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WOMEN TAKING CHARGE: Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye (front) leading the 2017 SA National Defence Force Women’s Parade. (Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole)

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outh Africans recently commemorated Women’s Day to pay tribute to the heroines of the 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. This year it is 61 years since at least 20 000 women opposed the extension of Pass Laws to women and demonstrated the power of unity. They demanded full recognition as equal human beings with no gender discrimination and exploitation.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) also held its annual Women’s Day Parade comprising of only female soldiers of the four Services on parade. This parade was held under the theme: “Women United in Moving South Africa Forward”. Addressing the spectators at the Women’s Day Parade, the Chief Director Human Resource Management of the SANDF, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, said that the historical example of the women of 1956 should guide us all to build on the gains that those women made since the advent of our democracy.

Maj Gen Motlhabane pointed out that women of all walks of life became equal partners in the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. She added: “This is to pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who protested against the Pass Laws as they have also paved the way for women in the SANDF.” (Read about the Women’s Day Parade, the Chief Director Human Resource Management of the SANDF, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, said that the historical example of the women of 1956 should guide us all to build on the gains that those women made since the advent of our democracy.

Many women are still oppressed, struggle and live under humiliating circumstances in our democracy today. Not to mention the daily on-going rapes, sexual abuses, and killings many South African women are still suffering. As a collective, we should unite against women abuse and make every effort to alleviate their burden. The question is: How do we really treat and value our women in our country today? Justice, dignity and equality are mere words to many women rather than a daily reality.

Are we doing enough to empower our women? A nation that takes good care of womanhood - would be a blessed nation... Empowering men is empowering a household, but that takes good care of womanhood - would be a blessed words to many women rather than a daily reality.

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SA Reserve Military Skills Team excels in Military Competition in Prague

By Lt Col Uys van der Westhuijzen, member of the CIOR Technical Team

Photo by Capt Jacques de Vries

South Africa can be very proud of its Reserve Military Skills Team. The team represented the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) recently during the Military Competition (MilComp) in Prague, Czech Republic. This was part of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers (Confédération Interalliée des Officiers de Réserve [CIOR]) Summer Congress.

The MilComp Team formed part of the overall South African delegation under the oversight of the Reserve Force Council (RFC), which interacted with the CIOR Council and assisted with Technical Jury duties. In addition, the delegation included a Young Reserve Officers Workshop group, and representation for the CIOR’s Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Exercise and CIMIC Committee.

MilComp participants engaged in scenarios which included the negotiation of land and water obstacle courses, precision and rapid fire in rifle and pistol marksmanship, grenade throwing, a land navigation map reading military speed march, administering of combat first aid, including a test in the field of Law of Armed Conflict. South Africa’s three-man MilComp team and one member as a reserve, comprised of Maj David Labuschagne (3 Parachute Battalion), 2Lt Ramon Purchase (Regiment Mooirivier [also the reserve should somebody get injured]), Cpl Sthembiso Hlope (Umvoti Mounted Rifles), and Rfn Brian Mdhlalose (3 Parachute Battalion). Capt Douglas le Roux from 3 Parachute Battalion accompanied them as the team coach.

The MilComp Team was split during the competition, with Maj Labuschagne, Cpl Hlope and Rfn Mdhlalose in the primary team and 2Lt Purchase as part of a MilComp International Team 4 with one German and one Swedish teammate.

South Africa’s notable achievements during the competition were in the category Best Individual Shooting trophy, with first place individual combined pistol and rifle shotist going to Rfn Mdhlalose. He secured an outstanding 100% score in the rifle category. (Competitors used the 9mm Parabellum CZ 75 pistol and 7.62x39mm VZ. 58 assault rifle.) The Czech rifle superficially resembles the Soviet made AK-47, but is based on a completely different internal short stroke gas piston design.

Maj Labuschagne, Cpl Hlope and Rfn Mdhlalose took first place as a team in the Law of Armed Conflict examination as part of military skills, while 2Lt Purchase’s MilComp International Team obtained the special category MilComp trophy which is only awarded by the CIOR Council under special circumstances to individuals or teams that display perseverance, courage and determination against all odds to complete the competition. MilComp International Team 4 completed its participation in the diverse MilComp categories despite one member sustaining serious injury. Cpl Hlope secured a Certificate of Competence in the Tactical Combat Casualty Care Qualification evaluation that took place as part of the Military Orienteering Speed March.

South Africa played a crucial part in making MilComp’s Military Orienteering Speed March a success when organisational equipment challenges saw MilComp team coach, Capt Le Roux, stepped in as an event assistant with technical gear that was used to capture all data related to the march. Without this timeous intervention, this event would not have taken place.

Lt Col Uys van der Westhuijzen plays an active role as South Africa’s representative in the CIOR’s Technical Jury, especially on the pistol and rifle ranges. Close coordination and cooperation ensured that the various events were a success and that the evaluations made were fair to every individual from the countries participating. The tenacity of our South African MilComp participants showed that Reserves are flexible, highly motivated and qualified individuals who at the CIOR Summer Congress in Prague contributed to the pride and prestige of the SANDF. Well done!
THE AFRICAN GIRL CHILD WHO WANTED MORE

The African girl child, why the suffering? This is a life of a girl who decided she wanted to be different from the normal African child who just goes to school and becomes a doctor, teacher, nurse or artist. Instead she chose a strange thing, i.e. “soldier”. She was only five years old when she realised that she was different from the other girls, spending time at the top of a big tree in front of her house, looking at the far horizon as the sun came up and went down daily. Than it was time to start school. She just turned six years in January 1985, the start of the big adventure, which she has long waited for.

She was dropped off at school by mommy dearest and off she went to work “tata mama, love you” as she waved goodbye to her loving mom. Next to the other children, crying their lungs out, because they did not want to be there. Softly she whispered to the one standing next to her in Setswana: “didimala tle, mama wa gago o tla tla go re tsaya mo skolong, ga ra latlhega” meaning, stop crying dear, your gago o tla tla go re tsaya mo skolong, ga ra latlhega.

The years passed so fast. She was known by everyone in the school, the short dark girl with the longest hair. She was full of energy; teachers could not handle her, they would always ask her: “Who are your parents? How do they handle you?” She would reply with a big smile: “My parents are Peter and Alice Tuleho. Yes, they can handle me; and they told me I am a princess, the most beautiful dark girl in the world and no one can ever change that. I am loved.” Years went by so fast. Soon it was time to change schools and move to a high school where she started her standard 6 in the year 1992. To her the set-up was still the same in her head, another level of adventure; more people to get to know and explore the way they think. This was the era where the country was also experiencing little changes as youth were getting more and more involved in politics and fighting the cruel government which still thought that a black child was nothing in this world. But for her, it made her want more and more to explore this country and make a difference some day because she was different from the rest anyway.

“Brenda, what do you want to be when you are finished with matric?” she was asked.

She said to the teacher: “I want to be a soldier, meet a lot of people, and see the world.” The teacher reacted: “You are so crazy! I wonder what is having me going to help you with.” At that point, little did the teacher know what the young black child was imagining in her head: she saw herself healing this sick country of theirs by being honest in all her doings, by showing that all colours have a place in the country, male or female, you have the right to be what you want to be, where you want to be, and how you want things to turn out - is all in your own hands.

No one can say you cannot, the only one standing in your own way is yourself. Years later it was time to matriculate, the year 1996. She was out of school, it was again time for a new adventure and how to get to that place she had in mind years ago, the Army, to see the world and meet people all over the world. Her parents where so worried about her, because they did not have money to take her to university and she was still so young.

What is she going to turn out to be? Her friends are going to university. How will they tell her that, we have your older sister in university but we cannot send you, and yet your matric results were so

SA ARMY SUPPORT FORMATION CELEBRATES MANDELA DAY

The General Officer Commanding SA Army Support Formation, Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, the Chaplain of the SA Army Support Formation, Chaplain P. Ross, and members of the formation enjoying the show put on by the children at the Kgomo Child Care Centre.

The happy faces of orphaned children and teens were brightened when they saw the SA Army Support Formation members who came to lend a helping hand to Kgomo Child Care Centre in Soshanguve in honouring Mandela Month. The SA Army patriots were inspired to make a difference by donating food parcels of which is often in short supply at the Centre.

“It is not easy to feed over 200 children, but I have been keeping my promise to attend to the growling stomachs since the establishment of the Centre in July 2011,” exclaimed Ms Kgomo Child Care Centre, the founder and director of the orphanage.

