FREE ... But pass it on when you are done

SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIER

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The SA National Defence Force involvement with the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo had a 100% helicopter capability Composite Helicopter Unit serviceability. (Photo by Capt Kenny Black)

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COPYRIGHT: No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced without the written consent of the Editor.
SA Soldier recently lost one of its devoted and trustworthy Editorial Committee members, Col Shuping Andries “Cappy” Motswadira. The untimely passing of Col Motswadira, Senior Staff Officer Defence Reserves Promotions, came as a great shock. His presence and valuable inputs will be dearly missed during future SA Soldier Editorial Committee meetings.

During a memorial service held at Thaba Tshwane City Hall on 2 August 2017 various speakers acknowledged his selflessness and integrity. They described him as a humble, hard-working and giving person. He will be remembered as a man of many positive characteristics who inspired the culture of togetherness.

The Chief of Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, who worked with the late Col Motswadira said that his death was a devastating loss to the Defence Reserves and the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) as a whole. He said that the late Col Motswadira had a major impact on the Defence Reserves and the youth of South Africa. Maj Gen Andersen added: “Nothing was too much for Cappy. He was modest and down to earth.” May his soul rest in peace.

In this edition we pay homage to an international global icon, the late Mr Nelson Mandela, the first Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF. On International Mandela Day members of the SANDF dedicated 67 Minutes in making a difference in various ways.

The Military Command Council joined forces with members from the Logistics Division in dedicating their 67 Minutes by painting, tiling, plastering, replacing old building materials, removing rubble and cleaning the SA Forces Institute (SAFI) Business Centre in Thaba Tshwane (see pages 16 and 17).

Also read articles on pages 5, 11, 36 and 37).

International Mandela Day encourages every person to make the world a better place every day. Each year on this day people worldwide reflect back on what has been done, and perform good deeds in celebrating Madiba’s legacy in a sustainable way to bring about lasting change.

Let us strive to make every day a Mandela Day.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) celebrated International Mandela Day at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane by giving support and recognition to the retired members of the SANDF.

The Chairperson of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke (middle, front row), with the Forum members with the blankets that were presented to the retired SANDF members.

During the event Military Veterans underwent medical consultations with regard to their well-being. The retired members of the SANDF underwent various medical examinations, such as blood pressure and blood sugar levels and their body mass index (BMI) were determined.

The event was hosted by the Chairperson of the Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke, who mentioned that Mr Nelson Mandela once said that people should take care of one another. Another thoughtful gesture that happened on the event was the donation of blankets to SANDF retired members in honouring International Mandela Day. The hall was filled with laughter and smiles of elderly people as they ascended the stage and smiled while they took pictures as they were handed their colourful blankets.

A medical officer conducting a medical examination on the Chairperson of the SA National Defence Force Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke.

A day to give back

By Ms Beauty Pinga
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) celebrated International Mandela Day at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane by giving support and recognition to the retired members of the SANDF.

The Chairperson of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Spouses Forum, Ms Charlotte Shoke (middle, front row), with the Forum members with the blankets that were presented to the retired SANDF members.
For 20 years I am serving in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) still as a Rifleman. I joined the military in 1994. I changed many different companies at 14 SA Infantry Battalion (14 SAI Bn).

I want to tell the members serving like me that it is not nice and easy to study, it is a very big challenge but manageable. I did it, you can do it. To have what it takes to succeed at Distance Learning: diligence, determination, self-sacrifice, and commitment. I started at Unisa 12 years ago. Some years I had to deploy as I have a family to support and the first born is at currently at university.

Patience, dedication, responsibility are needed when you want to achieve your goals. Endurance and resistance are important to face all the challenges of the world. To be realistic it is not easy to study as a soldier, more especially as a Rifleman. I had to work hard to achieve something. I learnt never to stress myself about something that I do not have control over, I just take a deep breath and move on. Sometimes it hurts and I acted as if I am okay. My belief was: “strong walls shake but never fall”. I acted like a wounded tiger that was more powerful and strong. I stood tall and looked forward to more success ahead. I understood that the devil added a full stop next to my name long ago, but God began a new sentence for me.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: “Be the change you want to see in the world”. Life is not about pleasing everybody. All the stones that were thrown to me, I collected them and built this house of success: “Me, myself and I”. Thanks to all those that played a part in my life - positively or negatively. My friends, colleagues, my schoolmates, my supervisors, my facilitators, my coordinators, the civilian social workers who supported me when I encountered crises at work, I thank all the ladies and gentlemen. I cannot forget my wife who always supported me spiritually and her prayers had put me to be whom and where I am today. As a Rogerian

I believe that people can do things for themselves (Person Centred Approach). People are important. We as facilitators cannot change people; instead we facilitate change by creating a relation with the people and this relation makes the client changes from within. Power is shared (taken from the ideas of Carl Rogers, 1902-1987).

I like the idea of Robert Chambers in his book Rural Development: putting the last first. He said that we have the community and professionals. The professionals are not the only experts, but should listen and learn from the community. Both the professionals and the community are experts in their fields. The community can do things that the professionals cannot do and have skills that the professionals do not have.

I also believe that people are not ignorant. Knowledge needs to be shared. Pte Solomzi Nqumama, 14 SA Infantry Battalion

LET’S GIVE CREDIT TO 2 SAI BN AND THE SANDF AS A WHOLE

Over the years 2 SA Infantry Battalion (2 SAI Bn) has sustained excellency when discharging the organisational duties and responsibilities when they are called upon and has always served the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the people of South Africa with distinctions. All of its success was guided by the Battalion’s commitment to comply and act within the provided law, guidance and provisions of the SANDF. This is a battalion formerly known as 32 Battalion which conquered Angola and Namibia during colonial wars in the late 70’s, 80’s and 90’s before its relocation to Zeerust (North West) in 1998 and ultimately changed its name from 32 Battalion to 2 SAI Bn. For over the years 2 SAI Bn has deployed both internal and external and continued to represent South Africa so well. On its deployments, particularly internal, 2 SAI Bn hold notable credentials of marvellous work success which remains unbroken by other South African battalions on the borderline.

2 SAI Bn remains the only battalion in South Africa to have confiscated contraband products with an estimated value of R30 million, such as cigarettes, and the smuggling of clothes and cars on the South Africa/Zimbabwe border in only six months from March to September 2014, and have arrested more than 6 000 undocumented migrants. As they always commit on their duties, 2 SAI Bn broke another record on another internal deployment. This time it was at Macadamia (Mpumalanga) from September 2015 to April 2016 where they managed to arrest more than 5 000 undocumented migrants and confiscated dagga, smuggled clothes, cars and contraband worth an estimated R5 5 million.

Just when you think it is finished; this same battalion was chosen as the best battalion in Africa after successfully opening a United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) 2003 and operated with distinction and diligence.

So with all these successes I would like to wish 2 SAI Bn a successful Operation CORONA mission in Musina (Limpopo) on the South Africa/ Zimbabwe border where they are going to participate from September to March 2018, and also to encourage them to continue with the great job they are doing in South Africa. As a member of the SANDF and a citizen of this country I salute them. Rfn Swangi Maswanganyi, 2 SA Infantry Battalion, Zeerust

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

The event happened recently at the SA Air Force Gymnasium, Air Force Base Hoedspruit Limpopo Province. More than 150 members of the SA Air Force Gymnasium including those undergoing training received the lectures.

According to the organisers, the main focus of the campaign was to make members aware of the diseases, how to prevent them, compliance and taking precautionary measures on how to manage those diseases.

In addition, the Commander mentioned that the campaign was targeted to benefit both the uniformed members and the defence civilians working at the base. He urged members of the base to attend the lectures for their benefit. He ended by thanking the Officer Commanding SA Air Force Gymnasium, Col Riaan van Wyk, and the Management for a warm reception received from members of the Unit.

According to Lt Molobane Moloto (Health Care Nurse), almost all sections of the Health Centre were represented:

- Dietary (Capt Mmgotudume Lewele)
- Psychology (Capt Tsakane Rikhotso)
- Social Work (Lt Emmanuel Moalusi)
- Biokinetics (Capt Themba Mgwenya)
- Dental (Dr Kingsley Engelbrecht and 2Lt Adolphinah Mokwetlo)
- Medical (Lt Nthabiseng Seshoka and Lt Marika Tomlison)
- and the Physiotherapist Section (Rhaaynan Alexander).

Lt Moloto said they have achieved their objective and therefore thanked the team for a successful campaign.

He said the campaign will continue until the end of the year. Capt Lewele who represented the dietary section mentioned that she is responsible to provide advice regarding food base dietary guidelines to all South Africans from the age group of five years and older with the aim to promote healthy food for healthy living. For those who wanted to enjoy a healthy living, she advised them to follow these guidelines: enjoy a variety of food, make starchy food to form part of most meal.

The following could be eaten daily:
- fish, chicken, lean meat and eggs.
- Have milk, maas and yogurt every day, eat plenty of vegetables and fruits every day,
- eat dry beans, split peas, lentils and soya regularly.
- Use salt and fat sparingly,
- and choose vegetable oil rather than animal fats.

Good nutrients are what the body need; a healthy meal makes the body healthy. Reduce your risks of obesity which could lead to: diabetics, high blood pressure, heart disease and certain types of cancer. Use sugar and fizzy drinks containing sugar sparingly. Drink clean safe water and remain active, she said.

According to Lt Moalusi (Social Work Officer), the campaign provided an excellent opportunity for him to make a meaningful presentation on substance abuse, which affects the lives of the youth on a daily basis.

The presentation by Lt Moalusi was aimed at providing a general overview on raising awareness of substance abuse.

Lt Mokwetlo, commonly known as “Ado”, together with Dr Engelbrecht represented the Dental Section. According to Ado their awareness was focused on oral health promotion, while educating members on the correct use of brushing and flossing techniques and the common oral diseases and the prevention thereof. Lt Seshoka and Lt Tomlisen represented the Medical section, while covering the issue of HIV and Aids diseases and the prevention thereof. Lt Thomas Mulauzzi, SA Air Force Gymnasium, Air Force Base Hoedspruit

SA ARMY SHOWCASES ITS PACE STICK DRILL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Riding in a London cab, visiting the Big Ben, taking a photo in front of Buckingham Palace, walking over the London Bridge, buying food from a street stall … my bucket list when going to London in the United Kingdom (UK), England. The six Sergeant-Majors from 3 SA Infantry Battalion and Training Formation also had a bucket list, but definitely not the same as mine. Theirs were to showcase their best pace stick drills and to keep the flag of the SA Army flying high. They succeeded in doing so.

The pace stick team from 3 SA Infantry Battalion represented the SA Army in the 2017 Pace Stick Competition in London. They obtained second position behind the champions of the Bahrain Army. Twenty-three armies from around the world participate in this competition.

The team has been the SA Army champions five times in pace stick and in representing the country in the UK. Not only is the Griffin’s flag flying high in South Africa, but also in the UK.

Well done Griffin Family!

Capt Melindie Tidbury,
3 SA Infantry Battalion
COL NATION MOKGWABONE HAS A NATIONAL AGENDA

Col Nation Mokgwabone, also known as Dj Nation is a young man who is a soldier in the SA Air Force (SAAF), and young man with charitable blood in him. Dj Nation was born on 8 May 1979 in the small town Taung in the North West Province. He is on a quest to uplift the lives of people in his home town. He speaks deliberately, with a commanding tone, belying from where in South Africa he hails.

“I completed my Grade 12 at P.H. Moreesiti Agricultural High School in 1996 in Taung, and in that year we had a visit from blue wearing uniform people. At first I thought they were police officers. No, they were soldiers from the Air Force coming to tell us about various careers available for us in their organisation. The following year, 13 January 1997, I joined the SAAF,” he says.

Col Mokgwabone is sitting in a reclining posture, left leg on the floor, the right one resting on the bench in front as we chat in the stadium seats. He smiles as his mother keeps calling. She is there to witness him take command of the Air Force Command and Control School formally. One can tell they are very close from how he talks to her. “Sorry for that, it was my mother I had to answer,” says Col Mokgwabone.

He continues to talk about his military career. “In 1999 I went for my Officer Formative Training. In that time Basic Military Training was still in me and I was fit physically, but the officer’s course is totally different and demanding,” says Mokgwabone. Col Mokgwabone started training as an Air Traffic Controller in the SAAF in 2000.

In 2004 he was selected to attend an Approach Control Course that was presented in South Korea. Col Mokgwabone has worked at Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof as an ATC. He was also an ATC at AFB Makhado. “When I left AFB Makhado I was transferred to Air Force Command and Control School between 2005 and 2010 as an Air Traffic Control Instructor.”

In 1994 when the late Commander-in-Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), Nelson Mandela, was inaugurated as the first black president the majority of citizens were happy. It was an historic moment that is still being talked about over 21 years later.

