the learners at the Arena, Minister Maphatsoe said that the SANDF was not only open for one racial group, but for all South African races and therefore all races were encouraged to become members of the SANDF.

Golf Day

On 19 February, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, and the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, Chiefs of Services and Divisions and invited guests from the business fraternity played a game of golf at the Wedgewood Golf Estate consisting of a four-all alliance.

Military band concerts

In an effort to raise awareness of the musical careers and talents in the SANDF various military bands held concerts in different localities in Port Elizabeth. These concerts drummed up support for Armed Forces Day on 21 February. The SA Navy Band hosted a concert in Namgoza Jeebe Hall in New Brighton, while the Air Force Band entertained locals at the Uitenhage Indoor Sports Centre and the National Ceremonial Guard Band played at the Motherwell Community Hall. The SA Military Health Service Band mesmerised people in the Chatty Community Hall and the SA Army Band had people dancing in Colchester.

On 17 February, the National Defence Force Bands performed for invited guests and the general public at a gala concert held at the Feathermarket Hall.

Signing of a memorandum of understanding

On 20 February the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, had a meeting with her Zambian counterpart, Minister Richwell Siamunene. The purpose of the meeting was to sign a memorandum of understanding that prescribed the terms and conditions of military cooperation between the two countries’ militaries.

SS MENDI Memorial Service

It has been through a concerted effort that the Annual Armed Forces Day is held on 21 February to coincide with the commemoration of the sinking of the SS MENDI on 21 February 1917. Before the Armed Forces Day Parade started, the Commander-in-Chief, President Zuma, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula, Deputy Minister Maphatsoe, Dr Gulube, Gen Shoke, the Chiefs of Services and Divisions and invited guests paid tribute to those who perished during the sinking of the SS MENDI at the SS MENDI Memorial Service held in New Brighton.
President Jacob Zuma as the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and main functionary on 21 February 2016 presided over the Armed Forces Day celebration in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape Province.

Essentially the Armed Forces Day annual celebration is to honour and appreciate the gallant men and women who willingly devote and sacrifice their lives as they opt to serve the Republic to protect it from real or perceived threats and aggression.

It has been through a concerted effort that the annual Armed Forces Day is held on 21 February to coincide with the commemoration of the sinking of the SS MENDI on 21 February 1917 to pay tribute to those who perished.

The commemoration of the South African soldiers who perished on that fateful day was also held on 21 February 2016 at the SS MENDI memorial in New Brighton in Port Elizabeth.

The celebrations on Armed Forces Day took place in the form of a parade and the President had the opportunity to award the Mandela Gold Medal to recipients who had rendered distinguished service while personally providing care for former President Mandela during his illness or had...
events

personally engaged in directing, controlling, planning, organising and assisted at former President Mandela's memorial service, lying-in-state and funeral service.

Addressing the audience, the Commander-in-Chief praised the SANDF for its sterling job in peacekeeping. President Zuma said: “We know that our Armed Forces occupy a special space in the hearts of our people. This is why we have set aside one special day to publicly show appreciation to our Armed Forces for their invaluable and selfless service to our nation.

“We play our role mandated mainly by the African Union (AU) with the support of the United Nations (UN), and we participate in peace missions on the continent. We do this because we want to see peace and stability on our continent. We want to see the end of the suffering of women and children in Africa. We want to see the end of the flight of Africans from their countries because of wars and conflicts.”

The Commander-in-Chief indicated his appreciation of his armed forces commitment to African peace and stability. He said: “We are passionate about peace and that is why our armed forces are always...”
events

READY: A fly-past by the Silver Falcons.

ready to participate in peacekeeping missions. The AU resolved that guns must be silenced in Africa by 2020. South Africa is playing its part meaningfully towards the achievement of that goal. Our soldiers have performed exceptionally well in these peace missions and have done the country proud. One of the key demonstrations

A R I G H T :  A f l y - p a s t b y t h e Silver Falcons.

of the success of South Africa’s participation in peacekeeping missions is the recent appointment by the UN of our very own Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi as the Force Commander of the 20 000-strong UN Mission in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, called MONUSCO, which is the largest UN peace support operation in the world and on the continent”. President Zuma added: “The appointment of Lt Gen Mgwebi is a clear indication of the confidence that the UN has in South Africa and the role and contribution we have made in peacekeeping on the continent and beyond. The appointment is a further recognition of his leadership qualities in the many missions that he has led abroad. It is a major gain for the UN to have such a decorated and operationally experienced officer in charge of MONUSCO. This appointment is therefore not only an honour for Lt Gen Mgwebi personally, but also for South Africa as a whole.”

The Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF paid his respects to SANDF members who had died on duty, saying: “As we celebrate Armed Forces Day today, we should pause as a nation to remember our men and women who have fallen in the line of duty. On behalf of the South African Government and all the people of our country, I express my deepest condolences to the families and friends of our departed soldiers either on the home front or in far-away lands on peacekeeping missions. May their souls rest in peace”.

ABOVE: Shooting of the 21-gun salute and fly-past.
The Minister launches the Legacy Project

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

A day before Armed Forces Day, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, in conjunction with the Minister of the Department of Social Development, Ms Bathabile Dlamini, launched the Legacy Project at Ekuphumleni Old Age Home in Zwide.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “When the decision was made to bring the Armed Forces Day celebration to Nelson Mandela Bay, it was decided that a legacy of the event must be left for the people of the area. In consultation with the Municipality and the Business Chamber, a number of old age homes were identified for the project.” The Minister indicated that the primary purpose of the Legacy Project was to espouse SANDF social responsibility and interaction between the SANDF and the community with which it comes into contact.

In a case study it was established that access to and the quality of social services in the country (old age homes in this instance) were still determined by the ability to pay for services. While private service centres were available and functioning in urban areas, it became abundantly clear that residential facilities for the elderly in previously disadvantaged areas were faced with a multitude of challenges exacerbated by abject poverty. A lack of funds meant that people in these areas were unable to pay for services. This hampered integration and the quality of service offered, which led to a steadily deteriorating standard of life and a higher mortality rate. The Legacy Project seeks to address this discrepancy.

A number of facilities were identified, e.g. the Ekuphumleni Old Age Home which was found to be in dire straits due to neglect and poor management, so it needed urgent attention. The Ekuphumleni Old Age Home is a facility that accommodates 60 frail and semi-frail older persons.

In addition, two other old age homes were identified and refurbishments to these homes were done. The first was the Bethelsdorp Old Age Home where a boundary wall that had collapsed was repaired and a wheelchair ramp was built. The second was the Gelvan Park Frail Care Home where a shaded veranda was repaired and two new ones erected so that the residents do not have to sit in the sun.