The Centre is not only aimed to be a safe haven for the unfortunate young, but also to add a wide range of offerings such as a arts and culture, library, counselling services and sewing activities of which the proceeds are used to build the Centre while developing and encouraging the entrepreneurial skills of the youth of Soshanguve.

After having been inspired by Ms Nyalunda’s testimony on the abuse that she incurred as a child, Chaplain Ross rendered words of encouragement to the caretakers, and also read from Galatians 6:9-10: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (KJV). He added: “It is in our hands to make the world a better place” and continue to expand the effort that is commensurate to make it such.

The General Officer Commanding SA Army Support Formation wishes to extent his heartfelt appreciation to all individuals who participated in this generous and selfless act, and to motivate all members of the SANDF to donate to a worthy cause, a cause that strives to nature the future leaders of this beautiful diverse country we call home. Thabang Motswabangwe, SA Army Support Formation

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 ssoldier@mail.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.
HYGIENE BOOT FOR AN ORPHANAGE ON MANDELA DAY

The Civic Education Strategy Sub-commission, spearheaded by Col K.G. Kegakilwe and Senior Staff Officer Civic, Patriotic Education and Social Actions Service (SECAS) Col A. Batabombi, identified orphans and needy children from the Republique Democratique du Congo Forces Armées (FARDC). Camp Kokolo hosted 300 children who had braved many days of little or no provision of basic needs. The FARDC-SANDF Military Strategy Commission became a beacon of hope on Mandela Day by making a generous donation of toiletries and sanitary pads to promote hygiene. We were able to provide such products that would promote pride and the restoration of individual and collective dignity. Col Kegakilwe also offered invaluable education to ensure that the young ones were empowered to care for themselves in the absence of those basic products. Brig Gen M.Y.F. Binene (Ret), on behalf of the Commission Coordinator, was able to give a short narrative and explained to the young minds the purpose of Mandela Day.

He encouraged the young ones to be selfless and to aspire to be better leaders that would advance their social, political and economic climate. We strongly believe that the knowledge acquired by children on Mandela Day regarding personal hygiene will allow them to raise their individual pride and confidence.

The team was joined by the Beatrice Hotel staff to present their donations as sponsorship. The needy Congolese children were given lunch/food parcels. The supply of food to hungry and needy children raised profile of the event. They aligned their donation with the 2017 Mandela Day’s theme: “Action against Poverty” by reducing hunger.

All efforts taken by Commission and Beatrice Hotel Staff that day certainly encouraged the Congolese children to relate a different narrative: that of courage, hope and assertive vision. The Chief of Staff of the FARDC SECAS expressed gratitude and commended the Military Strategy Commission for their concerted efforts to relieve poverty.

Col K.G. Kegakilwe, email

PILOTS WINGS COURSE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE GROUND SCHOOL AT 80 AIR NAVIGATION SCHOOL

The year 2017 is just another year (another chapter) for the Pupes on the “Pilots Wings Course (PWC) 126” course. Our story goes back to the first week of basic military training in 2015 when it became clear we were not on a vacation. We were put to the test during the bush phase at Loskop Dam half a year later during the Officers Formative Course. The course members then spent six months as technical assistants at Central Flying School on a Pepe’s best friend - the Pilatus PC-7 MKII. “A good pilot knows more than flying” was the theme, followed by the Parachute Orientation Course to mark the end of 2016. The journey commenced this year with the Aircrew Survival Course. Our group was ready and excited to experience the brutal stories we have always been told about. Many were shaken at the thought of sleeping in the wilderness and being tracked and hunted by the “enemy”. There were a few, however, who were only worried about not being served steak and vegetables at 1700.

The task force was no match for us. Being in touch with Mother Nature was refreshing and sleeping under her blanket of constellations was quite an experience for all of us. PWC 126 has proven to be a strong group who are very courageous and truly represent soldiership. All of the above-mentioned events were just an introduction to the real hardships of being a pupil pilot as we began Ground School in February 2017 at 80 Air Navigation School (80 ANS). The perfect words to describe this particular course would be “work, work and work”. Despite the hard work, PWC 126 as a collective agreed on this one fact: that this course is the most enjoyable of all. This can be attributed both to the passionate 80 ANS instructors presenting the course and to the fact that this is what we have been looking forward to as Pupes. Finally we are learning what being an aviator all is about by understanding the procedures and processes that inform the world of aviation. Ground School would be impossible without the facilities available at 80 ANS. Stationery, classrooms and a refurbished bedroom all contribute to the successful life of a student. Our daily tea breaks form an integral part of our day’s learning as we have an opportunity to discuss the concepts that we have learned with one another. The adult approach of our instructors alleviates the strain the course could otherwise have on individuals. Fitness levels have improved with weekly Fitness Drives and running from point A to point B on a daily basis. With all we have come through and everything that is still lying ahead, many of us have already decided that Air Force Base Ysterplaat is the place to be, although it may be a bit too early to be making such decisions as we are aware that the steepness of the hill has just begun. With group cohesion as excellent as that of our course and the chemistry between all of us as colleagues, it is simply a blessing that wherever we go, our motto keeps us going further: We have made it thus far, we can make it anywhere. Pilots Wings Course 126, email

Letters to the Editor

good. The smile on her face made her parents realise she was not angry with them but understood the situation at hand.

She was looking forward to 7 January 1998. She reported to a place she has never seen before in her life, between the “Outeniqua” in George at the SA Army Women’s College. Yes, the adventure was at stage 1 of her life, according to her. She would see the world, meeting new people and sharing herself. Welcome to the military girls, we will be your mothers, fathers, grandparents and whatever you want to think of us: those where the voices of the corporals as they welcomed the intake of 1998, you are the last group that will train here, so when you leave here, you will be soldiers of the SANDF, who will fly the flag of the country high. Yep they were right, fast forwarding the years, coming to the year of 2017, nearly 20 years later. I look back and ask myself: “Have I achieved the goal that I set during that year of 1996? I say I have. I was the first African female Corporal in my unit - 1 SSB, first Sergeant, first Staff Sergeant and now once more the first Warrant Officer. To be soldiers of the SANDF, who will fly the flag in George at the SA Army Women’s College. She was looking forward to 7 January 1998.

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SA ARMY FOUNDATION DOING THEIR PART FOR MANDELA DAY

According to Wikipedia - The Hennops River is one of the largest rivers that drains into Gauteng, South Africa. It has its source near Kempton Park, eastern Johannesburg, and meets the Crocodile River in Limpopo shortly before Hartbeespoort Dam. Running through Centurion, the home of the SA Army Foundation Head Office, the Hennops River is also one of Gauteng’s most polluted rivers. And it is for this reason that staff at the SA Army Foundation spent their 67 Minutes doing their part in trying to clean up a small area of this river as their Mandela Day initiative.

Clad in Mandela Day T-shirts, gloves and old tekkies, the staff was bussed down the road to the banks of the river and diligently went about the cleaning project. Polluted with all sorts of debris, mainly plastic bags suffocating the fauna in the area, it was clear from the start that this was going to be a difficult task, and the difference made would be too minute to notice due to the enormity of the pollution.

Going down into the storm drain with its repulsive stench, rubbish bags were filled with disposable nappies, cast away school bags, beer bottles and other unsavoury items discarded uncaringly into the flowing river. The team, although in high spirits and full of energy, could not help but express their disappointment in the disregard that has led to the poor state of this great river.

Lack of sanitation facilities and maintenance in Tembisa, Ivory Park, Olifantsfontein and Erasmia are the reasons pinpointed as the cause of the river being turned into an open sewer. Recently, water samples from the Hennops River were collected and according to the results, more than 1 000 000 units of E. coli per 100ml are present in the water. The norm in an aquatic environment should be less than 200 units per 100ml to ensure a healthy ecosystem.

Although a small drop in the River’s overall state: the clean-up effort by the SA Army Foundation staff was much needed, and hopefully, those who witnessed the work being done may be spurred to do their part on another stretch of the same river. Continued initiative is indeed required if any real difference is to be achieved, but until then, the Hennops River will continue to be one of the most polluted rivers in the country, our environment will continue to suffer, and, in the long run, so will we.