“I still remember the day in January 2011 when I was transferred to AFB Waterkloof as the first black Chief Air Traffic Controller in the SAAF,” he says. He speaks of the achievement with an air of humility.

“Most of my time is taken up by what I must do for the next person. This evening (30 March 2017) I will be officially taking over command of the Air Force Command and Control School, I am the OC, an OC that will shine with his subordinates. My subordinates will take up most of my time, I am used to people taking up most of my time,” says Col Mokgwabone.

At work he is Col Nation Mokgwabone, and when he takes off the uniform he transforms into DJ Nation, the pride of not only Taung but the entire North West Province. DJ Nation is well known across South Africa and has people dancing to his deep house music in Botswana into the early hours of the morning.

DJ Nation in not only a soldier, DJ Nation is not only a Dj, DJ Nation is more, more to the people of Taung, more to the people of South Africa. At South African Prisons they know him. “I have been to the Tshvelopele Correctional Centre, the warders know me, and the inmates know me very well. Being in prison is not acceptable,” he says. DJ Nation enjoys visiting prisons to motivate inmates about life. He makes time to go into prison, a place that many fear, to give motivational talks, play music for inmates and give out essentials that inmates use on a daily basis.

Social issues in his community must have drawn him into community involvement. Taung is not a well-developed village. The people of the village struggle to identify with role models in their neighbourhood because there are not many. “I started helping others from a young age and I loved music from a young age. My father had lots of vinyl records. They are still around today.”

He hosts the Dj Nation Annual Bash in Taung to celebrate life and collect funds for his many activities and for various outreach programs he runs. “My annual bash works for the people of Taung and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Party lovers look forward to the music, street vendors look forward to making money, everyone comes looking for something at the bash. I look forward to making people dance, moreover I love what the bash gives me to pass on to others,” he says.

The Dj Nation Annual Bash attracts people of different ages, races and unites people of the SADC. In December 2017 it will be in its 6th edition and each year the event gathers over 15 000 people. The Dj Nation Annual Bash attracts internationally acclaimed Dj’s and musicians including Black Coffee, Christos, Glen Lewis, Ralf Gum, Louis

REPUTATION

A reputation is the opinion that generally holds sway about a person. Guard your reputation with all your being. It matters not what your rank or job title is within your workplace within the Department of Defence and in life in general, adhere to the rules and regulations. Be a reputable person and move South Africa forward.

Sct Simon Moela,
SA Army Intelligence Corps
Vega, Casper Nyovest and Monique Bingham.

“In 2016 I was amazed when one woman came to me and said she has made R40 000 as a vendor. My quest is to get kids off the streets. The money from the bash I use to pay University fees for students, some currently at University of Witwatersrand, I buy school uniforms and shoes. The proceeds also attend to the sensitive issue of sanitary pads,” he says.

Moreover, Dj Nation is well on his way to being a community builder and humanitarian to the people of Taung. Col Mokgwabone, Dj Nation, is not a man that boasts about what his life is about. It does not come as a surprise that very few soldiers know he is a Dj and community builder, and very few party animals know he is a soldier, but a lot of needy people know he is nation builder. Earlier this year Dj Nation bought fences for the local cemetery in Taung after he saw the sad state it was in.

Furthermore, Dj Nation bought paint and he and team painted the Taung Hospital. “I am inspired by people that started from nothing to now being heroes and game changers in the poorest villages across the world,” he says.

Many may have expected Dj Nation to be despondent and not care about the nuclear family and his community. “I am from a family of three children and both my parents are still here and together. Me and my siblings are close and love each other; each family has its own dynamics,” he says.

About his childhood his mother says: “Nation was a boy who used to detest going to church, but I did force him to go and like a child with respect he then went without complaining. His father (Mr Isaac Mokgwabone) taught him to listen and respect others; he has a giving hand; a giving hand taught not to expect anything in return.

My family believes in prayer for everything we do.” She is a former law enforcement officer herself with the South African Police Services (SAPS). “We are from the dusty streets of Taung, it is a hot area. Grass and green trees were foreign to us but our life through our son is forever in greener fields,” says Mr Mokgwabone (father).

“I believe Nation is very troubled by the youth of today; when they forget where they come from. Once they get a break in life, they quickly forget where they came from. I am not saying our children must be living and dying in villages but while they are in lavish homes they must know, home will always be home,” says Mr Mokgwabone.

letters to the editor

Col Orapetse Nation Mokgwabone, Dj Nation, is a man serving the nation in many ways. He treats people fairly and with respect. He respects and supports others. He carries out his many missions with courage. Dj Nation has the courage to assist people he does not know and might never meet again. His pledge is to the people of South Africa. He is a selfless human being, and he does not invoice people in the community for what he gives them. He treats everyone fairly. “Everyone is a priority in my life,” says Dj Nation.

“In the military I am inspired by all soldiers that are passing on their knowledge to juniors without resistance. My role models in the entertainment are Louie Vega, Vinny da Vinci and Christos. I am a growing person, I know where I want to be, I will get there, and I will sit in the league of my role models,” he says.

“Family is important, I am from a small family, but it is a united family. I have a sister (Renellwe) and brother (Letlhogonolo). I am blessed with one beautiful daughter Kagoentle (Letlhogonolo). I am inspired by people that started from nothing to now being heroes and game changers in the poorest villages across the world,” he says.

The SA National Defence (SANDF) soldiers were externally deployed on various missions such as Operation CORDITE in the Sudan and Operation MISTRAL in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These missions were primarily aimed at peacekeeping.

Operation CORDITE was halted in 2016 due to a strategic/political rationale. At this stage, SANDF soldiers are still deployed as part of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC. The FIB is comprised of various Forces which includes forces such as the Malawan and Tanzanian Defence Forces. The mandate of the FIB is to enforce peace in the DRC as the result of rebel groups fighting each other and the DRC government.

The FIB under command of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) is mandated to intervene in this volatile situation which also endangers the local community of the DRC. SANDF soldiers are always psychologically and mentally prepared to be deployed to these life threatening missions.

These soldiers put their lives at risk because peace enforcement requires them to open fire when the need arises. They abandon their lovely families for a period of approximately twelve months and live their lives on foreign soil. Our fellow soldiers leave their families, who require protection and affection from them, behind but they avail themselves for assignments by their country.

They are willing to spend their time in a country where they do not enjoy privileges which they usually get in their own country. They are sometimes struck by devastations because of the lengthy distance between them and their families, but they remain resilient, dedicated and committed, willing to proceed, serving their RSA in any given condition and at any time.

The SANDF only compensates these soldiers with allowances which are not proportional to the effort exerted by these fellow soldiers. The SANDF compensates these soldiers with danger, special danger, standby, International Daily Obligation and Deprivation allowances.

These allowances amount to approximately R25 000 per month, and the SANDF deducts a sustainment allowance which was paid in advance to these soldiers. The SANDF should revise the allowances paid to these soldiers as they deserve more than what they currently are compensated with. Our fellow soldiers are performing optimally and deserve to be compensated reasonably for their efforts.

Capt Mondi Chaba,
Directorate Army Human Resources

ALLOWANCES ADJUSTMENT FOR PEACE ENFORCERS DEPLOYED ON EXTERNAL MISSIONS

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S A S O L D I E R  •  V O L  2 4  N O  7  2 0 1 7
SA Air Force officer impresses Chief of Military Aviation in the Democratic Republic of Congo

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

The SA Air Force aviation support is acknowledged by the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) deployment as they continue to record successes in the mission areas in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Lt Col Rammy Molebaloa is the Commander of the RSA Composite Helicopter Unit and has gained recognition from Lt Col Taras Syplyvyi, the Force Headquarters (FHQ) Chief of Military Aviation of MONUSCO.

Lt Col Molebaloa is posted as the Commander of the RSA Composite Helicopter Unit since November 2016. He is responsible for the planning, managing, coordinating, controlling and utilising of Helicopters of the RSA Composite Helicopter Unit and Unit Staff within MONUSCO.

He said: “I joined the SA Air Force in 2003 from the SA Navy where I was a submariner, I completed my pilot training in 2005 then did my pilot instructors course in 2006 where I gave flying instruction for 4 years before finally transferring to Air Force Base Waterkloof 41 Squadron where I am currently flying the C 208 and the BE20.”

He said the highlights of the deployment was when they had to go for a combat search and rescue of the downed Armed Forces of the DRC Mi 24 attack helicopters in the volcano mountains next to the Rwanda border. “Seeing all 8 helicopters being serviceable and ready to fly for the first time in the history of OP MISTRAL and actually seeing them flying in the historic 8 helicopter stack and working under the Command of Lt Gen Derick Mgwedi is on its own an honour and inspiration.”

Lt Col Molebaloa said he has also deployed to OPS Copper in Pemba Mozambique. He said the experience was life changing when he saw and learnt how other people live and the potential the African continent has. He believes the unnecessary suffering of innocent civilians cannot go on while nothing is done.

The Force Headquarters (FHQ) Chief of Military Aviation of MONUSCO, Lt Col Syplyvyi said he is impressed by Lt Col Molebaloa’s logical planning and extraordinary coordinating abilities when working with FHQ and the Military Aviation Cell for the requisite operations within MONUSCO. He said that he has demonstrated impressive job knowledge and an exceptional ability to adapt in a multicultural environment.

Lt Col Syplyvyi indicated that Lt Col Molebaloa is a keen team player in coordinating day to day joint operations with Military International Air Components as directed and instructed by the Military Aviation Cell and is instrumental in maintaining the efficient flow of information.

He said: “During his tour of duty the officer has demonstrated a very high standard of professional skills, dedication which has certainly contributed to the efficiency of the RSA Composite Helicopter Unit. With his ingenuity, he is able to effectively complete assignments in a highly convincing manner.

Through his hard work, maturity, dedication and sincerity to the service he has projected a positive image of Staff Officer of the United Nations. He is an excellent ambassador for his country, devoted and contributing to world peace.”
International Mandela Day is an annual day to honour Nelson Mandela, and is celebrated each year on 18 July, on his birthday. The day was officially declared by the United Nations in November 2009 with the first UN Mandela Day held on 18 July 2010. Mandela Day is not meant as a public holiday, but as a day to honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela, South Africa’s former President, and his values, through volunteering and community service.

The SA National Defence Force, as one of the contingents deployed in the DRC, took the opportunity in their busy schedule of peacekeeping in the DRC to help Bethsaida orphanage centre that is based in the Sake area with a theme of fighting against poverty. Bethsaida orphanage centre was started in 2005 by a local doctor with 16 children with the aim of helping children who do not have a place to stay after their parents were killed or some left the country. The orphanage centre currently has 55 children (30 girls and 25 boys).

The RSA Battalion deployed in Sake decided to fight against poverty by starting a vegetable garden for the orphanage centre for the children so that it could sustain them for the rest of their lives.

Lt Col Dibuwe Tigele, RSA Force Intervention Brigade Battalion Commander Operation MISTRAL XXV, appreciated his members for the efforts that the members put to the DRC; “I would like to thank members who made this day possible and making sure that we uphold the UN mandate by helping people of DRC because they need us,” he said.

Lt Col Dibuwe Tigele smiling after handing over clothes to needy kids in Sake.

LEFT: Members of 5 SA Infantry Battalion planting sweet potatoes after cleaning the garden.

LEFT: Cpl Mamohube Phasha dishing up a meal to an orphan on Mandela Day.
SA National Defence Force leadership visits deployed South African soldiers

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) under the leadership of the Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo, recently visited our deployed soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Lt Gen Hlatshwayo and his delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) Headquarters.

The SANDF delegation was welcomed by the Head of the FARDC delegation, Maj Gen John Nyembo-Ngoy, and the Chief of Operations of the FARDC, Maj Gen Nabyolwa Prosper.

Maj Gen Prosper also indicated that they mainly utilise female soldiers in support roles and they were putting measures in place to encourage inclusion of women in the decision-making bodies of the FARDC. Currently the FARDC has three female Brigadier Generals.

The Chief of Joint Operations took the opportunity to explain the purpose of his visit. Lt Gen Hlatshwayo said: “Over and above visiting our troops based in your country under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission, it is in our interest to find out if FARDC has any challenges or concerns related to the peacekeeping efforts that we as the SANDF should address.” Lt Gen Hlatshwayo assured the FARDC that the SANDF would always be willing and ready to assist the DRC to achieve peace and stability.

The SANDF delegation visited the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) Western Brigade Commander, Ghanian Contingent Commander, Brig Gen Irvine Ayeetey.