The Department of Social Development became involved and donated close to R300 000 to purchase material. The SA Navy sent 48 artisans to Port Elizabeth to start the renovations on 18 January 2016. The work was completed on 12 February.

It was the wish of Minister Mapisa-Nqakula that wherever the SANDF goes it must touch people’s lives positively.

The Legacy Project is about telling people that the SANDF is for the people and therefore is compassionate towards South African citizens, regardless of age, colour or creed. The intention of the Legacy Project in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality was to promote the overall (psychological, physiological, social and financial) well-being of the elderly, especially those being cared for in the old age homes.
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, accompanied by the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, and the Chief of Corporate Staff, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, recently inspected the progress of Operation THUSANO at Army Support Base Potchefstroom.

Operation THUSANO is meant to provide a platform to build capacity, repair, service and maintain unique SANDF combat vehicles and to impart such skills to personnel in the Potchefstroom (ASB Potchefstroom) and Wallmannsthal Military Base respectively. Operation THUSANO involves a partnership between the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

This partnership seeks to provide expertise in servicing and maintaining unique SANDF combat vehicles to create and sustain a logistics system capable of keeping the SANDF moving and combat ready. It further is primarily aimed at improving the serviceability (maintenance and repair) of prime SANDF equipment and to invigorate the transport and technical capabilities of the SANDF to decrease dependence on the private sector.

Operation THUSANO is meant to not only provide a platform to build capacity, repair, service and maintain SANDF combat vehicles, but also to impart such skills to personnel in the
Engineering Corps, which includes formally trained SANDF soldiers, Defence Act Personnel (DAP) and civilians employed in the Department of Defence - Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP). As part of the maintenance and repair process, a number of new capabilities were developed at 102 Field Workshop, including auto-electrical, trimming, spray painting and engine test stations.

In a presentation at Army Support Base Potchefstroom, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula was informed that one interpreter and eight qualified Cuban mechanical engineers were allocated to 102 Field Workshop. Other Cuban experts were placed to assist in other relevant military units. The operation in 102 Field Workshop comprises one PSAP, 59 SA Army members and three SA Navy members. The breakdown is as follows: twelve qualified vehicle fitters, 37 (32 men and five women) vehicle fitter apprentices, three (one man and two women) auto electricians, seven (including one PSAP) panel beaters, one female trimmer, and three (two males and a female) SA Navy members.

Brig Gen Elvis Mathaba, Director of Army Logistics, mentioned that Operation THUSANO preferred and invited Cubans specifically to assist the SANDF because the private industry was reluctant to pass on skills to the DOD/SANDF personnel.

Over time, as inflation rises, it becomes increasingly unsustainable to use the private sector to maintain the vehicles of the SANDF. South Africa and Cuba enjoy cordial political and military relations, and considering the economy of Cuba and its capacity to keep its own military vehicles running, it made sense to have this partnership with them.

The Cubans do not just refurbish vehicles; they have five goals: to organise fleet management, organise technical support, deactivate old vehicles, preserve vehicles and perform maintenance, and repair and overhaul activities.

During the actual inspection, Lt Col Roberto Henrinades, Head of the Cuban repair team at 102 Field Workshop, informed the Minister and Secretary for Defence that, on average, they repaired approximately 20 vehicles per day and that ideally they would like to increase that number.

Of a number of 4 202 vehicles were due for repairs, more than a hundred Samil 20s, 50s and 100s were already repaired, and more than 360 Mambas, Casspirs and Ratels were ready for preservation.

Col Henrinades and the engineers at the workshop further informed the Minister and Secretary for Defence about budgetary constraints in procuring and purchasing spare parts for vehicles and other execution related challenges the operation was experiencing.

Given the obvious success of Operation THUSANO and the Minister’s satisfaction with the milestones Operation THUSANO has reached, the Minister and Secretary for Defence, committed to adhere to governmental and departmental policies, would discuss availing funds to have Operation THUSANO continue without the hurdles highlighted by Col Henrinades.
Durban Naval Station was elevated to a fully-fledged Naval Base

By WO2 Mathebula Moraile, Public Relations Officer Naval Base Durban
Photos by CPO Bafana Nkosi

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, officiated at the recently held Sod Turning Ceremony at Naval Station Durban on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, President Jacob Zuma.

When addressing the guests the Minister said: “This single giant step will mark the beginning of the process of the rejuvenation of the SA Navy and the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in general, as part of the process we have outlined in the recently adopted Defence Review and the milestones we have to achieve in that regard.

“The elevation of the Durban Naval Station to a fully-fledged Naval Base will go a long way to shoring up our country’s maritime security and will make a significant contribution to our ocean economy, which runs into billions of rands and has enormous potential for the growth and development of our country. It will further enhance the growth of the maritime industry as an integral part of the defence industry in general. This will be achieved through the support and maintenance of SA Navy assets to be maintained here. These will consist primarily but not exclusively of the offshore patrol vessels as well as visiting and passing naval vessels.”

It was in 2001 during a media briefing held at Naval Base Durban that the former Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Johan Retief, officially announced that Naval Base Durban would be downsized to a naval station. This was commissioned on 14 August 2002 and all the strike craft and offshore patrol vessels...
ABOVE: The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, takes the salute from the guard of honour.

were thereafter attached to Simon’s Town. The Minister said that this Sod Turning Ceremony was in fact the process to reverse what occurred in the past, when there was a decision to downscale and eventually close what was once a budding navy facility and move all the facilities to Simon’s Town.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “After assessment of the international, regional and domestic security situation, we have come to the conclusion that resuscitating and even upscaling the SA Navy presence along these shores is the right decision and will become part and parcel of the entire defence presence on the eastern seaboard. This initiative will also bolster our military operations and presence further up the coast to Mozambique and Tanzania, and will further enhance the maritime security of our east coast.

“We are in fact already reaping some of the dividends of having taken a decision to be part of the maritime security of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, along both the eastern and western coasts of our country. On the east coast, we have established a tripartite arrangement between Mozambique, Tanzania and ourselves. There has been a visible decline in attempts at piracy since our deployment under the auspices of our Operation COPPER and the tripartite arrangement of our three countries. On the west coast we are collaborating with Namibia, Angola and Guinea. All these initiatives and activities are an integral part of our maritime security strategy.”

The Minister also advised young people to be vigilant where militants were concerned. She said: “It is not only about defence intelligence, whether in uniform or not. You should be the eyes and ears of this country. If you let the country go, you let it slip away, so we will never forgive you, even from our graves. I am sure the Madibas, the Sisulus, the Mompatis, the Slovos, the entire leadership of this country, which fought so hard, will turn in their graves against you. It will be silly and very naive of us to think that we are immune to terrorism, which is on the rise worldwide.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added: “A maritime nation and an ocean economy cannot be successful if not defended. Today’s initiative is a significant step in that direction, especially considering that more than fifty per cent of our trade is via the blue economy. The SANDF and SA will therefore be making a contribution to the ocean economy in this regard; and further increase their capacity to lead the Indian Ocean Navies - the IONS.