Ms Lerato Mtambanengwe, SA Army Foundation

HOEDSPRUIT HEALTH CENTRE REACHES OUT TO THE NEEDY

At least 17 girls in the age group of between 13-21 years old from the Nourish organisation at Sigagule Village in Mpumalanga, were among some of the beneficiaries of the 67 Minutes of the Mandela Month who received gift hampers to the value of R67.00 each on International Mandela Day. Nourish is a registered non-profit organisation which was founded in October 2001 by Ms Sarah Bergs with the mission to deliver a sustainable change in individuals and the community, with a clear commitment to delivering beyond information, knowledge and inspirations, thus, opening the pathway forward to practical sustainable new skills.

The following are offered: a vegetable garden objectively meant to promote a healthy living, thus breaking the poverty line, early childhood development, through a day care centre and a fully stocked library to assist young and old scholars with English literacy and home work. Emphasis is also placed on social integration, environmental education and entrepreneurial training, explained Ms Bergs.

At present, Nourish has registered 20 children from 2-5 years old in order to start their foundation phase at Sihleksisi Primary School in 2018. The day care centre starts from 08:00 until 16:00. In addition, Ms Bergs explained that even though the organisation was registered with the department of social development, it still remain a challenge for them to receive donors from sponsors to cover for meals.

More than 40 children visit the organisation on daily basis in order to be empowered by volunteers of the Nourish organisation. Members of the Hoedspruit Health Centre, under the command of Lt Col Itani Makhaga, spent the day with this organisation, in particular the girls, focussing on health matters, so they too can make an informed decision on issues affecting them daily. According to the commander of the Health Centre, the visit motivated them and was an eye-opener to them which benefited both the personnel of the Health Centre and members of the Sigagule community. Among the gifts donated were a pack of sanitary towels, a face cloth, tooth paste, a tooth brush, roll-on, soap, and a hand lotion.

Sgt Tuli Mohlabane from the Hoedspruit Health Centre gave the girls an opportunity to share their aspirations and dreams in life through an interaction session, while the boys were having fun playing soccer. The visit ended with a tour to the creché where children were seen enjoying colouring in photos of Madiba. Lt Maryke Tomlinson, Hoedspruit Health Centre
SCHOOL OF ARMOUR REACHING OUT TO THE NEEDY

“What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead” - Nelson Mandela.

On International Mandela Day the School of Armour dedicated their time in an effort to make a difference in the lives of those in need of change for the better. This day celebrates the lifetime of service Nelson Mandela gave to South Africa, and the world.

The School of Armour identified four organisations where time and effort could be positively invested. These institutions included the Rosesstad Old Age Home, The Elpizo Baby House, The Towers of Hope Church and the Lesedi Relief Centre (Hospice).

The Rosesstad Old Age Home is situated in Pasteur Avenue in Bloemfontein and accommodates 72 (elderly) pensioners. The immediate need was the cleaning of a small area at one of the entrances. The Armour Training Wing took to the opportunity in order to give back to the community and fulfilled this task as best they could.

The Elpizo Baby House is a safe house for babies situated in Hospital Park, Bloemfontein. The House depends on the government for funding, which is often not enough to cover their everyday expenses. The house accommodates a maximum of six abandoned or orphaned babies at a time that are transferred to this house of safety, until the babies can be placed in foster homes. Here the Education, Training and Development (ETD) Wing ensured that the time given back was well worth it. They managed to restore an old cupboard that has been damaged over the years by moist, and unit members donated Baby Formula and disposable diapers.

The Towers of Hope Church, situated in the CBD in Bloemfontein, helps the community in many ways. Adults and children living on the streets are given a brighter future as the church offers a soup kitchen, clothes and classes such as life skills lessons. The unit assisted in the cleaning of the church and sorting clothes and transferring some of the furniture to another facility. The day was enjoyed by all involved and members really enjoyed the effort.

The Advanced Training Wing and the Driving and Maintenance Centre combined their efforts and resources to participate in the Mandela Day activities. After Chaplain Bezuidenhout, Capt Choma and Lt Fillis identified places where support is required, the planning for this day commenced.

Lesedi Centre of Hope is a faith based organisation and an independent non-governmental organisation and provides homecare for a maximum of 18 living-in patients (nine male and nine female). The organisation is responsible for HIV and AIDS awareness programmes and encourages prevention of HIV through behavioural change initiatives. Lesedi Centre of Hope also provides meals to orphans and vulnerable children and in addition to this they also run an after-care programme that assist children with the completion of their homework. The Lesedi Centre of Hope in Turflaagte Township in Bloemfontein was allocated to this grouping and their requirement was the establishing of a vegetable garden.

After reconnaissance at the hospice, WO1 Heinrich Swartz and WO2 Hannes Etsebeth took the lead in this effort and with the assistance of WO1 Boer Maartens build a structure that was covered with shadow netting. This structure will provide protection against the weather as well as birds that destroyed previous efforts of the hospice to establish a vegetable garden.

On 18 July 2017 the personnel of these two wings drove to the hospice and started with the preparations that were required. The structure was placed in position where after the ground were prepared with compost. Onions, beetroot, spinach, carrots and cauliflower seeds were planted in boxes and then placed inside the structure. The existing spinach was also replanted inside the structure and additional seeds were provided to the personnel of the hospice that must be sowed during spring.

On completion of the project Chaplain Bezuidenhout handed over clothes and non-perishable foods to the organisation. A monthly visit will be conducted to this area to confirm that care is taken of the organisation.

All members were eager and enjoyed giving back to the community. Together we will strive to make everyday a Mandela Day!

Lt Col D. Engelbrecht, email

SOLDIERS INVOLVED IN A FARM ATTACK SCENARIO EXERCISE OUTSIDE WORCESTER

Joint Tactical Headquarters Western Cape (J Tac HQ WC) was part of the planning team for compiling a scenario for an exercise about an attack on a farm. The National Joints gave an instruction that a simulation exercise regarding Rural Safety must be executed twice a year. The first simulation exercise was recently held on a farm outside Worcester.

The scenario entailed five armed suspects overwhelming the farm manager and tying him up after he was forced to open the safe and they robbing him of the weekly wages. The culprits then proceeded to the farmhouse where they assaulted the farmer and killed his wife in order to obtain weapons from his safe, and then fled in the farmer’s bakkie.

The dual aim of the exercise was to test the contingency plan for the area, including the local farm watch. It was also a training opportunity for the other rural safety managers in the Western Cape that were present. The Worcester farm watch was the first responder, followed by the SA Police Services and then other departments such as EMS, Forensics and K9.

Not only did the SA National Defence Force coordinate the script but also acted as facilitator and provided intelligence input during the various scenarios. The simulation took place in a good spirit between the various role-players and will be followed by another simulation later this year.

Lt Col Sulene de Kock, email
As part of Women’s Month, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) collaborated to assist with much needed sanitary pads for female learners as part of socio-economic upliftment programmes at schools in the Gauteng area.

Tswelopele Secondary School in Tembisa was the first checkpoint of distribution for sanitary pads. The visit also included a short presentation about a healthy lifestyle presented by the SA Military Health Service.

The Chief Director Human Resource Management, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, said they have learned that the school obtained the Most Disciplined School Award in the area awarded by the Taxi Association. She explained that discipline in the SANDF is fundamental and as such, they saw it fit to interact with disciplined youth of our society. She said the Department of Defence (DOD) has formed partnerships with other government departments and organisations, in particularly outreach programmes.

Maj Gen Motlhabane said: “We have formed a partnership with the NYDA as they contribute to youth development in terms of providing resources that will set them on their career path. The SANDF has its own programmes that focus on the youth and career development from within it ranks. We have come to realise the socio-economic situations that affect most of our families in the country. Through this partnership we decided, among other things, to start issuing sanitary pads to schools.”

She said the initiative is done in an attempt to solve problems of girl learners, such as missing schooling owing to a lack of sanitary pads. Maj Gen Motlhabane said such engagements will also be extended by introducing the SANDF to the learners which will include presentations of career opportunities that exist in the SANDF. She mentioned that the SANDF could use learners who perform well in school, especially in maths and science.

The Agency has been given the responsibility by the Government to ensure that integrated youth development programmes are run in the country. He said the responsibility includes the assurance that the developmental needs of the learners are catered for. He said: “We felt that it is important that we form partnerships with government departments from national, provincial and local and also include the private sector and other industries to join hands and find sustainable solutions that will enable us to make sure that your development needs are cater for.”