(MONUSCO) Western Brigade Commander, Ghanian Contingent Commander, Brig Gen Irvine Ayeetey, and the SANDF Specialised Contingent (SANDFSPCC) – Western Brigade in Kinshasa. Brig Gen Ayeetey briefed the SANDF delegation about his area of
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, says the Defence Force Service Commission will continue to undertake visits to the various units of the SA National Defence Force as these have yielded positive results.

The following day the delegation where briefed by the Chief G5, Lt Col Bev Allen, at the MONUSCO Headquarters in Goma about the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) mission, the area of responsibility, intelligence update and current FIB situation.

The delegation also visited the FIB HQ in Beni where the SANDF component is deployed. Col Monwabisi Dyakopu, the FIB Deputy Commander who is also the RSA Contingent Commander, briefed them on its area of responsibility, various challenges and successes. Thereafter they visited the commanders from Sake and Munigi Base gathered at the RSA Composite Helicopter Unit based at the Goma Airport. Lt Col Gabriel Blie, Officer Commanding Aviation Unit, and Lt Col Constance Tlhaole, Officer Commanding RSA Engineer Squadron, gave presentations on the various aspects of their deployment, which included challenges, successes and the humanitarian projects they were involved in.

During all site visits Lt Gen Hlatshwayo and his accompanying Generals addressed the soldiers. In his address Lt Gen Hlatshwayo advised the deployed members to be disciplined, professional and vigilant and to always be responsible in handling their equipment. The Chief of Joint Operations emphasised that the deployed soldiers, regardless of their gender, must
SA
Soldier

news from abroad

The Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo and the OC RSA Engineer Squadron, Lt Col Constance Tlhaole, listens to Insight Secure Company Branch Manager, Mr Abbas Dbouk, at the Munigi base RSA contingent base explains the repair he has done on a component of the jackhammer.

The Officer Commanding RSA Engineer Squadron, Lt Col Constance Tlhaole, and Chief Director Transformation Management, Maj Gen Elsie Mahlangu, with the children of the adopted Nyiragongo Red Cross Orphanage.

on certain days of the week. They also supply hygienically consumable water to the villages and clinics. In addition, they also assist sick children by paying for their medical fees.

A team of various humanitarian experts in different fields has been established to profile the children in the orphanage and creating a database for each child with the hope that most children can be reunited with their displaced families or next-of-kin.

On International Mandela Day, the SA Ambassador to the DRC together with SANDFSPECC extended Madiba’s legacy and spirit of UBUNTU through gardening, cooking and overall cleaning at the hospital and Matumayini Orphanage. The day was sponsored by the DRC based South African companies: Vodacom, PG Glass, Standard Bank and Pretoria Portland Cement.

take serious cognisance of not violating the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy. He further indicated the dire consequences of those who would be found guilty of contravening this policy. He encouraged them to observe the correct channels of command and control of reporting grievances.

The SANDF deployed soldiers not only assist the DRC in keeping peace and stability they also build and improve infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Furthermore, they improve the lives of local children by building schools and when necessary renting new schools, starting and teaching locals about sustainable vegetable gardening, assisting with food to malnourished children and offering shoes to children.

The RSA Engineer Squadron under the command of Lt Col Tlhaole has adopted a Red Cross Orphanage in their area of responsibility, where they provide food on certain days of the week. They also supply hygienically consumable water to the villages and clinics. In addition, they also assist sick children by paying for their medical fees.

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LEFT: The General Officer Commanding SA Army Infantry Formation, Maj Gen Rudzani Maphwanya, Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo and Officer Commanding RSA Engineer Squadron, Lt Col Constance Tlhaole at the adopted Nyiragongo Red Cross Orphanage.
Defence Minister hands over Mobile Laboratories to empower Rural Schools

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, in partnership with the Armament Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR) and the University of Fort Hare (UFH) officially handed over mobile science experiments laboratories to rural learners in the Eastern Cape to mark the Nelson Mandela International Day recently.

This significant occasion is in line with the values that Tata Mandela espoused, as evidenced by his contribution in the country and expressed in one of his quotes that “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. In response to challenges confronting education in the country, ARMSCOR embarked on a nationwide partnership with schools and institutions of higher learning to explore ways of assisting teachers to acquire the necessary skills and encourage learners to take up and perform better in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

In July 2016, ARMSCOR collaborated with UFH to educate and create awareness about maintenance and development of defence capability. To further stimulate and create interest in learning STEM subjects, students were offered extra lessons every Saturday, as part of the Learner Intervention Programme (LIP). It is envisaged that the ripple effect of the programme will result in a high matric pass rate.

“I am happy to have partnered with ARMSCOR to reach out to rural schools in this programme, we are encouraging young learners in the country to study STEM subjects to meet the needs of the defence force of today – engineers, doctors in the military health service, scientists, etc.” said the Minister. The programme has so far yielded positive results as over 520 learners from 40 schools around Bisho and Alice have benefitted. Such strides will make science and engineering attractive to learners as career options.

Speaking at the event, Armscor CEO Mr. Kevin Wakeford, indicated that strong nations rely on strong defence industry that requires highly skilled scientists and engineers to ultimately forge a strong industrial nation. He also commended the ARMSCOR board, Executive and staff members for making the programme a success.

“This is not a donation, but a joint commitment and an effort to invest in our people and in the future of the country.” said Mr Wakeford.

Consequently, this programme will ensure that learners in rural and remote areas have an equal opportunity to be empowered to reach their full potential. Based on the success of this initiative in the Eastern Cape, it is envisaged that the programme will be rolled-out to other provinces. The total investment from Armscor to the UFH Programmes amounts to over R7 Million.

The Defence Minister cautioned learners and teachers to seize opportunities available not only in the defence industry but in various fields that require scarce skills. She further expressed her wish for the University to introduce a course in military science in line with the caliber of defence cadres required for the future. She also requested that some of the learners be invited to be part of the upcoming Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (AAD 2018) Youth Development Programme. AAD 2018 will take place next year from 19-23 September at the Waterkloof Air Force Base. This programme is one of Armscor’s initiatives that reflect the organisation’s resolve to engage in meaningful interventions to create long term sustainable investment in the lives of those that are less fortunate. The spirit of giving is set to continue beyond Mandela day to seamlessly resonate with the call to make every day a Mandela Day.
67 Minutes dedicated to making a difference

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Pte Paul Mpangala

As part of International Mandela Day, the Military Command Council, under the leadership of Gen Solly Shoke, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, together with members from Logistics Division, dedicated their 67 minutes painting, tiling, plastering, replacing old building materials, removing rubble and cleaning the SA Forces Institute (SAFI) Business Centre in Thaba Tshwane.

The theme: “Take Action-Inspire Change
Make Every day a Mandela Day. It encourages us every day to make the world a better place.

The Director Institutions and Funds/General Manager SA Force Institute, Brig Gen Mzikayise Tyhalisi (third from left), briefing members of the Military Command Council (MCC) on some of the renovations that were carried out at SAFI Business Centre in Thaba Tshwane.

SA National Defence Force members doing their 67 minutes for Madiba cleaning front entrance of the Business Centre next to SA Force Institute (SAFI) in Thaba Tshwane.

LEFT: The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, expressed his appreciation and admiration for the work done as part of Mandela Day.

Each year on 18 July we reflect back on what has been done, and forward to what will be done celebrating Madiba’s legacy in a sustainable way that will bring about
Members busy with construction work doing damage repairs.

enduring change. The General Officer Commanding of Defence Works Formation, Maj Gen Joseph Ledwaba said that the construction projects taking place at the Thaba Tshwane Business Centre is the brainchild of Gen Solly Shoke’s Project LEBAKA when he was still the Chief of the SA Army then and was conceived to address the poor state of Defence facilities, improve infrastructure development, living conditions of SANDF members and other refurbishment projects. 

Brig Gen Mzikayise Tyhalisi, Director Institutions and Funds/General Manager SA Force Institute took members on a tour around the SAFi business centre to see the on-going renovation projects. He highlighted that part of the construction and renovations that were carried out included replacing the old building materials, improving the broken, damaged and outdated materials, water damage repairs, steel structures, new floor tiles and paintings, adding value and creating a more conducive environment.

Gen Shoke was impressed with the good work done by Defence Works Formation and when addressing members who took part in Mandela Day, highlighted the importance of celebrating this day and the need for people to come together to do good in honour of the legacy of Tata Madiba.

He mentioned that the objective of this day is to help change the world for the better by contributing 67 minutes through participation in various humanitarian activities, community outreach and engagement initiatives. He said “Of course, it doesn’t just have to be 18 July only, you could do well throughout the year tending to those less fortunate and supporting a good cause.

He also stressed the importance of taking care of our military facilities and taking responsibility for the cleanliness of our surrounding environment.

Gen Shoke thanked all members for making Mandela Day a success and suggested that the SANDF needs to start “Project VUKUZENZELE” and he would like to see an increased involvement of Services and Divisions. 

LEFT: Renovations that were carried out included replacing the old outdated, broken and damaged materials.
30 Years of distinguished and loyal service awarded

When your dedication and service is appreciated and someone recognises that you did a good job and says thank you and well done, it can make all the difference in the world.

Recently, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force Medal Parade was held at Army Support Base Limpopo in Polokwane, where Lt Gen Lindile Yam, the Chief of the SA Army, congratulates the medal recipients who distinguished themselves through their long service of 30 years.

SA Army was the main functionary who officiated on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke.

Lt Gen Yam conferred medals to the men and women in uniform in their different ranks who had distinguished themselves through their long service of thirty (30) years. The Medalje vir Troue Dien (30 years) and Bar to the “Medalje vir Troue Dien” (30 years) were awarded to 59 members and two members received medals posthumously.

During his address after the medal presentation, Lt Gen Yam mentioned that medals are authorised by the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, the President of the country, and it’s a gesture of honour and appreciation by the military authority to SANDF members who have rendered distinguished service, good conduct and loyal service to the SANDF and the country.

He acknowledged the selfless determination of SANDF members and expressed his gratitude, commending the recipients on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF. He said that medal parades are prestigious military ceremonies and proud moments for soldiers.

Pte Titus Magoma (57) from 15 SA Infantry Battalion (Bravo Company) was among the medal recipients. He told SA Soldier that he joined the military in 1982 as part of the Venda Defence Force and integrated into the SANDF. He pointed out that the medal he received reflects memories in his military career.

Asked about the greatest lesson he learnt in the military. He said: “Discipline is the best teacher and doing things right even when no one is looking”. He added: “Appreciation is a wonderful feeling and recognition is one of the best method of improving work motivation”, he said.
The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam inducted nineteen SA Army officers who were admitted to the rank of General at a ceremony recently held at SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane. The newly appointed Generals took an oath and pledged to be good leaders to those placed under their command.

They also undertook to continue serving their country with loyalty and honour, to discharge their duties with zeal and diligence and to set a good example to those placed under their command. They all concur that it was an honour for them.

**The Chief of the SA Army and the newly appointed Generals.**

Officers should live the creed and values that come with such a sacred appointment and forever be mindful that as they accept the solemn oath to be a general officer in the SA Army, thus entering into a covenant as part of the higher echelons of military service, their behaviour, attitude, lifestyle and actions in general should be such that they steer them clear of scandals and they should only be focused on the attainment of the organisational goal.

The Chief of the SA Army reminded them that they were now admitted to a corps of selfless individuals who have forsaken the right to be self-interested and instead embrace the cardinal understanding that you serve not in isolation but as part of a greater cause”.
The Japanese Embassy in South Africa under the leadership of Ambassador Shingeyuki Hiroki hosted a reception at the embassy premises to honour the 63rd Anniversary of the Japan Self Defence Force (JSDF) Day recently. The event was officially opened by playing the National Anthems of both countries.

In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Hiroki reflected on the Korean War back in 1950 which necessitated the strengthening of national safety and security through the establishment of the National Police Reserve, which was later transformed to the JSDF on 1 July 1954.

"The JSDF continues with its commitment to international peacekeeping operations through its on-going personnel presence in South Sudan and its support of anti-piracy operations in Djibouti", said the Ambassador.

He emphasised the importance of peace and stability in the African continent under the government’s Pro-Active Contribution to Peace Policy, and that Japan is in agreement with the African Union’s Agenda 2063 that peace is a central prerequisite for the prosperity and well-being of the African people.

In support of these goals, the JSDF has been co-operating with the different services of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), especially through its contribution to the Peace Mission Training Centre at SANDF Training Command.

Lt Gen Lindile Yam, Chief of the SA Army gave the key note address at the function that was attended by members from various walks of life including retired Generals from the SANDF.

Lt Gen Yam expressed his appreciation to the JSDF for its contribution to global peace initiatives and also reflected on humanitarian relief after the earthquake struck Haiti in February 2010, the flood relief in Pakistan and the repairing of roads, airports and other damaged infrastructure in the Republic of South Sudan.

Japan has been involved in international peace missions as early as 1992.