The Minister said: “Let it not be lost on us that we need men and women to join the SA Navy in particular and the SANDF in general to play their part and make a contribution to the safety and security of our country and ensure economic growth that will lead to the eradication of poverty and open up opportunities for our people. We cannot fail.”
The Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, conferred Long Service Medals (30 and 40 years) on loyal recipients in Simon’s Town on 10 February 2016.

Medals are authorised by the Commander-in-Chief, the President of the country, Mr Jacob Zuma. It is a gesture of appreciation by military authorities to SANDF members who have served the country with dedication and unwavering patriotism. The responsibility of decorating deserving recipients (alive or posthumously) lies with the Chief of the SANDF or any high-ranking officer that he delegates to execute this task on his behalf.

WO1 (Ret) A.M. Erasmus was the only retired member on the medal.
ABOVE: The National Ceremonial Guard entertains the guests, spectators and recipients.

The Chief of the SANDF conferred the Bar and the Medalje vir Troue Diens 30 Years on 67 serving SANDF members and 13 retired members. In addition, three members were posthumously awarded the Medalje vir Troue Diens 30 Years and Bar.

General Shoke said that he was indeed proud to confer medals and bars on these members for displaying a high level of patriotism by serving their country with valour, discipline and dignity for thirty or forty years. Gen Shoke added: “I congratulate you today on making yourselves an example of what commitment and discipline is. It is only through your discipline as soldiers that you endured all these years of service. This is something that we wish all soldiers to emulate.”

The Chief of the SANDF reprimanded some for ill-discipline and a sense of entitlement. He emphasised that in his tenure he was not going to tolerate soldiers who seemed to be confused by the fact that the SANDF was an apolitical organisation supporting any legitimate government of the day.

General Shoke said: “The SANDF should always rise above petty party politics and the latter therefore has no role in executing our mandate.”

LEFT: The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke (left), received a token of appreciation from R Adm Bravo Mhlana, Flag Officer Fleet.
Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi standing tall in the global community of nations

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The United Nations expressed a vote of confidence in South Africa’s ability to represent and advance the continent’s aspirations and interests. Our country is standing tall in the global family of nations in terms of the maintenance of international peace and security.

We continue to strive to maintain world peace, settle international disputes, engage on issues of development, bring solutions to the continent’s advancement and develop a true and effective partnership for a better Africa and a better world.

The SA National Defence Force’s Senior Officer who was heading the Joint Operations Division, Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi, was appointed as Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the first ever United Nations (UN) force to be given an offensive mandate in its work of protecting civilians.

Lt Gen Mgwebi’s appointment was announced by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in December 2015. He succeeds Lt Gen Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz of Brazil, who completed his assignment on 2 December 2015. Lt Gen Mgwebi will be Force Commander for at least the next twelve months.

As Commander of the single largest UN mission, Lt Gen Mgwebi has about 20 000 members under his command. This includes military, police and civilian components as well as the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). This tri-national force will be made up of Malawian, South African and Tanzanian elements.

He has more than 35 years of national and international military experience and continental peace support and peacekeeping deployments, including Force Commander of the African Mission in Burundi and of the UN Mission in Burundi.

Lt Gen Mgwebi has previously been the Director Special Forces of the SANDF as well as Director of Training and Operations. He held the post of Military Secretary at the Ministry of Defence from 1995 to 1997 and served at Mpumalanga Command from 1997 to 2002, after which he was appointed Director of the SA Army Infantry Formation. From 2004 to 2006 Lt Gen Mgwebi served as Force Commander of the United Nations Operation in...
Burundi (ONUB). From 2007 to 2011 Lt Gen Mgwebi was the Chief of Human Resources of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

The Department of Defence (DOD) Head of Communication, Mr Siphiwe Dlamini, said the appointment of Lt Gen Mgwebi was a clear indication of the confidence the UN had in South Africa as a country and its role and contribution in peacekeeping on the continent and beyond. “The appointment is further recognition of Lt Gen Mgwebi’s leadership qualities in the many missions abroad that he has led and is a major gain for the UN to have such a decorated and operationally experienced officer in charge of MONUSCO. Mr Dlamini added: “This is the largest UN Peace Support Operation in the world and on the continent. This appointment is not only an honour for Lt Gen Mgwebi personally, but also to South Africa as a whole.”

**Change of Command Parade**

The SANDF’s Joint Operations Division recently held a Change of Command Parade between the outgoing Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Derick Mgwebi, and the incoming Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Dumisani Mdutyana, at Air Force Base Swartkop West in Valhalla.

The Change of Command Parade followed the appointment of Lt Gen Mgwebi as the new UN Mission Force Commander in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in December 2015.

In his farewell speech, Lt Gen Mgwebi said that the Division had been involved in a number of operations both internally and externally during his reign. He said: “There have been various Humanitarian Support Operations in our neighbouring states and other African countries. These operations were conducted in line with our international agreements whose mandates emanate from our Constitution.”

Lt Gen Mgwebi mentioned that the Joint Operations Division had been praised by all quarters of society for a job well done. He said: “There were several multi-national as well as SANDF specific exercises that were conducted with absolute military professionalism. What an honour to have experienced many of them first-hand.”

He expressed gratitude to his family, all the personnel of the Joint Operations Division, Services and Divisions and the senior leadership of the SANDF/DOD he had worked with since his appointment in the SANDF. Lt Gen Mgwebi said: “A true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him.”

The parade was followed by a farewell function. The incoming Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Mdutyana, told the gathering that while thinking of what lay ahead, he was aware of the huge responsibilities associated with his appointment and he was ready to face the challenges head-on with passion and enthusiasm. He congratulated his predecessor on the positive influence and hard work he had done at Joint Operations Division.

**New leadership for Joint Operations Division**

Lt Gen Dumisani Mdutyana, who is taking over the reins of Joint Operations Division, is an equally operationally experienced officer who boasts extensive experience in work for the UN and the African Union (AU). In 2003 Lt Gen Mdutyana served as General Officer Commanding of the South African Contingent in Burundi, as Deputy Division Commander of the Eastern Division in the DRC in the UN Mission (MONUC) from February 2005 to September 2007. In February 2008 he was promoted to the rank of Major General and posted as Chief Adviser to the DRC and Chief of Defence Staff until March 2009. From April 2009 to November 2010 he served as the Deputy Force Commander of the UN African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) in the Sudan.