Mr Ramukumba stated: “We have started a CEO Education Enablers Fund to some of you who are from disadvantaged families and provide you with basic needs whether social or health wise, to enable you to focus on your studies.” He said it is important for them to engage with different organisations and stakeholders so that they are able to intervene in many of the lives of the learners.

The Life Orientation HOD at the Tswelopele Secondary School, Ms Kekeletso Sibiya, outlined the positive impact the planned monthly donation of sanitary pads would have on both the learners and the school. She added: “Most of the girl learners become absent when they have their menstrual cycle because they do not have sanitary pads due to various reasons; now we are trying to build a relationship with them.” She said the school was chosen because most of the learners are from disadvantaged families. Ms Sibiya mentioned that they are also trying to expose them to different careers in the SANDF.
Defence Minister hands over computers to Wongalethu High learners

Since the intervention by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans and the Eastern Cape Department of Education in 2015 the Grade 12 learners’ pass rate improved in 2016 from 17% to 34%.

The private sector came on board to help in this regard and donated 20 desktop computers to the computer laboratory of Wongalethu High School. The Department of Education donated 21 laptops for the teachers and a teaching and training mobile broadcasting kit. On 1 September 2017, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula and the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Phumulo Masualle on behalf of the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for the Department of Education, Mr Mandla Makupula handed over this equipment over to the school. With the provision of brand new computers it is expected that the Grade 12 learners’ pass rate will soar in 2017.

The Principal, Ms Ntombizonke Mamatu, said that the pass rate of the school is one of her priorities and the drop in results of the Grade 12 learners is also a concern to her. She said: “This intervention by the Defence Minister and the Eastern Cape Department of Education is indeed a welcome relieve and highly appreciated. All of our 598 learners will academically reap the benefits of this intervention. I am personally grateful to Minister Mapisa-Nqakula for her efforts to plough back to the community where she was born.”

Addressing the learners, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula urged them to use these computers in a way that will benefit them academically, warning them about the ever increasing negative side of online social media platforms. The Minister pleaded with the community to protect the school’s assets as these were beneficial not only to learners but to themselves too.

“I am quite excited by the gift from Minister Mapisa-Nqakula because we are now going to be able to do our research at school and that will surely assist us in improving our marks,” said 18-year-old Azide Sikonwane, a Grade 12 learner at Wongalethu High School. In.

SA Soldier

focus on youth

In January 2015 the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, adopted Wongalethu High School in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape as she was concerned about the poor performance of the learners due to a lack of resources.

Wongalethu High School had obtained a mere 17% pass rate in December 2014. This dismal performance by the school was not only unacceptable but an embarrassment to the Mdantsane community who take pride in Wongalethu High School. The High School is one of the oldest schools in Mdantsane turning 50 years in 2018.

At the time of the Minister’s visit to Wongalethu High School she met with the teachers and Department of Education officials at the school to discuss remedial action to be instituted to curb the downward trend in the passing rate in 2015 and years to come.

18-year-old Azide Sikonwane, a Grade 12 computer class learner at Wongalethu High School (front), with learners from the neighbouring Zinzani High School (in green school uniforms) who attended the event.

LEFT: The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, and the Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Phumulo Masualle (right), visiting the computer laboratory of Wongalethu High School.
Going strong all the way

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photo by Mr Katiso Mabuza

The adage that we do not plant a tree for us, but for future generations to enjoy the shade, comes immediately to mind when Col Elsa van Wyk, Senior Staff Officer Reserve Force Projects at Defence Reserves, passionately shares the milestones of her career in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) when being interviewed.

SA Soldier caught up with her during one of the rare days of calm that she was not spending in meetings and conferences, working tirelessly behind the scenes as the Secretary of the SANDF Education Trust to ensure the necessary funds are available to support the education needs of the dependants of members killed or severely injured in the line of duty after 27 April 1994.

“I have many fond memories of achievements in my military career, like being appointed as the Secretary for the SANDF Education Trust that was established by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, to provide financial assistance by means of bursaries for educational purposes to dependants of SANDF members who lost their lives,” Col Van Wyk said.

Col Van Wyk, who is strong on administration, left a solid base for her successors to further the Defence Review. She stated: “I was appointed as the Programme Coordinator of the Defence Review Committee as instituted by the then Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu, and managed to drive the Defence Review programme to completion within the timeline as set by the Minister from July 2011 to November 2012.”

One of the highlights of her career was in 1987, when she became an Officer and was appointed as a Troop Commander of a group of 60 volunteer women in the SA Army who trained at 5 Signal Regiment to increase the number of women in the SA Corps of Signals.

She revealed that her childhood dream was to become a teacher and in the military to become an Instructor. Asked why a teacher? She said: “A teacher inspires hope and it’s like a light that lights the way for others. Teaching is the profession that teaches all of the other professions and fortunately in the military I became an Instructor which paved the way for one to become a unit commander.”

Col Van Wyk was born and bred in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, where she attended Laerskool J.J. van Der Merwe and later Hoërskool Ermelo where she matriculated. Soon thereafter she joined the SA Army on 5 January 1979 as a member of the Corps of Signals and did her basic military training at the then SA Army Women’s College in George.

From 1979 to 1986 Col Van Wyk was a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) stationed at 5 Signal Regiment in Wonderboom, Pretoria, where she was a Signals Instructor. She specifically trained the then National Servicemen to be Electronic Warfare Operators to read and send Morse code and Systems Operators to set up command and control communications links and to maintain basic radio communications.

In 2001 she was appointed as the first female Officer Commanding of the School of Signals. From January 2008 to June 2010 she was appointed as Officer Commanding of Army Support Base Dequar Road.

Col Van Wyk says that another turning point in her career was when she was appointed as the first female Defence Advisor to Botswana from November 2004 to January 2008. While in Botswana as the South African Defence Advisor she participated in an international exercise (Exercise THOKGAMO) in conjunction with all participating Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. She said that as a woman the reaction from members of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) was positive and that’s where she learnt that life is not about finding oneself, but is about living your life as the best “You”.

Col Van Wyk mentioned that South Africa has key partnerships with SADC member countries through bilateral and multilateral interactions. She believes that South Africa is part of the region and global community, and that nations working together for the good of humanity is progress, and working together is success.

During her deployment period in Botswana her key roles included: creating a positive relationship and image of the SANDF within the Botswana community and with civic leaders, strengthening the mutually beneficial military relationship between South Africa and Botswana. She was also responsible for managing the training exchange programmes between the SANDF and the BDF with specific reference to Pilot Training and Senior NCO Infantry Training. She acted as a liaison officer between the SANDF and the BDF. Since the BDF was an all-male establishment at that time the BDF also utilised her to provide input regarding the integration of women into the BDF based on her experience and lessons learnt with the utilisation of women in the SANDF.

Col Van Wyk said: “Soldiers are like a ray of hope for those whose lives are plunged in the darkness of despair. They are heroes who step up when everyone else backs down.”

Her motto in life is: “Just do it” and her message to women is: “Value life; value each other or each person. When you go through hardships face everything and rise, never surrender and dare to be great - greatness is the fruit of hard work, sacrifice and courage. She adds: “Sometimes you will never know the true value of a moment until it becomes a memory.”
Chief of the SA Air Force awards Long Service Medals

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Pte Paul Mpangala

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, bestowed Long Service Medals for 40 and 30 years on recipients who had distinguished themselves through long and efficient service in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Medals were conferred on 21 recipients for uninterrupted long service at the Chief of the SANDF Medal Parade held at 4 SA Infantry Battalion in Middelburg.

Presenting the medals on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Lt Gen Msimang stated that the aim of the parade was to recognise the contribution and sacrifices these members made over the years. He added: “We are recognising you and your families who have stood by you over the years. As you know, we have one member who has over 40 years of service and twenty members who have over 30 years.”

Lt Gen Msimang stated: “The history of honours and awards goes back a long way in the military. Military Commanders have always realised that their recognition of meritorious service or deeds of bravery by way of an honour or an award is something which often inspires further such achievements by the receiver.

The Chief of the SANDF requested me to deliver the following message verbatim: “It takes discipline and resilience to serve an institution like the SANDF for a period of over 30 years. The officers on parade have distinguished themselves in serving the country and its people and that is why we honour them in public”.

Lt Gen Msimang described a soldier as an extraordinary being; one who answers the nation’s call to serve the country. He said: “What is it that makes soldiers commit deeds of singular bravery, or devote their lives to serving the nation for perhaps five to ten years? The answer is simple ... It is because a soldier is not an ordinary person.”