"South Africa and Japan have co-operated for 103 years, with the year 1910 marking the beginning of official trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries. However, full diplomatic relations between a democratic South Africa and Japan were only established after 1994 when President Mandela visited Japan in July 1995", concluded Lt Gen Yam.

The reception was characterised by bidding farewell to Japan’s first Military Attaché to South Africa, Lt Col Kenichi Ebina through a symbolic handing and taking over ceremony between himself and the incoming Military Attaché Lt Col Kazunori Yanagawa. In his final remarks, Lt Col Ebina expressed his gratitude for the support he received together with his family in South Africa as he concludes his mission.
SA Military Health Service strengthens relations with their counterparts from Germany

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

The Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe had invited his German counterpart, General Inspektuer Sanitätsdienst, Lt Gen (Dr) Michael Tempel of the Bundeswehr of Germany for a working visit to South Africa.

The visit was meant to pave the way for both military health services to share knowledge and expertise on military health, education and training that will enhance the working standards of both services.

Over the past decade, the SA National Defence Force, through the Republic of South Africa (RSA) has been involved in enhancing its bi-lateral relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. The SANDF is expected to increasingly participate and contribute to global and regional issues.

The visit included discussions on common issues and forged relations in areas of cooperation that would be beneficial for both parties. The visit emanates from the goodwill visit between the SAMHS and the German Medical Service Bilateral Annual Programme in 2014 in Pretoria.

Lt Gen Sedibe indicated that the SAMHS has a lot of history from the 1920’s until to now. He said it is also an organisation which evolved with time and developed with the SANDF.

He said: “It’s an honour and a privilege to have you in these facilities of the headquarters of the SAMHS. We are grateful to have a chance to host you in South Africa in order to showcase our military health service capabilities to you.

The SANDF is an armed force that is very unique. The SAMHS is open to working with the German military health service and building relations which will enhance our capabilities and ensuring that we contribute to world peace as both our countries are involved in peacekeeping operations.” He further stated that this gives them an opportunity to benchmark from each other on capabilities which they are using and ways they can assist one another to ensure the world remains a peaceful place.

Lt Gen Tempel said military medical services are unique and they should always seek to connect to different services in other countries to exchange ideas with each other.

He said the German military medical service has been independent since 2002 and it does no longer fall under any military service or branch.
Generals and Admirals Club still going strong

The quarterly Generals and Admirals’ Club (G and A) Special General Meeting was recently held at the Military Health Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane. Surgeon General (SG), Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe said the SA Military Health Service is proud to host the meeting of all serving and retired Generals and Admirals.

He said this year marks the 40th anniversary since the establishment of the Generals and Admirals’ Club. These special meetings should not be taken for granted as it is a privilege to not only see newly appointed Generals and Admirals in our midst but also be afforded the opportunity in conversing with superiors and peers that time does not always allow for. “It is our responsibility to ensure a favourable future for the Generals and Admirals’ Club to achieve its goals.”

He said the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) continues to honour its Governmental commitments in ensuring peace and stability on the African continent with the commitment of combat ready forces.

Lt Gen Sedibe mentioned however, that it is the responsibility of each and every member of the SANDF to ensure that a healthy lifestyle is adhered to wherever and whenever their circumstances in the execution of their duties, leads them.
Commander of Combined Task Force visits Chief of Staff of Joint Operations Division

Article and photo by Col Khaya Nkukwana, SSO Foreign Relation Joint Operation Division

R Adm Olivier Lebas, Commander of the Combined Combat Task Force 150, recently conducted a courtesy call to the Chief of Staff of the Joint Operations Division, Maj Gen Mlindeli Sibango. The Chief of Staff represented the Chief of Joint Operations. R Adm Lebas was accompanied by the Defence Attaché of France in South Africa, Col Jean-Marie Monot, and the Deputy Defence Attaché of France in South Africa, Capt (Navy) Arnant Lacote, and R Adm Lebas’s assistant, Lt (Royal Marine) William Clark from the United Kingdom.

Also present were R Adm(JG) Douglas Faure representing Chief of the Navy as well as Director Operations, Brig Gen Kwezi Nompetshe, Senior Staff Officer Mission Readiness, Col Andy Matu, and Senior Staff Officer Admin and Liaison, Col Khaya Nkukwana, from the Joint Operations Division.

Combat Task Force 150 is a multinational Task Force based in Bahrein whose mission is to promote maritime security in order to counter terrorist acts and related illegal activities, which terrorists use to find or conceal their movements. Its command is rotated between participatory nations on a four to six months basis. Combat Task Force 150’s Area of Operations covers the Red Sea, Gulf of Eden, Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman. Participating nations include Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and United States of America.

After the Chief of Staff had welcomed the Commander of Combat Task Force 150 and his delegation, he introduced members of the SA National Defence Force and then R Adm Olivier Lebas introduced their delegation. Deliberations started when R Adm Olivier Lebas indicated that their operation, Task Force 150, is conducted in two phases where the first phase is to fight against smugglers and the second phase is to negotiate with the neighboring countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, etc., in exchanging information about criminal activities taking place along the East African coastline. Some of their operational successes in their operations during the past few months included one ton of Narcotics (heroin) and a sizable amount of cocaine.

Difficulties that are experienced by Combat Task Force 150 are:
- Finding some of the drugs as the dogs struggle to find some of the drugs which are usually hidden inside the fuel tanks of the criminal’s boats.
- They do not have powers to arrest and prosecute as the mandate does not allow them to do that.
- It has not been possible to cover all possible smuggling options with allocated assets.

During the deliberations it also came out that the CTF has intentions that includes the following activities:
- Sharing of information with the SANDF deployed under Op COPPER.
- Closer cooperation through multinational exercises.
- The establishment of a relationship with Task Force 151 and Task Force 152 against piracy.
- The deployment of surface units along Dar Es Salaam and Pemba as these are essential for the convergence points of illicit cargo offload transshipment.
Chief of Logistics confers various long service medals

The Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Morris Moadira, recently conferred 58 various long service medals to deserving members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) during a medal parade held on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, at Tempe Military Sport Grounds in Bloemfontein.

The parade was intended to acknowledge the selfless dedication and loyalty displayed by the members of the SANDF during their years of continuous service. It was also to honour meritorious service or achievements. The Chief of Logistics was impressed by the sight of the men and women standing before him to receive their well-earned recognition. Equally important, the medal parade gave us all an opportunity to celebrate as we reflect on the contribution made by our fellow soldiers to the security of our country.

A medal parade is a reflection of the diligent and professional behaviour of the soldiers. This behaviour is in accordance with the Military Code of Conduct. The last part of the Code of Conduct states that “we will strive to improve the capabilities of the SANDF by maintaining discipline, safeguarding property, developing skills and knowledge, and performing my duties diligently and professionally”. The parade therefore is in line with the military culture of recognising all those who have provided extraordinary and professional service to the SANDF.

Addressing the members on parade, Lt Gen Moadira said that to be a member of the SANDF today means to be entrusted with a responsibility to defend the country’s sovereignty in accordance with the constitution and the laws of the country. Lt Gen Moadira said: “In order for us to succeed in carrying out our mission, we require a high degree of discipline, unity and an undying spirit of collectivism. As a collective, we are mightier than any challenge. We should all, regardless of rank, project a brand of discipline that never falters, discipline without bias and discipline with no sinister motive. This is the type of discipline required of you, it is our determination, unflinching commitment, courage and above all, discipline that will carry us through even the most trying times.”

He concluded by congratulating and commending all the recipients and their families for the milestone they have achieved. Lt Gen Moadira said: “The medals conferred to you today do not equate with the value that most people put on money, but had an immense and special sentimental value and significance in the life of a compatriot.”

Medals presented were the IPHROTHIYA ye SILVA (PS), awarded to members who distinguished themselves by outstanding leadership or outstanding meritorious service and particular devotion to duty. The 40 and 30 years Good Service Medal, awarded to members whose character and conduct have been irreproachable and who have completed 40 and 30 years qualifying service.
Joint Operational Headquarters bids farewell to Maj Gen Nkabinde

The outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Joint Operational Headquarters, Maj Gen Jabulani Nkabinde (left) handed over the command to the incoming GOC, Maj Gen Thabiso Mokhosi.

The outgoing General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Joint Operational Headquarters, Maj Gen Jabulani Nkabinde handed over the command to Maj Gen Thabiso Mokhosi at a Change of Command Parade held at the SA Military Health Service (SAHMS) Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane. Maj Gen Nkabinde is retiring from active military duty.

Maj Gen Nkabinde handed over a symbol of command of J OP HQ that is in the form of a traditional Impi Battle Spear. The symbol was introduced for the first time in 1998 and has since seen six changes of command. The spear symbolises the authority of the Commander.

Maj Gen Nkabinde is a struggle veteran against apartheid and for the liberation of South Africa since the early 1970s. Maj Gen Nkabinde served in various positions as a full functionary of the African National Congress (ANC) and Umkhonto weSizwe (MK). During his career he served as a platoon commander, Reconnaissance commander, Chief of personnel and Military Attaché for Non Statutory Forces in Zimbabwe. He was also the Regional commander Zimbabwe, responsible for operations in the Northern Transvaal.

Upon his return to South Africa, Maj Gen Nkabinde integrated in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1994 and was appointed as the Brigade commander at Walmansthal. He served in various capacities including Officer Commanding Joint Tactical HQ North West, Inspector General of the SA Army and since January 2013 as the GOC of J OP HQ.

J OP HQ is mandated to conduct and spearhead all SA National Defence Force (SANDF) exercises and operations inside and outside our borders. Under his watch the J OP HQ conducted a number of operations both internally and externally. Notably the largest external operation being the Peace Support Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as well as the maritime operation in the Mozambican Channel.

Maj Gen Nkabinde has seen great successes during his time as GOC at J OP HQ. Under his reign he has seen the demise of the March 23 (M23) armed rebel group in the DRC. During his time he has experienced no piracy incidents in his area of responsibility on the East Coast of Africa as well as the oversight process for the successful withdrawal of the SANDF members from the Sudan.

Addressing members on parade and the guests, Maj Gen Nkabinde paid tribute to some of the people and organisations that played a significant role in his career and thanked them for their support. In particular he thanked his wife, Mrs Gwendoline Mahlangu, for standing by his side during some very difficult and trying times, not forgetting the role she played many times during his absence from home.

Secondly he thanked his superiors for allowing him to be part of this great military organisation, pre and post 1994 and lastly he thanked his staff that always trusted his judgment as a commander while leading them. Maj Gen Nkabinde said: “I wish to thank all the personnel of the J OP HQ for your hard work, dedication and loyalty towards the SANDF. An organisation is only as good as its employees. Convey my best wishes and gratitude to your loved ones and always remember, a true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him”.

Maj Gen Mokhosi, when accepting the command of J OP HQ said that he have all confidence that he will lead the headquarters with the distinction it deserves. Maj Gen Mokhosi is an operationally experienced and highly qualified officer and is well vested in military operational thinking, directing, planning and conducting military operations.

While he is humbled by the trust shown in him by the Minister, the Chief of the SANDF and the Military Command Council (MCC), he is fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead, however he is optimistic that with the support of his principals, stakeholders and the people of South Africa he will be able to carry out his mandate as expected.
Defence Diplomacy in a Digital Era” at the Velmore Hotel estate in Pretoria recently.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, was the main speaker at the conference. The aim of the conference was to provide a report about DFR progress on the decisions of last year’s conference as well as to cover aspects related to progress and challenges in other areas which requires the attention of all the relevant internal and external state industries since the DA conference in August 2015.

The Chief of Defence Intelligence (CDI), Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, who opened the conference, stated that this was not the only purpose for their gathering. He said the conference afforded them an opportunity to reflect among themselves, deal with strategic issues, reflect on their diplomacy as their valuable asset to our government and how that diplomatic function can be used to forge, closer multilateral relations.

The CDI referred to defence diplomacy as the pursuit of foreign policy objectives by peaceful employment of defence force resources and capabilities.

As the conference was aimed at providing a report which applies the DFR progress on the decisions of last year’s conference, the CDI in his report alluded that the military strategy directs DFR towards defence operations and the development of common security regimes as well as to prevent major conflicts before deploying military forces.

The report went on to say that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and DA abroad are DFR’s mission prepared personnel that are deployed. They are critical to achieving the goals of the SANDF and DFR’s functions in all that render and integrate the DFR’s services to
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, and the members who attended the Defence Attaché conference on the first day.

the Department of Defence (DOD), the support and cooperation of all services, divisions, offices of the ministry of defence and secretariat.

He further emphasised that, it is important for the DA to be knowledgeable not only in the respect of SANDF but our foreign policy that our country locating which is anchored in our own national interest.