He obtained a Masters Degree in Defence Studies at the Madras University in India, where he studied from 1992 to 1993. In 1993 he was appointed as the Marketing Manager of Gimacer Electronic Systems. Lt Gen Mdutyana served in numerous posts in the SANDF: in 1995 he was appointed as Senior Staff Officer Operations at Eastern Province Command. From 1996 to March 1998 he served as Officer Commanding of Group 6. He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and appointed as Director Area Defence at the SA Army Infantry Formation from April 1998 to December 2001. Thereafter he occupied the post of General Officer Commanding 43 SA Brigade as from January 2002.

On 1 December 2010 he was appointed as General Officer Commanding Joint Operational Headquarters and on 1 December 2011 as the Chief Director Operations at Joint Operations Division.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, who was the main functionary, accompanied the SA Air Force Command Executive members. During the parade, Lt Gen Msimang acknowledged the excellence displayed by men and women of the blue pride culture for their hard work, achievement and superb contribution to the SA Air Force by presenting the deserving Unit/Base with a prestigious trophy and a Sword of Peace.

Addressing the parade, Lt Gen Msimang said that 2015 was another tough, but successful Air Force year, because we collectively had the resilience to make it through another difficult period of severe austerity measures. He added that the SA Air Force, as a well-trained and motivated outfit, had proved to be professional, responsive and dependable in the face of adversity. He said: “Our performance and commitment has showcased our primary greatness and we must continue to raise the bar of professionalism and excellence. I call upon all of us in the SA Air Force: Regulars, Reserves and civilians, to take the giant steps needed to be a world-class Air Force family.”

Lt Gen Msimang highlighted some of the SA Air Force’s focus areas for 2016, which include the Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition 2016, building Reserve Force capacity and reactivating the Reserve Force flying squadrons, foreign learning opportunities, restructuring the SA Air Force, chess programmes, youth outreach and transformation.

The annual parade is held on the Friday closest to 1 February to acknowledge the founding of the

In welcoming the Basic Military Training graduates he said that these Airmen had answered our nation’s call. He reminded them that women and men in uniform symbolised South Africa’s strength, dignity, hope, selfless and patriotic service to the nation. Lt Gen Msimang said: “I congratulate the graduates of the Basic Military Training ‘02 of 2015’ and also recognise those who excelled and received trophies for their sterling efforts. May these accolades be but the first of many during your careers in the SA Air Force. You are now members of a proud warrior class of this glorious SA National Defence Force.”

Lt Gen Msimang inspected the parade and handed out various awards and trophies to the Basic Military Training graduates for their outstanding achievements in fitness, academic and all-round performance. Air Force Base Hoedspruit received the Prestige Unit Award for 2015. This is recognised as one of the most prestigious awards presented annually to the Unit/Base that excels at all levels of tasks and operations.

The following trophies were presented to the Basic Military Training graduates:

- **Best Male Shottist with 89%** - Amn Washington Kheleli
- **Best Female Shottist with 96%** - Amn Agnes Masiye
- **Fittest Male Student with 97%** - Amn Kokets Monareng
- **Fittest Female Student with 98%** - Amn Sisipho Mvunyiswa
- **Best Academic Achiever with 95.3%** - Amn Zilla Steyn
- **Best Overall Student with 93.4%** - Amn Mpho Kekana

Lastly, the trophy for the best instructor and confidence builder was awarded to Cpl Thulani Nyuswa for inspiring confidence in the recruits.
In line with the recommendations of the SA Defence Review 2014, the SA National Defence College (SANDC) started to present the first Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) as the replacement programme for the Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) in January 2015.

The SDSP is presented at the SANDC in collaboration with the Faculty of Military Science of the University Stellenbosch. Officers and officials in the rank group of Brigadier General/Colonel or civilian equivalent are selected from the Department of Defence (DOD) and other government departments.

The SDSP curriculum prescribes study tours to both regional and other countries to expose programme members to aspects of national security, including security policies and strategies. Study tours also broaden the horizon of programme members in terms of regional and global security trends and concepts.

SA Soldier interviewed Brig Gen (now Maj Gen) Gordon Yekelo, the then Commandant of the SA National Defence College (now General Officer Commanding Training Command) late last year. He elaborated on the current status of the programme and the direction it is taking. The SDSP programme is accredited and promotes ENSP best practices:

General, can you please give a description of what the new Security and Defence Studies Programme is all about?

Broadly speaking the Programme continues with the established tradition of educating and training senior officers and officials for employment in the area of national security. The College has undertaken this task since its establishment in 1972 when it presented the then Joint Staff Course from 1973 to 1999.

Following the approval of the 1998 Defence Review it was thought appropriate to introduce a new programme, the Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) which as you know was discontinued at the end of 2014. The SDSP has an added dimension as candidates now have the opportunity to acquire a recognised academic qualification in addition to strategic skills and competencies.

Briefly then the SDSP covers important areas of knowledge that are critical to practitioners in the security, defence and international relations environments. Candidates are taught about national security and strategy, management of international conflict, strategic management and research, among others.

Does the programme replace the Executive National Security Programme (ENSP) and why?

It is partly a replacement of the ENSP in so far as it is an accredited academic programme, but where content, level and areas of focus are concerned it builds on and continues with ENSP traditions.
What is expected of the programme considering the roll-out of the new Defence Review?

Your readers might know that the current trajectory which is focused on the education and training and enhancement of professionalism of the SANDF was given impetus by the declaration of intent by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans during the Budget Vote Speech of 17 May 2012. As outlined and later reiterated in the Defence Review, the DOD is to focus on the enhancement of both professional and academic qualifications of members, especially officers. This was followed through and institutionalised via SADR2014 and proposals in that regard.

The introduction of this programme is probably one of the “quick wins” in the implementation of Defence Review proposals. If this is the case, its impact will be more profoundly felt over the next few years. The programme prepares members of the DOD to address emerging challenges and to craft and propose strategic responses.

In this regard candidates will on their return to the workplace be able to advise their principals on how to address defence and security challenges related to the four milestones in the implementation of the Defence Review. They will thus be able to give relevant advice to the DOD to “Arrest the Decline”, to rebalance, capacitate and respond to strategic challenges. I believe that this is what the department expects from a graduate of the Defence College.

What is expected of participants regarding the selection criteria and their approach towards the programme?

Candidates are selected by Chiefs of Services and Divisions and the selection is based on the requirements of the Services and Divisions. The College expects that well-prepared, well-trained, experienced and self-motivated and driven officers and officials will be selected to attend the programme, with due regard to their future utilisation.

Are there similar programmes in institutions of Higher Learning and, if so, how do they compare?

There are similar programmes in South Africa in as far as the academic part of the programme is concerned, such as the academic programme presented by the University Stellenbosch through its Faculty of Military Science. However, when the overall programme is considered, especially with regard to its professional dimension, similar programmes are presented notably by Defence Colleges.

How long do you think the curriculum will remain relevant before it has to be reviewed or improved?