He said the SANDF wished to express its appreciation to the families for their sacrifices in supporting the members during their service to the nation. Lt Gen Msimang said: “To the members on parade, we are proudly affirming your hard work and dedication. We celebrate your service and sacrifice, thank you for your devotion.”

Lt Gen Msimang said: “Well done to you, dignified loyal members of the SANDF. I am confident that other, more junior members will be encouraged to walk in your footsteps to work harder, so that tomorrow they too can be acknowledged as epitomising diligence, discipline and integrity within the SANDF.

“Allow me to express my appreciation to all SANDF members on parade today. I also thank the Officer Commanding 4 SA Infantry Battalion and his staff who have contributed to making this medal parade a splendid event. To the recipients today, on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, I say: wear your medals with pride and dignity and let it be a pledge to yourselves and to the nation of your personal commitment to strive for excellence and to defend our democracy.”

MWO Frederick Louw received the Bar to the Medalje vir Troue Dienis, 40 years.
Cpl Magushana Maselela received the Bar to the Medalje vir Troue Dienis, 30 years.
Col Allen Nelson was one of the members who received the Good Service Medal for 50 years, at the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Medal Parade recently held at Naval Base Simon’s Town.

At the end of the medal parade, a media interview was conducted with Col Nelson on his military career of 50 years’ service. He pointed out that the issues of discipline, commitment and hard work must be put into practice.

Col Nelson added that even though the day of the medal parade marked his last day in the SANDF, he was not just going to sit back, as he has established a youth development programme that will offer military training on Saturdays to Grade 11 and 12 learners. He said the training would give learners an insight into the military as well as discipline.

He said this would also be a platform to create jobs for those learners who thought there were no jobs out there. He added they were also running a construction project at Youngsfield in Cape Town where they were teaching learners the art of bricklaying and tiling.

Col Nelson said that he felt good about receiving the medal and that it had been a great journey to serve in the SANDF. He said that if it was not for his wife, he could not have made it this far.

The Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, bestowed the various Long Service Medals on the deserving SANDF members during the medal parade. The SA Navy Band provided the music during the medal parade.

Two members received the Good Service Medal for 50 years, 15 members received the Good Service Medal for 40 years and 177 members received the Good Service Medal for 30 years.

V Adm Hlongwane indicated that recognition and reward for good service had a rich history and dated back as far as the third century. He added that the award of medals was therefore a long standing tradition for honouring and rewarding services rendered.

The Chief of the SA Navy, stated: “Medal recipients, you should be proud of your loyal service, and today we reward you for what you have given to the SANDF and what you have given your country and its people by presenting you with these medals.” He said the recipients of the medals were there because of their discipline and hard work. He urged members on parade as well as all members of the SANDF to walk, think and eat discipline.

He remarked that the military and discipline were two sides of the same coin. According to him there is no military if there is no discipline. He pointed out that the Defence Review states: “Sound discipline, founded upon respect for, loyalty to and properly constituted authority is the cornerstone of a professional and functional National Defence Force”. V Adm Hlongwane encouraged soldiers to embark upon a process of introspection to determine if discipline existed in their lives or not. He said that ill-disciplined soldiers and their actions diminished not only the SANDF’s accomplishments, but also the very fabric of a disciplined military force.
The Military Police Division under the leadership of Provost Marshal General, R Adm (JG) Mokgadi Maphoto, recently hosted a two-day Department of Defence (DOD) Anti-Criminality Seminar at Defence Internal Audit Division offices in Centurion.

The aim of the seminar was to give all spheres of the DOD a better understanding of the impact of criminality and devising strategies towards combating fraud and corruption in the Department.

Topics and presentations held over the two days focussed on crime, fraud and corruption. It further highlighted issues such as risks, financial misconduct, compliance, good governance, accountability, proper records management, ethical practices, appropriate information technology controls and respect for the law.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, officially opened the seminar. In his keynote address he highlighted that South Africa is a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption. He pointed out that the National Development Plan which is a long term vision government has set in motion to work towards the development of a country with a zero tolerance for corruption. He expressed his profound gratitude to the invited guests and all delegates for attending the seminar. He said that acting together as a united and coherent force offers us the possibility to win the fight against corruption.

Provost Marshal General, R Adm (JG) Mokgadi Maphoto, said that we all need to support coordination between Government, business and civil society’s efforts to reduce corruption.

Invited guest speakers included Brig Zama Basi, Head of Anti-Corruption Investigation (Hawks), Mr Leon Esterhuyse, Director Forensic Examiner (ProScripto), Dr Trevor Budhram, Senior Lecture Department of Policy Practice (Unisa), Ms Nobathembu Mkoko, Consultant in Information Management (SITA), Ms Karen Neil, Assistant Director Financial Misconduct (Finance Management Division: SANDF), Adv Paul Louw, Prosecutor (National Prosecuting Authority) and other senior SANDF Officers.
“W e are where we are today because of your courage and boldness, you held the blade by the sharp side during the apartheid era and even in my very own uniform, I am a child in front of you,” said Gen Solly Shoke, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), when he recently visited the Society for the Care of the Aged in Vosloorus.

The visit was aimed at strengthening the relationship that Gen Shoke and the Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, established over the past few years with the Care Centre. This was done by sharing lunch with them as well as blessing them with blankets and a box for each one, full of healthy vegetables. The Care Centre was identified by the Chief of the SANDF and the Chaplain General who presented them with a number of gifts.

Addressing the guests on behalf of all the Care Centre members, Ms Lillian Thandiwe Molefe, the Chairperson of the Society for the Care of the Aged, expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the enormous work that the SANDF is doing for them. Furthermore she said they have seen what Gen Shoke is doing in their lives and that they are running out of words of appreciation as he keeps on doing more than expected.

She remarked that whenever they cry in need, Gen Shoke does his best to help where he can with an open heart.

General Shoke said: “Today I do not want to talk much but to fulfil the promise that I made to this home to spend a pleasant day and have lunch with you all. As I stand in front of you all I would like to take this moment to honour women as we celebrate Women’s Month.”

At this event the SANDF celebrated the women who stood up for our country, who brought the freedom we enjoy today.

One thing we must forever remember is that women are the mothers of the nation; they are the pillows we need in terms of comfort, and on rainy and windy days they offer us an umbrella of love. These are the women who carry our country with pride.

In closing, the Chief of the SANDF said: “It was an honour for me to join you today in this home. I cannot but express my feeling that you made my day filled with nothing but greatness: I enjoyed the choir and the dance moves of my parents. I am very happy and I promise to keep you forever in my thoughts.”

General Solly Shoke, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, handing over gifts to all the members of the Society for the Care of the Aged.

The Chairperson of the Society for the Care of the Aged, Ms Lillian Thandiwe Molefe, giving thanks to Gen Solly Shoke, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, for gracing them with his presence and spending the day with them.
Joint Tactical Headquarters (J Tac HQ) Limpopo recently handed over school uniforms and sanitary towels to the learners of Maroi Combined School in Musina. Following the operational order instruction from the Officer Commanding 10 SA Infantry Battalion, Maj Mpiyakhe Nhulamayo, which instructed base commanders to establish a community service initiative project that is aligned to the SANDF social responsibility programme.

“This instruction gave birth to Project MAROI,” said the Project Manager, Maj Mlandu Tshabalala, Commander of Alpha Company.

Maroi Combined School, which that was identified as the most suitable beneficiary of the SANDF social responsibility programme, is located approximately 36 kilometres from J Tac HQ Limpopo and is debatably the poorest school in the Musina border area. The school is situated on Mr Hannes Nel’s orange farm, Maswiri Maroi Conservancy. The school combines primary, intermediary and high school learners. These learners are children of the farm workers.

Maj Tshabalala formed a committee comprising 14 members to steer Project MAROI. The project was funded by J Tac HQ Limpopo members who from the goodness of their hearts individually adopted a learner they wished to sponsor and donated a minimum of R300 towards the purchasing of the uniforms and sanitary towels for 269 learners. The theme of the day for the handing over of uniforms and sanitary towels to the learners was “igniting education through vibrant passion”.

The Principal of Maroi Combined School, Mr Edward Mafune, in an exclusive interview with SA Soldier indicated that he was indeed happy with this social responsibility initiative by the SANDF. Ms Mellita Masebe, Maroi Combined School’s Grades R and 1 teacher, with her learners.