Guided by the report of the previous 2015 conference, the meeting covered how they nominate, select, prepare and ultimately deploy DAs, clear roles to be identified and standardised for the role of DAs in DI support. Defence Foreign Relations to develop an exhaustive method or process of selection, preparation, deployment and possible redeployment of those military DAs that perform well, upon the end of their term.

The meeting also covered all the necessary equipment and technologies to accomplish the tasks given to the DAs during their four year deployment.

During the key note address, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, said: “we are tasked as component of the Defence leadership, to locate our work within the context of this macroeconomic and geopolitical environment.”

She said it gives her great pleasure to once again have an opportunity to engage with the defence representatives of the South African people with their various stations of duty around the globe. We need to know that the government, our people and our country, continue to be thankful for the unique service and sacrifice you are making”.

She also emphasised that it is critical that DA members must not only be familiar but know in detail South Africa’s Military Strategy, which directs defence cooperation and development of common security regimes.

She remarked that this will ensure that they prevent, manage and resolve conflict prior to the deployment of military force. She stated that DA members are therefore the eyes and ears of not only our defence establishment, but South Africa as a whole. It is within this context that as they are deployed in their stations, they are also the military advisors to the RSA Head of Mission.

When recapping on the previous reflections of 2014-2015, she said in her address she indicated that it is expected of them to portray a positive image of the people of the RSA and their defence force.

At the close of the conference she dwelled much on discipline, encouraging DA members to do by all means necessary to keep themselves disciplined. She encouraged them to do things the right way and follow procedures. She further said they must conduct themselves in a way that will raise the South African flag.

She continued: “The positions you are holding are very sensitive and require a very disciplined person. At the embassy we have placed you, please stand for us in a good way during the four years. It therefore need to be noted that the four years is not guaranteed and that will depend on your performance”.

She remarked that there will be measures used to constantly check their performance. She urged them to control the situation at all times and not to succumb under the pressure of the environment.
The SANDF hosted a joint exercise with the United States Army

By S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole Photos by Capt Matthew de Jager

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) hosted Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017 at the SA Army Combat Training Centre in Lohatla recently. This was a combined joint exercise between the SANDF and the United States (US) Army. This exercise was planned as a result of the Defence Committee discussions that took place in 2015 between South Africa and United States of America.

Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017 was the third exercise conducted in South Africa, the previous two being held in 2011 and 2014 in the Eastern Cape. The aim of Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2011 and 2014 was to do combined training between the SANDF, the US Army and the US Marine Corps with medical assistance to the local communities within the larger Nelson Mandela Metropolitan.

However with Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017, the aim was to conduct combined joint training between the SANDF and US Army so as to test interoperability of equipment, training techniques and procedures based on Peace Keeping Operations doctrine. The scenario of the exercise was based on an United Nations (UN) mandated Chapter VII scenario to allow offensive operation, as well as normal Peace Keeping Operations.

This is the more robust mandate whereby belligerent forces are forced to disengage and to discontinue the armed conflict within the region of the exercise area of Lohatla. The US Army exercised strategic lift by means of sea, air and road movement and the SANDF exercised road movement support and replenishment. This mobilisation was done from various and multiple locations in South Africa to the Northern Cape with the aim of strengthening a bi-lateral relationship between the SANDF and US Army that affords mutual benefit through improving understanding of partnered operations with a highly capable allied force.

The exercise also focused on interoperability during military actions in areas of interest or disciplines. These actions included shared interest in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures between the SANDF and the US Army, individual Skills Training, Bush Craft, Counter Improvised Explosives Devices drills and night operations as well as a UN peace keeping scenario that incorporated elements of the SANDF and US Army recent experiences such as strong point defence, direct action and targeted offensive operations.

During 2017 Exercise SHARED ACCORD the participating forces had the opportunity to participate in providing services to the community on Mandela Day.

The main effort of the exercise was to strengthen the multi-national cohesion between SA and US. These exercises are not only important, but also critical prerequisites for adequate force preparation and their long term benefits are incalculable. Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017 is a key element in a broader military-to-military activity to demonstrate the strong partnership between the SA and US.

Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017 commenced with a rock piling ceremony. A rock piling ceremony is meant to serve as tangible motivation for troops to pledge their commitment in three areas: to train effectively and efficiently, to take care of all equipment entrusted to them and not to hesitate to defend the region and continent. Additionally it also serves the purpose of remembering fallen South African troops.

Speaking to SA Soldier, Brig Gen Gustav Lategan, Exercise Director said that the goals and objectives of Exercise SHARED ACCORD 2017 were to establish and operate a coalition by establishing a Joint Task Force (JTF) and also for the JTF to conduct Mission Command in a non-encrypted environment. Brig Gen Lategan said that all forces that participated in the exercise achieved all objectives in terms of logistical support, combined training and planning, combined live fire exercises, communication across long distances, share tactics, techniques and procedures between the SANDF and the US Army. Furthermore he said that all forces were combat ready for their respective tasks and training, the interaction from the lowest level up to the command level were excellent and training presented and received was of the highest quality.

However, in conclusion, Brig Gen Lategan, stressed the importance and objective of the exercise. Brig Gen
Lategan said: “It needs to be stressed that exercises of this kind is to share tactics, techniques and planning procedures, this is not training conducted for any planned operations in future on the African continent between the SANDF and the US Army. Many media houses see different things behind the scenes however the SANDF focus on training and conducting the exercise, nothing else”.

During the exercise the participating forces had the opportunity to participate in the community service on Nelson Mandela Day by partnering with a local animal shelter to provide free exams and medical treatment for Postmansburg pets on 18 July. At that time Brig Gen William Prendergast IV, the USA Reaction Forces Deputy Commanding General said that as part of Nelson Mandela Day, they came out to engage the community and give back to the community. Brig Gen Prendergast said: “US and SA troops collaborated with the local animal shelter, Diere Forum Postmansburg, and set up, a free, outdoor clinic for residents living in the area of Postmansburg. Residents eagerly lined up for their dogs to receive free vaccinations, flea treatments and de-worming medicine.”

Forces that participated in the exercise, from the USA were staff officers from the USA Reaction Forces based in Italy, 2-327 Battalion of 101st Airborne Division and Staff from the 101 Strategic Movement Control Battalion. The SANDF forces comprised of staff officers from J Ops Division and J Ops HQ, Defence Foreign Relations and Defence Intelligence, SA Army HQ and 43 SA Bde, CMIS, 2 SA Infantry Battalion, 21 SAI Bn, 16 Maintenance Unit, 101 Field Workshop, 1 Signal Regiment, 2 Field Engineer Regiment, 1 Construction Regiment, 13 Provost Unit, 8 Medical Battalion and SA Army Combat Training Centre.
SA Tank Regiment held a change of command parade between Lt Col Phaladi Motsima and Lt Col Phumzile Shingange. The regiment also held a change of office parade between the Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Matsema Modise and MWO Mothusi Mokebe at Bloemfontein recently.

Lt Col Motsima has since been appointed as Directing Staff at the SA National War College (SANWC) and MWO Modise as the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of School of Armour.

The event was held to acknowledge the contribution made by the outgoing OC and his RSM and also to welcome the new OC and RSM of 1 SA Tank Regiment. The parade was in the form of a Company in Review with Mechanised vehicles, one squadron of marching soldiers and a colour party accompanied by the SA Army Band Kroonstad.

A change of command parade is a military tradition that represents a formal transfer of authority and responsibility for a unit from one OC to another. The passing of colours and standards from an outgoing OC to an incoming one ensures that the unit and its soldiers is never without official leadership, a continuation of trust, and also signifies an allegiance of soldiers to their unit’s commander.

During the parade, Lt Col Motsima thanked his staff and members of the unit that he had the privileged to work with since his appointment as the OC to date. “Your support, commitment and dedication in serving you gave me strength to face with confidence the challenges each day threw at us”.

Lt Col Shingange took over the command of the regiment as the first women in the history of SA Armour. Lt Col Shingange is a seasoned and well trained Armour officer who obtained various military qualifications throughout her career. An accomplished scholar who holds a series of degrees. These include B Mil Degree in Human and Organisational Development from Stellenbosch University, B Com Honours in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from UNISA, Certificate in Senior Management Programme from University of Pretoria, Diploma in Joint Multi-National International Operations Qualification by SASSETA through SANWC (known as JSCSP). She is continuing with her Masters in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch.

Her record demonstrates her ability and willingness to serve the people of our country. We therefore applaud her appointment. Brig Gen Retief, General Officer Commanding of the SA Armour Formation said: “With the support of all of us gathered here today, we firmly believe that the regiment will be better served by her experience, dedication and hard work.”
Adm(JG) Alpheus Maphoto took over the command of the Military Police Division (MPD) as the first ever Senior Navy Officer to be appointed as the Provost Marshal General (PMG) of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Maj Gen Tshepo Buhali handed over the command during the change of command parade held recently at Air Force Base Swartkop in Pretoria. The ceremony was attended by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke and other senior Generals.

Maj Gen Buhali has since been appointed as the Inspector General of the Department of Defence. Since he took over in 2011 as the PMG, Maj Gen Buhali achieved a lot of successes in terms of combating and preventing crime in the DOD as well as the improvement of the image and professionalism of the Military Police.

Some of his highlights include, establishing the Military Police Airborne capability, the development of camouflage protective gear for motorcycle riders to reduce death and injury, the establishment of a fleet of vehicles for VIP support and taking part in the memorial and funeral services of the late President Nelson Mandela. Other achievements include the reviewing of the regulations regarding the detention facilities for the first time since 1961, aligning them with the regulations of the United Nations.

During his farewell speech, Maj Gen Buhali said that his job as PMG was very challenging and has been a roller coaster of a journey that he could not have fulfilled without the support of the members of the MPD as well as the support from the colleagues from Services and Divisions. He said he prides himself on the performance of the Military Police as this has prompted a number of countries in the continent to request to be trained by the SA Military Police. This countries include Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria and Botswana.

Maj Gen Buhali said he can proudly say that they have over the years provided support to all SANDF operations and exercises within our country and outside the borders of South Africa.

Speaking to the media after the parade, the newly appointed PMG said that he worked under Maj Gen Buhali and he was part of the successes and he knows what the challenges and requirements of his post are. R Adm(JG) Maphoto said he will put effort into eradicating crime in the SANDF and ensure that the SANDF is a discipline and respectable force.

R Adm(JG) Maphoto integrated into the SANDF in 1994. After completion of basic military training, he joined the SA Naval Police in 1995. He completed his military police training in Pretoria and worked at Naval Base Simon’s Town Military Police detachments, SA Naval College in Gordon’s Bay and SAS Wingfield until he was commissioned in 2000.

After working in various sections in the Military Police, R Adm(JG) Maphoto was appointed Training Support Commander in 2004 and later Second in Command at the Military Police School in Thaba Tshwane. In 2010, he was appointed as the first Naval Regional Commander of the Northern Military Police Region in Thaba Tshwane. Thereafter he was appointed as a Senior Staff Officer Provost Services between 2012 and 2017.

After completing military police courses between 1995 and 2001, Adm (JG) Maphoto in 2005 completed the Naval Junior Staff and Warfare Programme at Naval Staff College in Muizenburg. In 2007 he completed the Senior Management Programme at the University of Pretoria and subsequently completed the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme at the SA National War College.

In 2015, he completed Security and Management Studies at the University of Witwatersrand and received a post graduate diploma. That year he also received a post graduate diploma in National Security and Defence at the Revolutionary Armed Forces General Antonio Maceo National Defence College in Cuba. He recently completed the Specialty National Defence and Security Programme at the same institution in Cuba. R Adm (JG) Maphoto said he will put effort into eradicating crime in the SANDF and ensure that the SANDF is a discipline and respectable force.
Nurses play a critical role in providing primary healthcare, they embody the virtues of humanity, compassion, trust and honesty and understand the complex nature of maintaining health and wellness.

A total of 73 nurses from the SA Military Health Service Nursing College in association with the University of South Africa (Unisa) were honoured for their accomplishments and congratulated during their graduation ceremony held at Unisa’s Z.K. Matthews Hall in Pretoria recently. Thirty nine completed their four year diploma course leading to their registration as general nurses, psychiatric nurses, community nurses and midwives.

FRONT SITTING: Maj Gen Lesley Ford, Chief Director Military Health Force Support, Col Pelonomi Letebele, Officer Commanding SAMHS Nursing College, Mrs Joyce Selesho, Clinical Tutor (Louis Pasteur Hospital), Brig Gen Lulu Siwisa, Director Nursing, Prof Linda Cornwell, Director School of Social Science (Unisa), Lt Col Florence Mpoobane, SO1 Patient Care, 2 Military Hospital, Prof Sarie Human (Unisa) and Chaplain Portia Khosa, in the background graduates hold lamps as they take oath during their graduation ceremony.