The curriculum is generally speaking relevant, but the College continues to observe and monitor developments in the international security environment and implements incremental changes in order to keep up with world trends and developments.

*The article on the handing over parade of the General Officer Commanding Training Command appears on pages 30 and 31.

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General Officer Commanding Training Command hands over the reins

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by S Sgt Lebogang Thaole

A change of office parade between the outgoing General Officer Commanding Training Command, Maj Gen Dries de Wit, and his successor, Maj Gen Gordon Yekelo, was recently held at Air Force Base Swartkop West in Valhalla, Pretoria.

The two Senior Officers received a standing ovation, followed by a parade by members of the National Ceremonial Guard to bid farewell to the outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) and to welcome the new GOC.

Addressing guests and members on parade, Maj Gen De Wit said the Training Command had implemented, and will vigorously continue to implement various initiatives and plans to meet the priorities of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, as well as the strategic focus areas of the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

Maj Gen De Wit said: “A heavy emphasis will continue to be placed on those priorities relating to strengthening the Human Resources value chain, renewing the education, training and development system and developing the Human Resources (HR) policies regarding the full spectrum of Human Capital Management”.

Congratulating his successor, Maj Gen De Wit wished him the best for the new task ahead. He said: “May you continue to excel. You are well equipped to make a success of this appointment.”

The outgoing General Officer Commanding

Maj Gen De Wit’s illustrious military career and journey which spanned 41 years, started in the SA Air Force as a young regimental instructor and training officer at the then Air Force Gymnasium and at the SA Air Force College as a Directing Staff. He moved swiftly through the ranks and completed all the required military and HR functional courses and
events

General Officer Commanding Training Command hands over the reins (continued)

occupied various senior posts in the SANDF. These included: Directing Staff at SA Air Force College, Senior Staff Officer (SSO) Manpower Planning and Director Manpower Planning SA Air Force Headquarters, SSO Personnel Planning, Director HR Strategy and Planning, Director Career Management and Chief Director HR Strategic Direction and Policy. In 2015 he was appointed the General Officer Commanding of Training Command.

He received various honours and awards, such as the Military Merit Medal, Southern Cross Medal, Bar to the Southern Cross Medal and the IPhothiya ye Golide Decoration.

Maj Gen Yekelo holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Security Studies from the University of Witwatersrand. He is currently working on his Masters Degree thesis on the potential of a Defence Force contribution to national development, with specific reference to youth development.

The incoming General Officer Commanding

Maj Gen Yekelo underwent military training with Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in Angola in 1978 and then went to the Soviet Union, after which he served in various capacities. In 1995 he has integrated into the SANDF as a Lieutenant Colonel. After integration he was appointed as a Staff Officer at the then Witwatersrand Command. He completed various functional and developmental courses. He completed the Army Senior Command and Staff Course in 1999, after which he was appointed as Senior Staff Officer Intelligence at Regional Joint Task Force South in Port Elizabeth. In 2002 he completed the Executive National Security Programme.

In February 2003 he was appointed as Senior Staff Officer Operational and Counter-intelligence at Joint Operations Headquarters. He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and then to the post of Director Doctrine Development at Joint Operations Division Headquarters. While serving in this capacity, he was seconded to the Office of the South African Facilitator for the Burundi Peace Process from August 2008 to May 2009. He served as the Chairperson of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and as the resident representative of the Facilitator for the Burundi Peace Process in Bujumbura.

As Director Doctrine Development he attended and participated in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Senior Workshop on Rules Governing the Conduct of International Military Operations in Geneva in 1997, the African Union and United Nations Senior Mission Leaders’ Courses held in Cameroon and Finland. In November 2010 he was appointed as the Director Physical Training Sport and Recreation (DPTSR). In 2013 he served as the SANDF Project Officer on Youth Development. From 4 February 2014 to 31 January 2016 he served as the Commandant of the SA National Defence College.

Maj Gen Yekelo holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Security Studies from the University of Witwatersrand. He is currently working on his Masters Degree thesis on the potential of a Defence Force contribution to national development, with specific reference to youth development.

ABOVE: Maj Gen Dries de Wit, the outgoing General Officer Commanding Training Command (left) bequeaths command of Training Command to Maj Gen Gordon Yekelo.
SA Army Officer nominated for the Presidential Award

The Office of the High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Ms Evelyn Malejaka Letoane, recently extended an invitation to Maj Lesego Amon Mosingathi in recognition of his act of valour above and beyond the call of duty when he assisted destitute and desperate Basotho nationals.

This invitation followed after the Office of the High Commissioner of Lesotho learned that Maj Mosingathi had received the prestigious award from the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane for the Act of Good Citizenship for assisting Lesotho nationals.

During the welcoming and media briefing Col Tau Ntsohi, the Defence Adviser to the High Commissioner of the Kingdom of Lesotho, informed the media team that the gallant deeds of Maj Mosingathi was noted in the SA Soldier magazine (Volume 22 No 4 of 2015) for which he received an award from the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane for assisting Lesotho nationals.

The Lesotho Office of the High Commissioner was honoured by the gesture shown by the Office of the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane to recognise this Officer’s deed.

After thorough consideration the Lesotho High Commissioner found the deeds of this SANDF Officer befitted the nomination of the Presidential Award because of Maj Mosingathi’s achievements to the benefit of his country and beyond. Therefore the Citation for the Order of Mapungubwe was compiled to recommend this Officer as the nominee for this prestigious award.

After listening attentively to the Defence Adviser addressing the media team, Ms Letoane praised Maj Mosingathi who she said, had chosen to assist the Basotho nationals who were destitute and desperate for most needed help. He could have ignored them as others who witnessed the incident before Maj Mosingathi arrived, have chosen to ignore it. The great personality and leadership of this SANDF Officer who had the courage to own up to the situation inspired me and the entire Basotho nation. He surely deserves the Award presented to him by the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane.

Maj Mosingathi is a true son of the soil his deeds resemble the family that brought him up, and the teaching he obtained to become an Officer in the SANDF. It is this kind of reception that has made the Republic of South Africa continue to occupy an important position on the continent and in the rest of the world. Thanks are due to the Generals who moulded this Officer, as well as to the South African Government. Best wishes to Maj Mosingathi: may he have an enriching career in the SANDF.

On behalf of the King of Lesotho and the entire Basotho nation the High Commissioner of Lesotho, Ms Evelyn Malejaka Letoane, pays her gratitude to Maj Lesego Mosingathi.
The SA Army Foundation Bursary Programme bears fruit

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhale

In 2015 the SA Army Foundation saw its Bursary Programme finally paying off handsomely, as expected. Following a rigorous selection process, Melandri de Jager and Nthabiseng Ntsabane were selected as recipients of the Adopt a Student Joint Bursary Programme. Both of them completed their respective fields of study successfully, graduating in 2015.