Rfn Wendy Gckerskey with a learner who on the day developed a natural bond similar to that of mother and daughter. For the duration of the event “daughter” (the learner) did not want anyone but her “mother” (Rfn Gckerskey).

Mafune said: “Personally to me this is indicative of a regime change. By this act of caring and compassion displayed here today the SANDF has proved that it belongs to the people and soldiering is not all about guns and wars, this act truly changes the deeply embedded negative perception. I feel honoured and proud to be a South African and particularly proud of the SANDF as our last line of defence in this democratic time.” In their speech, the Principal, Mr Tshikonelo Nekhubvi, and the Soutpansberg North Circuit Manager, Dr Ntavhanyeni Phaswana, shared the sentiments of Mr Mafune. While encouraging the SANDF, Dr Phaswana and Mr Nekhubvi challenged the SANDF to continue with this social responsibility effort to make it their signature among the South African citizens.

The guests and the general audience were entertained by the all-girls school choir and the J Tac HQ Limpopo Choir as well as treated to patrol motorbike, horseback, veterinarian and canine displays.
As Women’s Month drew to a close, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) hosted a colourful Women’s Parade comprising of only female soldiers of the four Services to pay tribute to the heroines of the 1956 Women’s March.

The Women’s Parade was held at the Pretoria Military Sports Grounds in Thaba Tshwane under the theme: “Women United in Moving South Africa Forward”. The historical context of the 1956 Women’s March was to protest against the Pass Laws, the demand for recognition as full and equal human beings with no gender discrimination and exploitation.

The Chief Director Human Resource Management of the SA National Defence Force, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, was the main functionary at this year’s Women Parade. Addressing the spectators, she said that the historical example of the women of 1956 should guide us all to build on the gains that those women made since the advent of our democracy. She said that women of all walks of life became equal partners in the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

Members of the SA Army participating in the Women’s Parade.

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tihaole

The Chief Director Human Resource Management of the SA National Defence Force, Maj Gen Catherine Motlhabane, encouraging women to defy the stereotypes and break down barriers. Standing behind her is the Director of Nursing of the SA Military Health Service, Brig Gen Lulu Siwisa.

Members of the SA Air Force on parade.
She said: “This is to pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who protested against the Pass Laws as they have also paved the way for women in the SANDF.”

Maj Gen Motlhabane pointed out that the promotion of gender equality is one of the key elements on the SANDF’s transformation agenda and that the SANDF remains resolute in promoting gender equality and women’s rights. She said that to this end, the SANDF has consciously adopted a 30% ratio of women representation in all decision-making structures. She added: “This decision has led to increased women representation in the SANDF and since 1994 the representation of women has increased from 2% to 21% for the SANDF and the Secretariat currently stands at 37%.”

She said that today’s parade demonstrates our commitment that women participate in all spheres of life, and that they are now actively involved in the provision of peace and security. Maj Gen Motlhabane added: “Currently the deployment of women in peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has increased to 232 of which 158 are utilised on the sharp end. This is evidence that the SANDF is on track in implementing the United Nation’s Security Council Resolutions as required.”

Maj Gen Motlhabane acknowledged the outstanding contribution and good work that female soldiers are doing in the DRC under the leadership of Lt Col Constance Tlhaole, the Officer Commanding of the RSA Engineer Squadron; Together they initiated an outreach programme which is providing basic food through vegetable farming for the locals living around their deployment area. She added: “They have also assisted them in establishing a day care centre that will contribute in reducing child labour and child soldiers.”

The defining achievement for women is that the United Nations Security Council recognises their role in the security sector and has adopted resolutions on their participation in peace and security. The African Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocols and the Defence Review recognise women as a critical component in peacekeeping, peace-building missions and multidimensional operations.

Speaking to members of the media shortly after the parade, Brig Gen Lulu Siwisa, the Director Nursing of the SA Military Health Service, said that it fills her with pride and it is a great pleasure to see this beautiful parade. She mentioned that the gains made by the women in South Africa have been extremely hard fought for and their struggles are entrenched in the country’s history.
Farewell to Maj Gen Olga Nodola – outgoing Chief Director Transformation Management

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

Members of the Chief Directorate Transformation Management, SA National Defence Force (SANDF) senior officials and esteemed guests recently bade farewell to Maj Gen Olga Nodola, the outgoing Chief Director Transformation Management, during a farewell function held at Air Force Base Swartkop West in Valhalla.

The programme director, Col (Rev) Lazarus Mokobake, in his opening remarks said that Maj Gen Nodola will be remembered for her hard work. He described her as someone who was extremely dynamic in the way she looked at life.

Ambassador Themba Rubushe told the gathering that normally when one evaluates people of high quality, one compares them to different types of metal and those valued the most are compared to gold. He said that Maj Gen Nodola committed herself to an objective that could easily have claimed her young life. He said: “As you are looking forward to retirement, enjoy what may be your short break and remember that cadres never retired but are re-tired.”

Ms Moira Granny Seape, Chief Executive Officer Ahanang Hardware Construction, said that Maj Gen Nodola lived her life in uprightness and honour. She said: “She is not only a seasoned, trained and experienced health practitioner. Most of her adult life was spent caring for the sick and those that could not do much for themselves. Helping back to life those that are weak are attributes that she possesses.” She stated that goodbyes are never easy, at the same time they are fulfilling when one knows and realises that those that we bid farewell have left solid foundations. Ms Seape added: “You have been a pillar, a rock and a tree under which shade one could find rest.”

Maj Gen Nodola related her experiences on her arrival to the Chief Directorate Transformation Management and the SANDF for believing in me.” She further thanked the Services and Divisions, CDTM staff members and the entire military community for their support.

Maj Gen Nodola added: “It was not a walk in the park, but you all made my time pleasant. As I hand over the baton, let us focus on the future and continue to make the DOD/SANDF shine. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Over the years serving in the SANDF has been a great and overwhelming experience.”
Meet a passionate and driven General

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photo by Pte Paul Mpangala

Brig Gen Gladys Soldaat, Director Army Human Resources Plan, is a passionate and driven person who is also a sport fanatic. She played for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Women's rugby team from where she was selected to play for the Blue Bulls Women's rugby team since she came to Pretoria in 2005.

In 2005 she played trials for the selection of the first Springbok Women's rugby team and unfortunately ended up with a serious injury and could not continue. She was appointed as the Vice-president of SANDF Women's Rugby serving on the Rugby Executive Management Board. Her other pet hobby is fast cars and she enjoys travelling and driving.

Brig Gen Soldaat is a strong-willed spiritual woman who can take you on a journey on how to assess and plan for all areas of life with a view to achieve self-mastery. Her career of 30 years in the military is exciting and fulfilling. She was appointed to the rank of Brigadier General in 2015 as the Director Army Human Resources Plan at the SA Army Headquarters. Describing the feeling, Brig Gen Soldaat said: “I never saw this appointment or promotion coming and I was bewildered by the whole thing”. Her main responsibilities include ensuring that the SA Army HR Budget is properly planned, managed and spent within the stipulations of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and all other governance that directs the spending of government funds.

Brig Gen Soldaat was pleased to say that owing to our country’s history, in the past women were largely excluded to join the military as it was a predominately male-dominated sector and as such those who joined were placed in support musternings. Being passionate about transformation, she says that change is often misunderstood. She explained: “Today women are no longer limited, they can now fulfil a variety of functions and female demographics are growing.”

Having human compassion, being a religious and moral person she says that our country still has its fair share of problems of unemployment, social ills and demons of abuse that afflict our society. She is currently studying Theology through Unisa, as she wants to forge her relationship with communities and engage them at all levels and embark on a journey of building a joyous and prosperous society. She believes that we all have a vital role to play in our country’s growth and evolution.

She grew up in Stellenbosch near Cape Town and completed her schooling at the Vlaeberg Primary School and proceeded to Kleinvlei Senior Secondary School in Eersterivier, where she matriculated in 1985. She said that after matric she worked part-time as a shop assistant. Brig Gen Soldaat said: “In 1986 an announcement was made on radio that Coloured women can apply to join the SA Army. I was instantly curious, I applied and was considered and appointed on 2 February 1987, at the time of appointment we were only eight Coloured women to be considered and appointed on 2 February 1987, at the time of appointment we were only eight Coloured women to be appointed in the SA Coloured Corps and we did our basic military training at Wingfield Military Base and were posted in support musternings, such as finance, personnel and logistics.”