A further 23 members successfully completed a diploma in clinical nursing science: health assessment, treatment and care and 14 members obtained diplomas for the one year course in midwifery.

The guest speaker at the ceremony was Ms Tsakane Joyce Selesho who is a clinical tutor and infection control facilitator at Louis Pasteur Hospital in Pretoria. She urged the graduates to go out and make a difference in the provision of viable health-care in the SANDF and for all South Africans. She pointed out that the mandate of healthcare nurses is to provide quality healthy life for all, with specific focus on increased life expectancy, decreased maternal and child mortality, combating HIV and Aids, Tuberculosis (TB) as well as decreasing the burden of diseases on lifestyle. She encouraged them to expand and explore windows of opportunities, to stay true and to rise to new dimensions.

Professor Linda Cornwell, Director School of Social Sciences at UNISA, gave the congratulatory address referring to the motto of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS): “Audaces Servamus” - “We serve the brave”. She said that the motto captures the role played by this essential arm of the SANDF. She
mentioned that their mission is to support the armed services and the veterans by delivering a world-class clinical service not only for the full range of military deployments, but also for the families of those who serve or have served.

She pointed out that nurses are the heart of healthcare and all nurses in a developing country such as South Africa, both in the military and outside, have a critical responsibility to bring about societal development.

The Director Nursing of the SA Military Health Service, Brig Gen Lulu Siwisa, said it is a proud moment to see students succeed in their journey and reaching their goals.

She added that after all the hardwork, dedication and commitment, it finally came true. She was proud of the dedication displayed by the students during their studies and for successfully acquiring their qualifications. When sharing her wise words, she said that when you believe in yourself, you succeed better. “You have to give in order to receive, you conquered your desire to get what you crave”, she said with a smile.

She thanked the SANDF in particular the SA Military Health Service Nursing College under the leadership of Col Letebele, the University of South Africa, the Department of Health, health care institutions and companies such as Aspen Pharmacare for their support and providing clinical practice and the mentoring of students throughout their training. 

Lt Noko Morakaladi got distinctions in general nursing science, community nursing science, midwifery and psychiatry (Cum Laude).

Maj Gen Lesley Ford, Chief Director Military Health Force Support was the main functionary during the procession. Seen here is Lt Jeremiah Tshidino who successfully completed a four year nursing diploma (general, psychiatric, community and midwifery).
Initially established in 2005, the Wellness Clinic at the Bluff Military Medical Clinic (MMC) was the first clinic in the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) to acquire accreditation by the Department of Health. This was possible due to the motivation and support from the Department of Health, which led to the clinic being accredited and recognized as such.

In acknowledging the patient load at the facility, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) mentioned that there are currently 352 patients on antiretroviral treatment with an average of 135 follow-ups per month. To highlight patient flow at this facility as a whole, she indicated that over the past five months alone there has been an average of 1980 patients per month.

The Unit realized that the impact of this increased patient load over an extended period was going to negatively impact on both patients and staff. Therefore, they decided to approach the PEPFAR team for assistance in establishing a separate area for the Wellness Clinic.

The official handing over of the Wellness Clinic to SAMHS took place recently at Bluff Military Base. The facility was handed over by Consul General Ms Francis Chisholm to General Officer Commanding Area Military Health Formation (GEN AMHF) Brigadier General Debbie Tempelhoff. During her speech, the GOC expressed her appreciation to PEPFAR for their contribution in making this project possible thus impacting positively on patient care and the standard of service delivery.

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The Consul General and the PEPFAR team were delighted to be hosted and thanked with such a dignified military function. After the walk through of the facility, she expressed that they are glad that the facility is already being productively utilised and that they would be glad to assist with future projects.
Military Ombud signs working agreement with Defence Force Service Commission

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo by Pte Paul Mpangala

The Defence Force Service Commission and the Office of the Military Ombud signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide for a framework for cooperation and collaboration between the two institutions. The parties recognise the concerted efforts of the two institutions in respect of complaints falling within their respective mandates or areas of interest.

The Office of the Military Ombud is a statutory body established in terms of the Military Ombud Act, No 4 of 2012 to investigate complaints lodged by either current or former members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) regarding conditions of service and complaints lodged by the public concerning the conduct of members of the SANDF.

However, the Defence Force Service Commission is a commission established in terms of section 62A of the Defence Amendment Act, Act No 22 of 2010. The Commission is mandated in terms of section 62B of the said Act, to make recommendations to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans on improvements in salaries and service benefits, the review of policies in respect of conditions of service, promotion of measures and the setting of standards for efficient and effective implementation of policies for members of the SANDF.

Part of the agreement is that where a party receives a complaint falling within the purview of the other party’s mandate, the receiving party is to refer the complaint to the other Party for consideration or may refer the complainant to the said party for further assistance.

Where the allegations which form the subject matter of the complaint apply partially to the mandate of either party, the parties shall decide in the interests of proper and effective investigation of the complaint on the party that can best investigate the complaint or conduct a joint investigation as the case may be.

The Director Legal Services at the Office of the Military Ombud, Ms Chrystal Pillay, explained that issues of mutual interest had been elaborated on in terms of the agreement. She said the MOU provided that complaints received in the event that one was an institution were more suitable for processing it should be established which of the institutions can handle the complaint or have a joint investigation or an enquiry by both institutions.

Ms Pillay said: “The MOU speaks of collaboration and partnership in raising awareness of issues to ensure that personnel procedure relating to, among other things, recruitment, transfer, promotions and dismissals comply with the values and principles set out in section 195 of the constitution. This also involves the sharing of information that will include, but not be limited to dealing with complaints, support systems and procedure, training and development.”

The Military Ombud, Lt Gen Temba Matanzima (Ret), mentioned that circumstances beyond their control have led to their institutions identifying areas of collaboration with a view of offering better services to their stakeholders.

Lt Gen Matanzima (Ret) said: “The Defence Force Service Commission and the Military Ombud acknowledge that the two institutions complement each other to some extent. In recognition of the synergy between us, we identified areas of collaboration and cooperation. Our institutions play an integral part within the DOD in promoting good governance. The Commission is a strategic partner and we are confident that this agreement will benefit our strategic stakeholders which are the members of the military.”

The Chairperson of the Defence Force Service Commission, Prof Edna van Harte, said the commission valued the partnership as whatever complaints the Military Ombud had to deal with must also be of importance to the Commission. She said the Military Ombud were to fortify their office, especially in regard to legal expertise.
Dumping site turned into a school for disabled children

We all hate the terrible chill of winter, but something extra-ordinary happened in July to please South Africans. Radio DJs, news anchors, communication officers and their committees will be buzzing and amplifying their plans for this day. Yes! It was Mandela Day.

It’s a day for self-giving, volunteering, caring and loving. South Africans on this day forget their differences and unite in one noble course: to offer themselves to fellow South Africans in remembrance of President Nelson Mandela. The buzz words on everyone’s lips are: “making a difference”.

Yes, we all want to contribute positively to somebody’s life during our lifetime. This was no different for the SA National Defence Force College of Educational Technology this time around. This year, the college decided to visit the Olivenhoutbosch Disabled Organisation: popularly known as the “Disability centre”. Coincidently, 21 Squadron from Air Force Base Waterkloof found themselves at the same venue. These two units combined forces and dedicated their energies in support of the centre.

Olivenhoutbosch Disabled Organisation is the brainchild of Ms Mamonyane Dyna Sekese. Founded in 2004, it is today a flourishing school for disabled children. The school accommodates children from 8 months to 14 years of age. The school also looks after disabled adults. It has an admin block, kitchen, classrooms, sleeping rooms, a playground, a toy library and vegetables gardens, which are well maintained. I had a chance to interact with her and her story touched me.

Ms Mamonyane gave birth to a baby girl with Downs Syndrome in 2004. As a single mom with two other children to feed, she had to finish her maternity leave quickly and return to work. The newly born had to be left at a crèche. That is when she started to experience problems. Several crèches had to cancel her baby’s enrolment because they did not know how to take care of her child. Caregivers did not know how to feed the child. They did not understand how to deal with a child with Down syndrome.

Some crèches rejected her disabled child outright. She started to take her child with her to work. This was difficult when it rained or in extreme cold. She realised that her child needed a place that would look after her, but there was no such place in her area. She started thinking about establishing a school to cater for children with special needs.
One day she decided to quit her job of 17 years in order to look after her fragile child. Her dream of starting a place that would not discriminate against her child because of a disability got stronger. She started mobilising parents in the community that had a similar predicament. Soon many parents bought into her dream of building such a place. They identified a site was for dumping and started cleaning it.

She went to see the local ward Councillor about the site. This person helped her to acquire the site. Together with other parents, they took ownership of the place. They planted trees and painted old tyres to decorate it. They later acquired funds and put a fence around it. When the Councillor saw this effort, he offered them containers that were used in a failed recycling project. These containers could be used as offices and classrooms. The municipality also helped them to obtain sponsorship from Cortland and EXXARO to build a toy library for the kids. These companies supplied more containers and toys.

To keep the centre open, they rely on occasional donations from a few companies. They are also supported by Feed a Child - a charity organisation started by Anza Rautenbach. This organisation operates nationally and looks after 10,000 people. Its mission is to eradicate poverty in a sustainable manner. They help schools and the Olivenhoutbosch Disabled Organisation to establish and maintain vegetable gardens. Vegetables are planted and harvested seasonally and sold to the communities. A portion of the proceeds goes to the school. Feed a Child also relies on donations from communities that they resell to other communities.

Every year, on Mandela Day, government employees and private organisations come in numbers to help with menial labour and to donate toys and food. Colonel Keith Fryer the Officer Commanding of 21 Squadron - a unit that flies South African VIPs including the president of the country, alluded to the fact his unit has been supporting the Feed a Child programme for over five years and they have been to this school more than once.

Ms Noni Sindane, an administrator at the school, indicated that a portion of the harvest is allowed to remain in the centre to sell to the public to increase the proceeds. I asked Mamonyane about her fear of the day after Mandela Day. She said: “Mandela Day comes once a year, it is like Christmas. We are all happy on this day because we receive donations and physical help. What about tomorrow? The next day we back to square one.”

While the soldiers were busy breaking the ground with picks and forks for a new vegetable patch, the UNITAS hospital staff and JEN-TIL TOUCH arrived and put shoulder to the wheel. The UNITAS staff played with the children and were on standby in case of mishaps. The JEN-TIL TOUCH crew massaged the kids. The excited kids giggled as they tried to give each other a massage under the guidance of JEN-TIL TOUCH staff.

Col Benny Maloy, the Chief of Staff of SANDF COLET, summed it up in these words: “It is a celebration of life. It is a sacrifice and a privilege to pick up a garden tool and use it on a day like this: for a human being that is celebrated globally”. We therefore should not tire in our selfless endeavours to support fellow citizens that need us. Instead, we should try to volunteer and support this noble cause, as often as we can and in the process quash Ms Mamonyane’s fear of the day after Mandela Day.
How safe is my pension money?

By Maj Gen A.L. de Wit (Ret), Elected SANDF Member Trustee on the Government Employees Pension Fund Board of Trustees

During the past year the media, including social media, debated matters regarding the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF).

Questions like how safe is my money and will government not take all my hard earned savings from my Pension Fund, were at the order of the day. This situation brought unnecessary panic and even sparked some resignations among members that were worried about the status of the GEPF and how safe their money is. Resignations took place without taking proper financial advice, leading to an end result of unemployment in an economy where it is hard to find formal employment and on top of it members cashed in on their pension benefits without preserving the funds, which mean they must start all over to save some money for their old age.

So what is the status at the GEPF and is your money safe at the Fund? The GEPF, as the biggest pension fund in Africa, as well as one of the biggest pension funds in the world, logo states “your investment, your future”. In order to achieve this, we must learn from yesterday, live for today but save for tomorrow. You as a member of the Fund and your employer contribute every month a substantial amount of your monthly salary to the GEPF and it is the task of the Fund to safeguard and invest such contributions for when you reach your retirement age.

Just over 1.2 million members employed by Government contribute every month to the GEPF and just over 400 000 pensioners received their monthly pension from the Fund on a monthly basis. It is the task of the Board of Trustees of the GEPF consisting of 16 Trustees (eight representing the employer and eight representing the members/employees) to oversee and direct the GEPF affairs. It is your monthly savings that contributed to the growth of the GEPF Asset base over the last ten years from 546 billion rand to the current 1 686 billion rand.

The Board of Trustees directed the GEPF investments with a clear Investment Strategy and Mandate towards the Public Investment Cooperation who is the GEPF’s investment manager. Asset growth and performance are monitored on a daily basis and quarterly performance against targets at board level is an integral part of GEPF Board’s good governance practices.