The Bursary Programme was established as a joint initiative by the SA Army Foundation and Maxi Credit Solutions to provide comprehensive financial aid for the children of contributing members who for various reasons are financially unable to provide their children with a tertiary education.

Melandri from Durban in KwaZulu-Natal studied for a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Business Strategic Management, a three-year degree with Varsity College. A Business Strategic Management Degree offers careers in General Business Management, Marketing Management, Brand Management, Sales Management, Public Relations, Advertising Management, Market Research and International Marketing. Melandri indicated that she was employed at the time of the interview.

Nthabiseng from Ficksburg in the Free State Province studied for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology at the University of the Free State. This three-year degree in Psychology generally offers careers in human behaviour and related sciences. Nthabiseng said: “Though I would not mind getting a job, I feel I am still young and am more enthusiastic about my academic achievements and my ambition is to further my studies in Psychology.”

Both graduates encouraged other prospective students not to be hesitant. They were overwhelmingly appreciative of the opportunity that the SA Army had given them. They were adamant that their studies were not easy, but having worked with dedication to pass they never lost focus of their quest to attain their qualifications.

The Chairperson of the SA Army Foundation Board of Control, Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, and the General Manager of the SA Army Foundation, Mr Angel Ramphele, thanked the graduates for their hard work and commitment to their studies.

*For detailed information on criteria, processes, rules and how to apply for the bursary, you can visit: https://www.saarmyfoundation.co.za/products/education/bursaries
You can download the application form for the Adopt a Student Bursary Programme from the above-mentioned website or phone (012) 675 9421 or send an email to: communications@armyfoundation.co.za

This programme is OPEN TO THE CHILDREN OF SA ARMY FOUNDATION MEMBERS ONLY.
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The SANDF Education Trust


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

- SANDF members killed or severely injured subsequent to April 1994, while on official duty.
- Civilian members of the Department of Defence (DOD) killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, while deployed during official SANDF operations.
- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, during official SANDF operations provided that such citizens are not engaged in activities opposing the SANDF.

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

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

The banking details are as follows:

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Type: Current Account
Account No.: 1452016976
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We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.
Together we move South Africa Forward
The Military Academy welcomes its first-year students

by Maj Engela Meintjes, Military Academy Communication Officer

The Military Academy had its Welcoming Parade for first-year students (MA18) at the Military Academy parade ground on 28 January 2016. The Welcoming Parade marked the start to the beginning of the year for the Military Academy, and first year students got their first taste of events to come at the unit. The students were specially welcomed and honoured by the presence of the Mayor of Saldanha Bay, Mr Francois Schippers, the Chief Human Resources, LT Gen Norman Yengeni, as well as several high ranking SA National Defence Forces (SANDF) officials. The parade was led by the SA Army Band from Youngsfield.

The Commandant of the Military Academy, Brig Gen Lawrence Mbatha, welcomed the first years to the unit and also extended a welcoming to all staff members and students back from leave. In his speech, Brig Gen Mbatha mentioned that 2015 had been a busy and challenging year for the Military Academy, but thanks to the resilience displayed by the entire staff, the units were able to overcome all challenges. He also expressed his profound appreciation to the University Stellenbosch for their remarkable partnership with the Military Academy, which serves to ensure that the Military Academy remains a highly recognised institution in our country.

The Commandant mentioned the refurbishment project that started in January 2015, which was one of the biggest hurdles for the Military Academy to overcome. This project not only benefits the Academy, but also the local community in terms of job creation. It is envisioned that future leaders that will benefit from this establishment will continue to contribute positively to the local community and thus strengthen the Military Academy’s relationship with them. This is also visible in the continuous support from the Mayor of Saldanha Bay and the positive relationship that was built between his office and the Military Academy.

Brig Gen Mbatha continued by quoting from the late Mr Nelson Mandela: “I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter. I have made mistakes along the way, but I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb”. Brig Gen Mbatha said that his sincere advice to them was: “Focus totally on your studies from day one. Grab this opportunity with both hands and never let go of it. It is your key to life, both in terms of broadening options to life and furthermore enabling you as a citizen of this country to make a meaningful contribution”.

As part of the parade, the Dean of the Faculty Military Science, Prof Samuel Tshehla, read the Military Academy Code of Honour to the students. Next to him is Brig Gen Lawrence Mbatha, Commandant Military Academy.
The evening of 28 January saw first-year students and staff of the Military Academy (Faculty of Military Science) attending the Academic Opening for 2016. The unit was privileged to have Prof Nico Koopman, Vice Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel from Stellenbosch University as the guest speaker.

Prof Koopman reminded the students that they had come to the Military Academy to help build dignity for humans, animals and plants. He said that they also came here to build comprehensive human security and peace in South Africa, the continent and globally. He said: “We make a commitment that you will grow in knowledge, values and skills for the common good of South Africa and the rest of Africa - so that they can be served by you. You come with your focus on the common good – on yourselves, yes, but for the well-being of others and in the spirit of UBUNTU and let humanity and nature flourish.”

He told the students that the Military Academy and Stellenbosch University wanted their graduates “to be thought leaders”. They must know that analysis does not lead to paralysis, but it encourages them to address problems and overcome the immense challenges that they faced. Prof Koopman added: “We also want you to be dynamic leaders – people that are not happy with mediocrity, but who want to give their best and make distinctive contributions, excel and give their best in all respects.” And lastly they should go away as “lifelong learners”. The students must not only have their degrees, but they must always say I am curious, I want to be involved in continuous education programmes and I will always learn.

Prof Koopman concluded by informing the students that they would succeed in their studies and live constructive lives if three things materialised in their lives – three Greek words: Firstly, Logos, which means word/logic/knowledge, thus love your disciplines and be committed and make use of the support provided for you. Secondly, Ethos, which refers to ethics and the fact that we say that to study, is also an ethical choice, to build a new “habitat” for yourself and others. Thirdly, Athos, which refers to passion, love, commitment and energy to say you are thankful for this opportunity. This gives inspiration and meaning to your lives and lets you flourish in an unstoppable way.

Brig Gen Mbatha pledged that the Military Academy would remain committed as an institution irrespective of the challenges encountered and be focused and committed to our vision and mission. We wish the intake of 2016 a prosperous three years at the Military Academy.
Weight and weight loss

By Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA) on behalf of the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS)
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

There are many different reasons why people gain weight and are unable to shed unwanted kilos. These can vary from not being able to lose weight because you find it hard to resist good food, or perhaps you are unable to find a diet that works for you. Perhaps you are one of the many people who find comfort in eating.