Although she rejoiced at getting her big break when she joined the SA Army, there was more hard work ahead. In 1991 she completed Officer Forming Course as the only Coloured woman on course at the SA Army Gymnasium. At the end of the course she was presented with a trophy for the best disciplined student. She laughed when she recalls her basic military training: “We were exposed to demanding responsibilities that will stretch one to the limit, both physically and psychologically and there was no easy way. Despite the odds we made it through”.

She is passionate about people and this is one of the attributes that is clearly required in her line of work as a Human Resource practitioner. Brig Gen Soldaat considers it a blessing to have been guided by senior leaders in the SANDF, such as Lt Gen Norman Yengeni, the Chief of Human Resources, and others to always have been supported to fulfil her passion and helped her evolved as a person and military officer. Brig Gen Soldaat also developed herself and enrolled with Unisa where she obtained a National Diploma in Human Resources.

Brig Gen Soldaat pointed out: “I am a born soldier.” Her message to other women is: “Life is about creating yourself: Believe in your dreams; never doubt yourself; work hard and nothing is impossible to a willing heart and never let anything slow you from conquering your goals”. 

Brig Gen Gladys Soldaat, Director SA Army Human Resources Plan.
Department of Defence celebrating women

The Department of Defence (DOD) is fully behind women’s empowerment by providing equal opportunities to both men and women in all positions and giving women access to developmental opportunities.

The DOD is continuing in the advancement of women in critical positions although there is still much to be done. Therefore, it remains the duty of the current leadership within the DOD to ensure that the agenda of women emancipation does not fall by the wayside, in particular, for women who still require access to resources and are still at the bottom of the economic ladder.

The DOD salutes all women who have dedicated their lives in serving the country and selflessly making a huge contribution towards the safety of our communities.

In the essence of OR Tambo’s “flowers of the revolution” proclamation, the Department profiled remarkable women during Women’s Month about their triumphs, their tragedies and what they are learning from life. Two such extraordinary women are: Brig Gen Winnie Leketi, Director Human Resources Career Management, and Ms Aretha Marsh, Senior Personnel Practitioner Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) Education, Training and Development (ETD).

Director Human Resources Career Management

What was it like growing up, Brig Gen Leketi? I was born in Ga-Rankuwa, Pretoria. I am the eldest and only daughter and have two brothers.

What kind of school child were you? I was very dedicated to my studies and managed to achieve my junior degree, B Admin in Public Administration from Turffloop University at the age of 20 years. I achieved B Admin (Hons) at the University of Pretoria while employed by the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

How big was your family? I am married with three children: two sons and a daughter.

How did joining the SANDF mould you? I joined the SANDF at the age of 21 years. I am an introvert by nature and joining the SANDF assisted me in improving my interpersonal skills which boosted my self-confidence.

As a person who was born from a poor family and grew up in the township I am grateful that I was given opportunities to visit other provinces, some Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, and Europe. The SANDF presented me with opportunities to experience other countries. I appreciate the developmental plans that are put in place for us in the SANDF.

What kind of challenges did you have to overcome to get where you are in your career? I joined the SA Army, Personnel Services Corps. I started as a Non-commissioned Officer (Lance Corporal) and was identified to do Officers Formative Course and served a greater part of my career as an Officer.

I have three children and being a soldier and a mother is not easy. Sometimes when duty calls and you have to work after hours or be away from home you need a strong support system of people who can take care of your children. I am thankful for my supervisors, family and neighbours who assisted me when I needed them most.

What does it mean to be a woman within the SANDF? I was utilised in critical posts such as Senior Staff Officer Human Resources within the SA Army Support Formation, I assumed that post when transformation had to be institutionalised and had to take place in the SANDF. One of my roles included placement of SA Army members in posts according to the equity guidelines that had to be applied during the nomination of members in promotional courses. I felt that the expectation was double heavy on
me as compared to my male counterparts - there was a lot of criticism that I had to overcome.

Then, I was rotated to the office of the Chief Human Resources where we had to work with all the Services of the SANDF; I had to quickly learn the traditions of other Services. The expectations were more as I had to ensure that there is no discrimination and ensure that the unity of force is achieved.

I was recommended to attend the strategic leadership course at the Gibbs University where we learned how to assert ourselves when doing one’s work. The environment in the SANDF is conducive for women to achieve their full potential. It is upon us to support and mentor each other.

What life targets have you set for yourself? The National Defence Force was here before we were born and will still be here when we pass on, and it will constantly need young people. I use every opportunity to learn from my seniors and will always impart knowledge to others in everything I do. My goal is to occupy the highest Human Recourses’ post in the SANDF before my retirement at the age of 55 years.

In my personal life, I want to be the best mother-in-law ever and stop the norm that mother-in-laws are not good. I think my generation can achieve that.

What kind of child were you? I had to be disciplined and obedient. I started house chores at the age of 10 and assisted my mother, she had to work and managed us and attended adult school to further her studies at the same time. She inspired me to attend school because it was tough for her to handle work, family and school at the same time.

What has been your biggest formative experience in joining the SANDF? The SANDF gave me an opportunity to develop my full potential and allowed me to make mistakes, learn from them and gave me an opportunity to correct them.

Senior Personnel Practitioner PSAP ETD

In 2008 Ms Aretha Marsh had an opportunity to join the DOD as an intern. “My contract ended in 2009, which meant I had to go back and sit at home. Luckily, six days after that my life was changed because I got a call from the Department offering me a permanent job as a senior personnel clerk. Since then I have not looked back as I grabbed every learning opportunity and my career path flourished within the Department,” Ms Marsh said.

A great milestone of my career path just happened recently as I will be coordinating the national recruitment of the internship programme for the Department. This is an important milestone, knowing that I have positively contributed towards the youth’s lives and their communities at large. I witnessed smiles and tears of joy while handing employment contracts to interns. As a former intern, it warms my heart to be contributing towards these young people.

Being a woman in the Department really gives me a sense of motherhood. It evokes the need of caring and wanting to make sure that the youth is properly guided and channelled regarding issues, such as mentorship, career advice and life coaching. I am grateful for the opportunity given to me by the Department and believing in my abilities and entrusting this programme to me which will continue to shape the youth of our country. “For being a woman within the DOD means empowering all those around me; having the responsibility to assist other women and to go beyond. It also gives me the confidence that I can do anything and be anything.”

What was it like growing up, Ms Marsh? Growing up was not easy, I come from a very small family, we are only two children and I am the first born. I was raised by a single parent – my now late mother. My parents divorced when I was young. My late mother tried her best to give me the best education possible.

What kind of child were you? I was a very talkative, loving and naughty child. I always spoke my mind and I loved to play sports, especially netball and hockey.

What kind of challenges did you have to overcome to get where you are in your career? When I was busy with my third year at university in 2007, my mother passed away. I had to bury her and it meant I had to get a job since there was no income which was going to sustain me and my siblings in order to also pay for my school fees.

What kind of challenges did you have to overcome to get where you are in your career? When I was busy with my third year at university in 2007, my mother passed away. I had to bury her and it meant I had to get a job since there was no income which was going to sustain me and my siblings in order to also pay for my school fees.

How has joining the DOD moulded you? Joining the DOD moulded me to grow up and to learn to take responsibility for my life and future. It made me see life in a different way. I can now say my ambitions have elevated me to a higher point and my dreams are so big they even scare me sometimes.

What life goals have you set for yourself? My life goals are to work very hard and to be able to start my own company in the near future, which will assist young South Africans to get employment and empower themselves.
RIPPEL EFFECT
FROM LOCAL INNOVATION TO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

XRGL40 EXTENDED RANGE 40MM GRENADE LAUNCHER
The purpose of deploying a 40mm launcher and ammunition is to neutralize, disrupt and destroy enemy forces during offensive, defensive and peacekeeping operations. The effectiveness of the 40mm MGL, to distances up to 375 meters, has been proven over many years of use in numerous countries around the world and in the SANDF.

In 2007 Rippel Effect became the first company in the world to prove that 40mm ammunition can be safely and effectively used in a shoulder-fired weapon at distances up to 800 meters. In order to prove and qualify the concept, Rippel had to develop its own experimental 40mm ammunition (ERLP™), a new launcher, designed from scratch to withstand the much higher pressures of 40mm medium velocity ammunition (XRGL40®) and the world’s first - and still only – electronic, programmable, multi-velocity sighting system for 40mm MGL (GR40®). The XRGL40® System was qualified in 2007, witnessed and verified by the CSIR and the SANDF and was introduced to the world at the 22nd Small Arms and Cannons Symposium DCMT Shrivenham, UK 19–21 August 2008.