From a good governance and investment viewpoint the following GEPF investment beliefs, among others, forms the APEX of all investment decisions:

- The investment strategy considers the Fund’s risk profile, assets and liabilities.
- Taking well-considered risks is necessary to earn the returns required to meet the pension obligations.
- The Fund’s strategic asset allocation is the key determinant of portfolio risk and return.
- The GEPF believes in a combination of active and passive management.
- Appropriate risk management processes ensure the sustainability of the Fund over the long term.
- The GEPF believes that integrating Environmental, Social and Governance factors into the investment policies is material to the long-term sustainability of the Fund.
- The Fund’s investments should play a developmental role in the South African economy.
- GEPF governance structures support the mission of the Fund while applying the highest fiduciary standards.
- GEPF investment decisions may reflect wider stakeholder views, provided they are consistent with its fiduciary duty to members and beneficiaries.
- The Fund’s reputation should be supported by robust and rational investment decisions.
- GEPF believe in strengthening the Funds internal management by recruiting and retaining skilled and competent staff.
- The GEPF is a Defined Benefit Pension Fund which means that your pension benefit among others are defined in the GEP Law and Rules of the Fund and such benefits are therefore guaranteed by the employer which is Government. Therefore, it is not only the management of member contributions and investment performance that receive priority attention on a daily basis. In order to fulfill the benefit promise of each
member in the GEPF Rules, the management and understanding of the liability side of the Fund is of equal importance.

With the growth of Assets in the Fund the growth of liabilities in the Fund through an increase in salaries/pension and longer service years to just mention a view, are cardinal. In this regard the GEPF is making use of a comprehensive Asset Liability Model to manage both assets and liabilities in the most professional way possible.

The GEPF Investment Strategy takes into account expected future benefits payment (over a long period of 50 years and more), the actuarial position of the Fund and the long-term objectives of the Fund.

Among others the following are important ingredients of such a process:

- To provide members and their dependents with the benefits promised in the Rules of the Fund.
- To aspire to grant inflationary linked increase to pensioners.
- To keep the employer contribution rate as steady as possible.

In terms of the GEPF Rules a Statutory Actuarial Evaluation of the Fund must be performed at least every three years. The Board of Trustees decided to do it every second year over the last few years with March 2016 as the last evaluation. The March 2016 evaluation indicated a funding level for the GEPF as a whole on 115.8%. This means that if the total assets of the Fund are compared against the Fund liabilities that the asset side exceed the liabilities by 15.8%, which means that the fund can pay all its benefits as promised in the GEPF Rules to its members/employees and pensioners. In terms of the above it is clear that the GEPF is well funded to pay your pension benefits into the future and should there be no panic to resign as there is enough money.

The question has been asked: Can Government take my money/investment from the Fund? As indicated above the Fund believes the responsibility of the GEPF starts and stops at the GEPF Board of Trustees, which is well balanced in terms of representation from members/employers. The Board’s approach is always that it is the member’s money and to support such a viewpoint the GEPF is one of the founder signatories of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. To put this also into perspective, the GEPF is the largest investor in the South African economy including the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

The GEPF also has a Developmental Investment Policy that aims towards investment in economic infrastructure, social infrastructure and enterprise developmental projects. The GEPF is also a strong believer in responsible investments and to be active owners that integrate investment decisions that promote long term value for the Fund and all its members. It is therefore not a matter of come and take your pension savings. Your savings at the GEPF is therefore safe in terms of the current policies, GEPF Rules and GEP Law.

The GEPF was established in terms of the Government Employees Pension Law and published in the Government Gazette No 17135 on 1 May 1996. This year marks the 21st anniversary of the GEPF and looking at the growth of the fund assets and liabilities, the funding level at inception was 72% compared to the level of 115,8% in March 2016. Looking back at the achievements of the last 21 years, the GEPF will continue to ensure the financial security of its members. It will be a catalyst for change in terms of securing investment opportunities locally, regionally and globally to meet its pension liabilities.

In addition, the GEPF will strive to improve service delivery as well as communication and education of its members and beneficiaries. Two new projects, namely an additional voluntary saving scheme alongside the current GEPF to provide members the option to save more, over and above the GEPF contribution, and a preservation option within the GEPF are new developments on the table that will be rolled out in the year to come.

In conclusion, the GEPF as a Fund recognises the importance of promoting best-practice governance. Good governance and ethical behavior provide the foundation for the GEPF to realise its aspirations to be a role model for pension funds worldwide. I hope this few words on the GEPF’s performance and governance will give you as reader some comfortability that your pension savings are in good hands and there should be no reason to resign with the objective to only cash in your pension savings.
The discipline of members defines organisations

Article and photo by Col Riaan Louw (Ret)

The success or failure of organisations and groups in all spheres of life largely depend on, and are defined by, the conduct of their members. This is especially so in stressful situations.

Some organisations, such as the military, where certain behavioural patterns can mean the difference between life and death, require an organisational culture based on structured conduct and organised action to achieve their objectives. The concept of discipline, which is often wrongly regarded as the sole preserve of the military, serves as an excellent tool in this regard.

In terms of the dictionary definition, discipline is both an instrument that can be used to enforce compliance with rules and regulations and a core value that can be inculcated to guide the behaviour (conduct) and actions of individuals and organisations.

The concept of discipline can furthermore be divided into discipline that is related to personal (or individual) conduct and discipline that is linked to group or organisational conduct. Personal discipline consists of self-discipline and professional discipline (which was discussed in a previous article) and organisational or group discipline, which consists of functional and operational discipline.

Personal discipline, as an ingredient of a sound value system founded at an early age, lies at the core of disciplined conduct and provides the compass that guides individuals in their professional interaction with other people, groups and organisations.

Personal discipline is therefore a building block for ethical conduct; enhancing morale; what is needed for order and control to be maintained; and imparting instructions and giving commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice that inspires in the individuals no other feeling but an intense desire to obey. It also builds personal character that hinges on strong social values, such as honour, personal integrity (what one is supposed to do when no one is looking) and courage; good manners and respect towards others; honesty (especially with oneself); not subverting and undermining authority; accepting that when you know you are wrong, you have to address what is wrong; and, most importantly, understanding that discipline, in especially a military context, saves lives and wins battles.

Because personal discipline is most visible in organisational or group context, it must be understood that, in order to achieve organisational or group goals such as getting a group of individuals to achieve the same objective at the same time, the management of discipline in an organisation or group:

• Is a state of order and obedience in an organisation (or group)?
• Is the strict and precise observance of rules prescribed by laws, regulations and instructions of leaders?
• Is a state of order and obedience in an organisation, involving the ready subordination of the will of the individual for the good of the organisation (or group)?
• Is the individual or group attitude that ensures prompt obedience to instructions and appropriate conduct in the absence of instructions?
• Is the identified, relevant and promulgated standards of behaviour towards both superiors and subordinates?
• Is a state (outcome) of training, resulting in orderly conduct, self-control and character?
• Is understanding that corrective action should be directed against the act and not against the person?

“Only the disciplined ever get really good at anything” – Max Anders.

Col Riaan Louw (Ret).

• Is not just following instructions.

In contrast, organisational discipline, according to Satyendra, refers to “the orderly and systematically conducting of the affairs of the organisation” by the members of the organisation who work “together and cooperate harmoniously with each other as a team” and “who strictly adhere to the essential rules and regulations” in order to achieve the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organisation. The members “truly understand that the individual and group aims and desires must be matched so as to ensure organisational success”. Organisational (or group) discipline consists of functional and operational discipline.

Functional discipline refers to the specific discipline required for the execution of a task or mission to achieve a pre-determined objective. It manifests in:

• Task or work discipline, which implies meeting the challenges of specific requirements and responsibilities in the work environment and achieving organisational goals.
• Team discipline, which implies the ability to work in a team in order to achieve the goals of the team.
• Imposed discipline, which refers to the enforced compliance with laws, legal orders, instructions and regulations and the prompt execution of the letter and spirit of legal orders of lawful superiors.
Operational discipline, in turn, refers to the day-to-day execution of the core business of an organisation or group by individuals within the framework of specific expectations, goals and guidelines and according to formal written policies, standards, rules, processes and procedures in a safe and professional manner.

Military discipline is an excellent example of operational discipline. In a military context, operational discipline can be regarded as “a state of structure and order that is required for any activity where an individual work towards obtaining a specific objective or where people work together toward a common objective”. It can also be described as “that mental attitude and state of training which renders obedience instinctive under all conditions” and is “founded on respect for, and loyalty to properly constituted authority”. It manifests in the following:

- Training Discipline. Training discipline refers to training that develops self-control, character and efficiency which contribute to a state of order which increases an organisation’s effectiveness and gives it structure to provide a framework for acceptable conduct. It implies:
  - Individual subjection to the control exerted for the good of a group.
  - Constant striving to improve and meet the goals of the group even in the face of danger and hardships.
  - Creating uniformity in cooperating to attain common goals.
  - Creating common understanding through the sharing of common goals.
  - Building a requirement for effectivity in all circumstances/contingencies.
  - Installing automatic responses to avoid panic in emergencies and an ability to respond to changes in the situation smoothly and efficiently.
- Display Discipline. Display discipline implies the observance of military traditions, customs and courtesies which display the accepted form of politeness in the military and is an obvious sign of a well-disciplined organisation. It manifests in:
  - Drill, parades and ceremonies which establish and preserve discipline and instill practices and procedures required for crisis situations.
  - The enhancement of uniformity in cooperating with others.
  - Smartness of appearance and action, the proper wearing of uniform, bearing and pride indicating an alert, well-disciplined organisation.
  - Cleanliness and neatness of dress, equipment or quarters which display and contribute to superior morale.
- Combat Discipline. Combat discipline refers to the conduct of soldiers during crisis situations (such as battle) and can make a difference between life and death. It is a culmination of all other forms of discipline taught and practiced by a soldier and manifests in:
  - Prompt and correct action (instinctive execution of orders and drills).
  - Efficiency in battle (battle handling of equipment and achieving objectives under intense pressure).

From the above, it should be clear that military discipline ensures the efficiency of the military organisation as a whole, and as separate individual units. Efficiency, in turn, helps to ensure that goals are met and that the highest level of professionalism is maintained at all times. The level of discipline directly affects a soldier’s conduct, with the result that the two concepts are directly related and of equal importance. Linked to this, is moral discipline, intertwined with the discipline of physical and mental achievement, which lies at the core of the soldier.

Because discipline is clearly an implied leadership responsibility, the state of discipline in an organisation not only reflects the attitude, professionalism and reputation of the organisation in general, but specifically that of every leader down to the lowest level of responsibility.

Leaders are furthermore judged by the conduct or their subordinates and are personally responsible to instill, enforce and maintain discipline and institute transparent corrective actions against ill- and poor disciplined members, including subordinate leaders who do not enforce disciplinary regulations on a continuous basis. Leaders, who turn a blind eye to transgressions, are therefore guilty of poor discipline themselves.

The maintenance and enforcement of discipline is, however, also the responsibility of every member of an organisation or group. In this regard, the concept of disciplined conduct is usually embedded in a formal code of conduct which commits every individual member of an organisation or group to proper and professional conduct at all times.

This code is normally enforced by rules and regulations. In a South African context, these concepts are also visible in the principles of Ubuntu (respect for other people, ie being on time, observing the rules of the road, consideration for others, completing tasks in time, etc.) and Batho Pele, which implies service delivery by doing one’s job to the best of your ability.

The assumption by Claude Adrien Helvetius that “discipline is simply the art of making the soldiers fear their officers more than the enemy” is clearly no longer valid. Discipline is indeed the single most important foundation and backbone of an organisational culture that guarantees the successful functioning of organisations and groups.

Note: This document is based on a background document prepared by Col Louw for a presentation and booklet on the topic.
Many people pay little attention to their eyesight and the health of their eyes. This is despite the fact that most of us are very reliant on our vision to go about our daily lives. We use our vision to help us to get to work every day or to perform such basic tasks as making a cup of tea or coffee. Our eyes and our vision are an essential part of our lives and we need to take proper care of them.

As part of the Government Employees Medical Scheme’s (GEMS) on-going effort to educate our members and future members on a range of healthcare topics, this article explores the subject of eye care this National Eye Care Awareness Month.

What is blindness?

Blindness or partial blindness is when an individual is unable to see or has limited vision. Blindness affects millions of people in the world today and many of them live active and fulfilling lives. However, living with blindness can be extremely challenging and it therefore makes sense to do everything possible to protect your eyes and your eyesight. The South African National Council for the Blind says that as much as 80% of blindness is avoidable.