Each of these factors may contribute to your inability to lose weight, but if you are more than 15 or 20 kilogrammes overweight, chances are there is more to it than that. Research indicates that 30% to 60% of people have a genetic predisposition to store an excessive amount of fat. Most people will be able to lose weight on the correct weight loss programme. The problem is just to find the diet that suits you and your personal needs the best. Why not call on your family practitioner for a little help? If needed, your doctor can refer you to a good dietician who can assist you with your food choices.

Why is it important to lose weight?

First and foremost it is important that you lose weight for yourself and to improve your personal self-esteem. But, this aside – obesity is associated with conditions such as high blood pressure and coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, gallbladder disease, several cancers, insulin resistance, and lower back pain. In addition, being significantly overweight can certainly impact your chances of survival if you were to undergo a major surgical procedure. Obesity may also hasten death in a number of people – in fact indications are that obesity will soon overtake smoking as the top cause of preventable death.

What does surgery to reverse obesity entail?

In gastric bypass surgery for weight loss, the surgeons effectively reduce the capacity of the stomach by sealing off some of it to create a small pouch at the top, to which the small intestine is attached.

This means that patients can only ingest a small quantity of food at a time. In addition, the first 150 cm of the small bowel will absorb less carbohydrates and fat while very important gut peptides regulating appetite stimulation will be altered to ensure that you feel full quicker.

It starts with you

It is important to understand that the responsibility in all of this starts and begins with you. If you were to undergo surgery to lose weight, you would have to follow an eating plan for the rest of your life, and will have to take supplements to ensure that you get adequate nutrition.

If you want to live a happy, healthy and productive life, consider changing the way you live today. Start exercising, walking and eating right and you will soon feel like a different person. Ditch the sweets, biscuits, cakes and fatty foods and rather choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fish and lean meat.

If you are really serious about weight loss, seek professional help from your doctor and dietician as soon as possible. Also remember, not all exercise costs money. Start by using the stairs, walking more and sitting less.
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Since 1918
Lieutenant Wheeler, you don’t have enough fuel for another circuit! You have to land NOW!” Peter Wheeler was at the stick of a Spitfire Mk IX. As a trained Harvard pilot, he was flying a Spitfire for the very first time. The plane was much nippier and more agile than a Harvard - Much more unforgiving.

Going round for the third time in an attempt to land in the fast and unfamiliar final approach speed of 110 mph, life was distilled in an adrenalin rush. He had to land, and he had to land now. It was literally “do or die”.

The year 1950 saw Peter recruited into the SA Air Force (SAAF) where he served with 5 Squadron in Durban. When offered the one-off chance to fly a World War II relic a few years later, he jumped at the opportunity, no matter how daunting it seemed at first. The memory of the Spitfire’s raw, brutal power continued to burn brightly throughout his piloting career and beyond, even when he left the Air Force and started his own business.

I met Peter on 6 December 2014 at the SAAF Museum Flying Day at Zwartkop. At 84 years of age, he is much older than the adventurous pilot he used to be. Still, the first thing that struck me were the embers of determination that still glowed as brightly as his interest in aircraft.

Accompanied by Colin O’Leary (also an ex-SAAF Transall pilot) they enjoyed the flying and static aircraft displays and visited the “Windsdok Restaurant” where I exhibited my artworks as a member of the SA Guild of Aviation, Military and Maritime Artists. The Zwartkop Scale Modellers presented a collection of scale models that portrayed the same subjects as the paintings.

Soon the conversation explored the origin of our respective aviation interests, whereupon Peter recaptured several events in his career as a pilot. Theo Burden, a member of the Zwartkop Scale Modellers and fellow aviation artist, aptly presented a newly completed scale model Spitfire. Beautifully crafted and depicted in an unusual foil-finish, his Spitfire is ablaze with intensity and imagination.

While Peter admired Theo’s scale model, he continued his recollection of that memorable day when he piloted a Spittie. Post-World War II, South Africa received a generous donation of 80 Spitfires from the Royal Air Force and purchased another 56. Most of them had been flown during the war itself, during which they had captured the admiration of all, German pilots included.

During the Battle of Britain in 1940, Spitfires played a key role – with the hard-nosed Hurricanes Mk I’s – in resisting the Luftwaffe. In the face of pending disaster, the Spitfire became the epitome of Britain’s resolve when the Royal Air Force was about 24 hours away from being annihilated by intensive German bombing raids on airfields and other strategic targets. Strangely enough, Hitler and Göring became Britain’s best allies in the moment of crisis when they switched the Luftwaffe’s bombing targets to cities. Notwithstanding the human tragedy, this provided the RAF with the opportunity to survive and recuperate. Yet the effect of the incessant counter-attacks by exhausted British pilots cannot be underestimated. It eventually led to the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the skies of the United Kingdom, saving thousands of civilian lives.

Today approximately 53 of these remarkable warbirds are still
airworthy worldwide, with the majority in the UK. Most countries started decommissioning their Spitfires within a decade after the war ended, South Africa included. It took about twenty years, and the gigantic efforts of restoration groups, to place two at the disposal of the SAAF Museum: “Evelyn” and “The Spirit of Reutech”.

Privately owned, but restored to flying status by Atlas Aircraft Corporation and passionate volunteers, “Evelyn” was regrettably exported in 1986 and sold to an American collector. Her name continues to ignite intense emotions among aviation enthusiasts, especially among those who were instrumental in her restoration.

“The Spirit of Reutech” was originally one of the RAF Spitfires acquired by South Africa in 1947. As TE 213, a Mk IXe (LF) from the Castle Bromwich production line, she was built during the last month of the war when European hostilities were drawing to a close. After the sale she was flown from Britain to Egypt and from there onwards down the African continent, to be taken on strength by the SAAF in August 1947 as Spitfire 5518.

On 25 June 1949 she was involved in a collision with another Spitfire and after repairs had been affected. She suffered a further incident two years later when she was flown into a drogue cable.

The resolution to decommission Spitfires in the SAAF service was made in April 1954 and, as a tribute to these fighter planes’ history within the Air Force, 5518 was displayed on pylons at Air Force Base Waterkloof for more than two decades.

November 1978 marked the moment when she had a new lease of life. She was transferred to the SAAF Museum. Subsequent to the sale of “Evelyn” in 1986, the restoration of 5518 was officially authorised in order to retain an airworthy, SAAF-owned Spitfire. This project forged ahead gradually until support from Reutech and Safmarine provided a fresh spark, and in 1993 Atlas Aircraft/Denel Aviation assumed responsibility for finalising the restoration. Two years later, on 28 September 1995, she was unveiled during the SAAF’s 75th Anniversary as “The Spirit of Reutech” 5553 AX-K. Close to ten years of restoration had ensured that Spitfire 5518 was flightworthy again.

Mechanical complications necessitated her being grounded from time to time in order for repairs to take place, but upon successful execution of these maintenance projects, she consistently graced the skies at various airshows.

On 15 April 2000 she suffered a disastrous engine malfunction during a SAAF Museum Flying Day and her pilot, Lt Col Neil Thomas, had to execute an emergency landing. He survived the crash with minor injuries, but Spitfire 5553/AX-K was badly damaged and confined to crates, and has awaited rebuilding ever since.

In order to change her fate once again, a new Spitfire Restoration Programme was launched. The Friends of the SAAF Museum and other entities are working together on this programme spearheaded by Col Tony Smit, Lt Col Clive Shepherd, Phil Scallan and Ian Grace.

Supporting this project, the PE-based aviation artist, Don Bell (another member of the SA Guild of Aviation, Military and Maritime Artists) donated an oil painting of the SAAF Spitfire AX-K 5553.

Signed, limited edition prints can be ordered directly from him for fund-raising purposes, and in the near future the official launch of this artwork will be hosted in collaboration with the Spitfire Restoration Group.

But why restore a derelict, time-worn aeroplane at great expense and immense effort? Because the same flame of grit and determination that fired her engine was burning in the hearts of war pilots, as well as in the hearts of post-war pilots like Peter Wheeler.

Its cinders are still burning in the hearts of aviation artists and in the hearts of aircraft restorer groups. Despite being bombarded by a culture of instant gratification and lesser hardships, it will burn in the hearts of our children ... if we keep its history alive.

So, for the sake of the next generation let us show them what has been done. Let us encourage them to participate in projects that are agonisingly tough. Let us inspire them to overcome and soar to even greater heights. Per aspera ad astra: “Through hardships to the stars” - the motto of the SA Air Force.
By Chaplain (Rev) John Coetzee, SA Naval College

Verse 22: Then He made the disciples get into the boat and precede Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds.

23: After doing so, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When it was evening He was there alone.

24: Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it.

25: During the fourth watch of the night, He came towards them, walking on the sea.

26: When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear.

27: But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid".

28: Peter said to Him in reply, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29: He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water towards Jesus.

30: But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord save me!"

31: Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

32: After they got into the boat, the wind died down.

33: Those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God."

The truths of the Bible do not make any sense to those who do not believe. In order for anyone to experience the fullness of the glory of God, such individual need to approach the Bible as the Word of God. Unless this is the case, we are bound to really miss the joy that He planned for us.

Take for example the preceding pericope. Here Jesus leaves His disciples alone for a short while. What the disciples do not know is that this is just a set up on His part to perform a miracle among them. At times we become awkwardly aware of the absence of our Lord and it tends to send us into a state of panic, not realising that in His perceived absence, He is busy orchestrating things to work together for our good.

Another point worthy of note is that, when we are in the Fourth Watch, the time when the night is at its darkest or in the midst of our panic and despair, when we believe that there is no way out, He turns up, out of nowhere to save the day. Even if, at times, we do not realise who it is, He will make Himself known: "It is I". He will not leave you in a state of confusion but you will know that it is He.

The moment we take our eyes off Him, we will surely sink. But because He is such a gracious God, slow to anger and quick to forgive, He will again pick us up and carry us to our destination. Peter cried: "Lord save me!" Immediately when He heard Peter’s cry, He stretched out His hand and caught Him.

You see my dear sisters and brothers; God does not share His glory with anyone. When you are through with your trials and tribulations, when you past the darkest of nights, you will find that there is only one thing you can do and that is to give all glory to God. In this pericope and at the end there-of, it is said: "Those who were in the boat worshipped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God."

It is my prayer that the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding will guard your hearts and minds in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.
The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) is one of the unique Services in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). What makes it unique is the composition of its personnel who are known for their innovation and initiative. These skills are crucial because these members hold fellow colleagues’ lives in their hands on a daily basis. This is a huge responsibility that requires focus and dedication.

The members must always be up to date with new systems and developments in the medical field. Members are therefore expected to be up to date and even better than their civilian counterparts. Having given this brief background, the next part of this article will focus on a SAMHS member who published his first senior management book.

Capt Thabiso Kheu is a social worker at 3 Military Hospital in Bloemfontein. In 2000 the member was stationed at Natal Medical Command at the Bluff. Later that year he was redeployed to 121 SA Infantry Battalion (121 SAI Bn) at Mtubatuba. The member was employed the field on the border at Pongola and Ndumu with his members. As we know, 121 SAI Bn is a deploying unit.

In 2001 the member was transferred to 3 Military Hospital at Bloemfontein. In 2002 he was among the first group that deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo under United Nations Operation MISTRAL. Because of the need to keep his knowledge up to date, the member registered the same year for a Postgraduate Diploma in social work supervision and management with the University of Free State.

The member obtained this qualification in 2004. In 2006 he obtained the higher certificate in human resources management with Intec College. The member’s thirst was still not quenched and later in 2011 he obtained his master’s degree, Master of Business Administration (MBA) with MANCOSA.

This is where it started because Capt Kheu was fascinated by the research skill he obtained during his studies. He continued with research and even mentored other students who were studying for the masters programme with other universities. In 2012 he obtained the Strategic Management certificate from Unisa. There were also other short online courses that the member studied.

In 2014 Capt Kheu obtained the Introduction to Financial Accounting certificate from the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. Early in 2015 he obtained another short course certificate, namely in Financial Modelling from the Academy of Financial Training in India.

Book publication

A wise man once said: The more you read the more you realise that you don’t know and the more it requires of you to work hard. The research became addictive for Capt Kheu and the desire to share this knowledge also became intense. While conducting research studies the member realised there was a gap in the senior management system and this aroused his curiosity to find the cause of this challenge which was a trend among senior managers. The title of his book is: “Becoming the best executive manager beyond the digital age”.

After three years of intensive research with masses of data to be critically analysed, the author came up with a well-produced product. It is a dynamic product because it covers the knowledge relevant to aspiring managers, senior managers and Information Technology managers. It also deals with business intelligence which is the digital version that has dominated the globe economically and in the security services.

An example of this is seen in the increase in managers’ utilisation of computer systems and social networks in decision-making. The advance forces in developed countries are also making use of these digital systems during their military operations. So this book strives to sharpen the current management group and ensures that future senior managers do not repeat previous mistakes. Many people, especially senior managers, are too busy to read long books. However, this book is portable and easy to read. It can easily be carried anywhere you want to go.

“It’s not what we do once in a while that counts, but our habitual actions what ultimately determines who we become and where we go in life is our decision. These decisions shape our destiny.” - Anthony Robbins
Medicinal myths and a lack of care for our natural environment will be the forces behind the extinction of this magnificent animal.

The South African National Defence Force is a pillar in the reactive physical campaign being fought against poaching on the ground and in the skies. We also engage in proactive educational campaigns to spread awareness about the intrinsic value of this magnificent animal.

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