Some eye conditions such as pinkeye are generally not serious, but others like glaucoma may go on to cause complete blindness if left untreated. The good news is that most eye conditions can be successfully treated, particularly if they are detected early. This is why it is important to be aware of how to take care of your eyes and to visit an optometrist or doctor regularly from a young age.

Common eye conditions

There are many different types of eye conditions. The following are some of the more common eye problems to look out for, as well as their symptoms:

Pinkeye

Pinkeye is a fairly common condition that causes inflammation and redness of the membranes of the whites of the eye and the inner part of the eyelid. Pinkeye, or conjunctivitis as it is also sometimes known, may be caused by a bacteria or virus and can sometimes be linked to allergies or toxins. Some forms of the condition are highly contagious and are easily passed on from person to person. If you have pinkeye you should avoid touching your eyes with your hands and wash your hands regularly. Pinkeye is not a serious condition and lasts from between three and ten days. Bacterial pinkeye can be treated with antibiotics.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye condition arising from pressure in the eye that can damage the optic nerve. The condition can cause vision loss and eventually blindness, particularly if it is not treated. Glaucoma can be prevented from getting worse if it is treated early. It can be treated with the use of eye drops and in certain cases with laser and surgical procedures.

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye, which results in blurred or dull vision. It can be caused by a number of factors including aging, trauma to the eye and diabetes. Exposure to the UV rays of the sun can also contribute to cataract development. The condition tends to cause a slow deterioration in sight. Individuals with cataracts may improve their vision with the assistance of specially prescribed glasses. Surgery may eventually become necessary. This involves replacing the eye lens with an artificial lens. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 40% of blindness is attributable to cataracts globally.

Corneal ulcer

Corneal ulcers are usually caused by infections, which can be bacterial, fungal or viral. Red eyes, swollen eyelids, blurry vision, pain, a white or grey spot on the eye and feeling like there is something in the eye may all be signs of a corneal ulcer. This is a very uncomfortable condition and it may be quite serious. Anyone who has a corneal ulcer should see an ophthalmologist immediately. Treatment may include antibiotics and eye drops, and...
in certain instances surgery may be required.

The importance of regular check-ups

The above are just a few of the possible eye conditions that individuals sometimes develop. This is why it is important to have your eyes regularly checked by an optometrist and to visit your doctor if you have any problems with your eyes. This way any eye conditions or illnesses can be detected and dealt with early on. Your medical practitioner may refer you to an ophthalmologist (eye specialist) if you need specialist treatment.

Maintaining good eye health

There are a number of steps you yourself can take to protect you and your family’s eyes, which may help you to avoid eye infections or other conditions.

Protect your eyes from foreign objects such as dust or other particles. Scratches caused to the eye by foreign objects can lead to infection or damage the eye. It is therefore important that that you wear protective eye-wear if you are working with tools or equipment that may cause chips or shards to fly into the eyes.

Be sure to wear proper sunglasses. Inadequately made sunglasses will not protect your eyes from the rays of the sun, which can damage your eyes. You should therefore be sure to wear sunglasses that will provide proper protection for your eyes.

Take a ten minute break every hour when using a computer. This will minimise eye strain and the development of eye-focusing problems.

Have your children’s vision tested to ensure they are able to see clearly. A child that is not able to see properly may start having problems learning at school because they may not be able to see the teacher and blackboard.

Look after your eyes

Vision is a great gift and most of us find it challenging to live our daily lives without it. Taking care of our eyes is an important part of looking after our eyes, so it is wise to pay it the attention it deserves.

"We believe in heroes. We keep your spirit alive"

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.
- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, during official SANDF operations.
- Members of the Department of Defence (DoD) killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, while deployed during official SANDF operation.

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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We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.

Together we move South Africa Forward

SA Soldier
The significance of sport in the military

When people speak of a sport they often refer to an activity of an individual or a group of individuals making use of physical effort or skill to obtain pleasure. This is usually done in designated areas: for instance a tennis court in the case of tennis, a soccer field for football or a dojo in martial arts.

The sporting codes mentioned above are ones in that to a great extent require physical effort in order to excel. They also promote a sense of unity, and tend to boost the morale.

It is often thought that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has a tremendous number of employees, and that compared to other sectors (private), the personnel of the Defence Force are in exceedingly good physical shape as it is in the nature of their job to be constantly exposed to physical exercise.

The overall health and fitness of military personnel is thus promoted. A good example is the SA Army Technical Training Centre’s very own Sgt Thandwayinkosi Nkanyiso Buthelezi who is an athlete specialising in the 10km run, among other long distance events.

“I started my running career in 2008, having been motivated by Sgt Mkhize from 1 SA Tank Regiment in Bloemfontein”, said Sgt Buthelezi. In 2009 and 2010, the sergeant participated in what he calls the world’s most beautiful marathon, the Two Oceans Marathon. Two years later he completed his second two oceans marathon.

“Bling”, as he is affectionately known by his fellow athletes, joined the Pretoria Military Marathon Club (PMMC). This marathon fanatic says he started focusing on the 10 and 21km distances which, at that stage, increased his running speed.

He said that this was made possible because he also had a great coach at the club. This Technical Service Corps (TSC) member also had the honour of being part of the 12km cross-country gold winning team at the Youngsfield School of Logistics, Cape Town. “I then went on to compete in the 10km Silver Queen marathon held at Air Force Base Ysterplaat, and other races”, said the 31 year old.

Without blinking he added: “I love running. Every day I train, not because I want to earn a living from it, but because it is what makes me who I am”. The unit’s 2015 fittest member of the year says he has won countless trophies and medals in his illustrious career as an athlete, and that he has never looked back. The iron–legged man shared with us his motto: “Before you quit, ask yourself why you started”.

The SANDF sportsmen and women are also afforded opportunities and support to take part in other sports. The members are able to compete both nationally and internationally.
Siyabonga Mngqeta is one of the members who has had the opportunity to represent the SANDF and the Republic of South Africa both nationally and abroad. The Corporal had his work cut out for him when he squared off with some of the toughest judokas (judo competitors) in the country. “Before I left for overseas I had to take on the best that our country had to offer in national tournaments in order to qualify for the world games”, said the judoka.

The 26-year-old participated in that 2016 SA National Ranking Championships and the 2016 SA National Ranking Event, and won a gold medal on each occasion. This gave him on the number 1 spot in the 90kg division.

Fate led this ambitious young man on to the world stage in Judo. In October 2016 the SA Army Technical Training Centre’s 2015 Sportsman of the Year competed as a judoka in the International Military Sports Council (CISM) 6th Military World Games held in Mungyeong, Korea. “Judo”, as he is known by his peers, went toe to toe evenly matched counterparts in the sport.

Reflecting on the highlights of this monumental event, the Corporal acknowledges that competing internationally was a great experience and a good opportunity for him to display his abilities. He said that he was certain that he would bring gold home. However, that was not the case. Giving credit where credit is due, he added: “There were large numbers of competitors, who were just as good from 56 different countries.” This persistent gladiator did not let the setback deter him. After the loss, the diesel mechanic apprentice said he did not despair. He went back to the drawing board and re-strategised. He utilised his shortcomings as fuel to improve his fighting skills and once again won a gold medal in the 2017 SA National Ranking Event. Furthermore, he was crowned the South African champion in the 2017 South African Trials.

Recently he was selected to compete in the African Judo Union Competition which was held in Madagascar recently, but was not able to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Another example is one of the two most senior members in the unit, Chaplain Esau, who can still run 2,4km in nine minutes. He was scheduled to compete in the Two Oceans marathon which was held on 15 April 2017 in Cape Town. He came third in the 56km world renowned race. Recently the chaplain also competed in the Shoshanguve 10 and 21km competition, in which he captured gold.

The 60-year-old reveals that every athlete who joins the PMMC aspires to compete in the world’s largest race, namely the Comrades, in which runners from fifty countries toe to toe evenly matched counterparts in the sport. It is imperative that SANDF members should be physically fit because they are, after all, the country’s last line of defence. It must always be borne in mind that an army, or rather a defence force of unfit soldiers, is a vulnerable one. Experts always say: “A healthy body makes a healthy mind.” As such it is the primary purpose of every defence force to produce soldiers who are both physically and mentally fit for efficient operation in battle.
God is able to do far more than we expect

By Cpln Caroline Pillay, A/Senior Staff Officer Communications and Liaison, Chaplain General Division

TEXT: Psalm 27: 13 -14
“I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

My husband and I arrived in Pretoria on the 26 January 2016, to do reconnaissance based on our impending move. All domestic arrangements concerning our children were done, so we were confident that all was well at home during our absence. However, on the morning of the 27th January 2016, we received a panic call from a family member informing us that our 18-year-old daughter was in a car accident and was rushed to hospital. There were no broken bones so she was given pain medication and discharged.

We drove back to Durban and saw that Carmen our daughter, had deep imprinted bruising from the seat belt on her stomach area. She was bent down, holding her stomach, writhing in pain. We immediately rushed her to hospital, where a CT scan showed liquid accumulation in her stomach region. Further tests done showed a perforated bowel. This was now about 60 hours after the accident, her body was being poisoned every second as toxins started to accumulate in her body. This had started to affect her organs. She was rushed for an emergency laparotomy; an operation to re stitch the bowel and to clean out the inside of her body to get rid of the toxins. The surgeon comes out of the theatre, shaking his head and says, “Go read the good book and pray for your child.” Our child was wheeled into the Intensive Care Unit, fighting for her life. My first sight of her after the operation broke me beyond anything I ever experienced in my life. My gorgeous, intelligent, full of life girl lies, in ICU on a ventilator. The many machines around her brought us to a point of utter desperation. I could not see her like that; my entire body went into shock. At that precise moment, every inhibition of my faith in God had abandoned me.

I began to wail uncontrollably, my body started shaking with fear and helplessness. I did not know what to do, it seemed like our lives were transported from a happy,blest and favored life to one of total desperation and helplessness. A million thoughts ran through my mind, as we are a family of five; I refused for it to be changed to a family of four. My wrestling with God became intensive, became exhausting, and became relentless.

After this emotional explosion that we experienced, we realized that HE IS GOD ALONE, there was absolutely nothing that we as parents could do to save our child. It was God that was in control; her life was totally in HIS hands. I immediately got into soldier mode, became brave, put on my prayer shawl and started reciting every healing scripture I could over her.

Her condition worsened, and she was taken back into surgery. As a minister of the word of God, I found myself yearning for even more of the presence of the Lord. I prayed earnestly, without ceasing, “Jesus, you are our Jehovah Rapha, You are our Healer, save our child, and breathe life into her body.” Those were such precious moments with the LORD, as our faith strengthened every day. Colleagues, friends and families held prayer meetings daily to pray for our child to live. I never slept at night; I sat under my prayer shawl, in constant prayer mode, crying to God, believing that He is touching her despite all the negatives we were seeing and hearing from the surgical team.

Psalm 27 verses 13 and 14 became a word that we spoke daily into her life. “I am still confident of this, I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord, be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

This scripture gave us hope that she will not die but live to see God’s goodness in this land. Dear loved ones every individual goes through times of depression and trials beyond anything one can handle. But, I encourage you today to know that God is true to His promises. We go through times where our humanity exposes our weakness. When we are the children of the most high, even if the worst had to happen, we know that it will be HIS strength that will get us through. When we are weak HE makes us strong. Take courage in that and know that the fervent prayers of the righteous availed much. Our daughter survived, we see our Saviour’s touch upon her, strengthening her every day. She was saved to be a blessing to others.

When you face fiery trials, when you have exhausted every avenue of help and have nowhere else to turn. I encourage you to look up, seek the Lord, and turn to Him, for therein is where your help will come from. He has promised us He will never leave us nor forsake us.
SA National Defence Force Netball Championship

The SA National Defence Force Netball Championships were recently held at the Zambesi Action Sports Arena in China Mall, Pretoria, and proved once again that netball is a ball game for everyone. Mass participation by male and female participants from all provinces except Mpumalanga showed the sport has increased in popularity over the years. Col Luther Jacobs, Senior Staff Officer Logistic (SSO Log), welcomed all the players, team managers and organisers to the annual championship on behalf of the Acting General Officer Commanding of SA Army Signal Formation, Col Freeman Moni. But that does not make the female players any less competitive. One thing everyone had in common was playing to the best of their ability in order to win the coveted trophy.

The 2017 tournament director, Col Debbie Janse van Rensburg, SSO Operations at SA Army Signal Formation, not only arranged the championship with the assistance of her team, she also played in her last SANDF Championship as she is retiring in 2018.

The top honours went to:
- Men’s team/province – Western Province
- Senior ladies team/province – Gauteng
- Veterans team/province – Free State.

Both Col Debbie Janse van Rensburg from the SA Army Signal Formation (left) and Master Warrant Officer Lorraine van Heerden from Defence Headquarters played in their last tournament.