Since then, Rippel has worked closely with ammunition manufacturers from all over the world to assist in the development and qualification of 40 x 51mm medium velocity ammunition. In 2012 RDM from South Africa became the first 40mm ammunition manufacturer to qualify their 40 x 51mm medium velocity ammunition and to certify it as “safe for use in the Rippel Effect XRGL40”. RDM 40mm medium velocity ammunition is available in the same types as the low velocity 40mm ammunition currently in use in the SANDF. Subsequently Diehl BGT Defence from Germany has qualified 40 x 51mm ammunition in a joint project with Rippel Effect and ongoing projects are currently pursued with Energetics Technologies in the UK and Indumil in Colombia.

During the period between 2008 and 2012 when ammunition was being developed and qualified, Rippel invested further in the development of the System. The VPPD™ device enables the launcher to semi-automatically cycle the cylinder with low velocity ammunition, medium velocity ammunition and modern less lethal ammunition without any changes to the launcher. As a consequence, the XRGL40® is today also certified to cycle on semi-automatic less lethal ammunition with very low port pressures from the world’s foremost manufacturers of this type of ammunition, Condor in Brazil and ALS in the USA.

Rippel also developed a Soft Double Mount for the XRGL40® system. The Double Mount is light in weight, fits into a standard NATO pintle and makes it possible for the XRGL40® to be used in a mounted and dismounted role by simply clipping it in, or out of the mount as required.

The XRGL40® gives a significant advantage to special forces, marines, peacekeepers and infantry grenadiers during urban- and rural operations in a mounted or
dismounted role. “It takes the massive fire power of the 40mm MGL, from 375 meters to 800 meters, yet it weighs only 5kg,” says Ramfolo. “The GR40 sighting system allows the operator to choose between low- and medium-velocity ammunition with the push of a button,” explains Mr. Ramfolo. “The GR40® is compatible for use with night vision devices; this and the ability to cycle low- medium- and less lethal ammunition makes it possible for the operational commander to deploy the launcher in multiple roles and in scaled operations during night and day,” Ramfolo further explains.

**Rippel Production Manager, Jerry Mlangeni, explaining the functioning of the UBL40® seen here mounted on the AK47 with the Rippel Rail System and the CRAR-32™ sight.**

**IGS-4S™ INDIRECT GUNNER SIGHT**

The IGS-4S™ Indirect Gunner Sight is a cost-effective solution for providing 24/7 below Armour observation and ranging capability with vehicle mounted weapons in calibres from 7.62mm to 125mm. The System is manufactured and marketed by Rippel in partnership with Vision 24 Observation Systems – also from South Africa.

The system is fitted with a thermal camera, a day camera and a LRF and provides the operator with the ability to fire the vehicle’s weapon in all weather conditions, low visibility and darkness.

The Colombian Army has standardised on the Rippel IGS-4S for their Cascavel fleet and the system is in operation in several countries on South African manufactured platforms.

**Rippel Effect XR4L40® with the GR40® reflex sighting system in the shoulder fired position – shown here during training in Colombia.** The XR4L40® is currently in service in 13 countries, including 2 NATO countries.

**AK RAIL SYSTEM AND UBL40®**

The Rippel 40mm under barrel grenade launcher (UBL40®) is designed to be used with their Upgrade Rail System for the AK47. The Rail System allows for the launcher to be mounted closer to the center of gravity of the AR and can be fitted to the AK47 without any mechanical changes to the weapon. The UBL40® opens to the side (left or right). The Rail System also allows for the fitment of tactical equipment such as laser designators and reflex sighting systems. Rippel also manufactures the CRAR-32™ reflex sight that can be mounted on a ballistic compensator and then used to aim both the rifle and the grenade launcher. The Rippel Rail System can also be adapted to fit the R4 assault rifle.

“Rippel Effect Manufacturing is a South African Company, owned by South Africans, working with technology developed 100% locally by Rippel and exported to 33 countries around the world by them” said Ramfolo. “We now look forward to bringing our internationally recognized and acclaimed products to South Africa and Africa,” Ramfolo concluded.
Army Support Base Johannesburg welcomes its new female Officer Commanding

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

The outgoing Officer Commanding Army Support Base (ASB) Johannesburg, Col Veron Witbooi, handed over the reins of the base to his successor, Col Mafihlwase Mkhize. Col Witbooi explained that the management of such a base is to be effective and efficient in executing its tasks.

Col Witbooi said the ASB Johannesburg will soon become a centre of excellence for logistics computer systems with a 20 seater computer training centre and accommodation. The centre will assist the region in eliminating the backlog in the CALMIS and other logistic systems.

He said: “Renovation projects will commence in the new year which will change the face of the ASB Johannesburg. Renovations of the mess already started and soon it will be a pleasure to eat and prepare food in that facility. Renovations are currently underway at the Zuurbekom married quarters.”

Col Witbooi expressed gratitude to members of the ASB Johannesburg and the Lenz Military Base for their cooperation and assistance during his tenure as the Officer Commanding. He said that the social upliftment projects that they have done made a huge difference in the lives of the community and the children. He said the unit has completed renovations and painted buildings at the Vaal Childcare Centre which had put smiles on the children’s faces.

Col Witbooi said: “The logistics team of ASB Johannesburg worked tirelessly to get the logistical systems in a sound state. The procurement team faced many challenges to ensure that our client units could be satisfied with their logistical requirements. I need to commend the logistical team for the extra mile they were prepared to walk in the provision of ammunition and rations at short notices. Often we had to use initiatives to make things happen. The logistical team include Supply Support and the Procurement Section. There are individuals that can take ASB Johannesburg to the next level. I want to encourage them to continue to work as part of a team.”

The incoming Officer Commanding of the ASB Johannesburg hails from Kroonstad in the Free State Province. Col Mkhize completed a Finance Management Programme, a Logistics Management Programme at the University of Pretoria and a Master’s Degree in Defence and Military Strategy at the University of Madras in India.

In 2017 Col Mkhize received a Book Prize Award for Overall Good Performance during the Senior Command and Staff course in India when she outperformed 262 fellow Army Wing Students on course. She was also awarded a certificate for the Overall Best Student on module 8 of the course at the Department of Defence School of Logistics Training.

Col Mkhize said the expectation from the ASB Johannesburg is that the base will continue to provide services to all its clients. She said women should also be empowered and wishes to urge them to prove themselves by working hard.

The incoming Officer Commanding of the ASB Johannesburg said: “I feel honoured to be appointed to command this base as the Chief of the SA Army indicated that he will only appoint competent officers to command units. I also feel that this is a positive step for women as I am one. We only need to work hard and prove ourselves worthy of opportunities to be in leadership positions.”

ASB Johannesburg provides support to 25 client units in its area of responsibility which include supply chain management, human resource management, Fire and Rescue Services, Environmental Services and Occupational Health and Safety.
ONLINE PAYDAY LOANS

The South African Army Foundation now offers ONLINE PayDay Loans between R500 & R2 500

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On the home screen you will find APPLY NOW!
Alternatively go to Products, Financial, [Army Foundation] PayDay Loans
The first woman to command 1 SA Tank Regiment

Lt Col Shingange is a seasoned and well trained Armour officer since 1998 when she became part of the SANDF. She started her career at the SA Women’s College in George and then joined the SA Armoured Corps. She served the SANDF and the SA Armoured Corps in various position until recently appointed as the Officer Commanding. Lt Col Shingange obtained various military qualifications throughout her career. An accomplished student who holds a series of degrees that include a B Mil Degree in Human and Organisational Development from Stellenbosch University, B Com Honours in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from Unisa, a Certificate in Senior Management Programme from the University of Pretoria, a Diploma in Joint Multi-national International Operations Qualification by SASSETA through the SA National War College (known as the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme). She is continuing with her Masters in Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch.

SA Soldier spoke to Lt Col Shingange who discussed her appointment, hopes for the regiment and immensely sensitive and challenging work as the Officer Commanding. Asked about what prompted her to join the SANDF, especially the SA Armoured Corps. Lt Col Shingange said that she was inspired by the female soldiers operating big machines. She said: “I said I want to do that as well, I want that challenge too. It looks very heavy and difficult, but I want to do it. I knew I had a strong character and the courage to challenge these big machines.”

As the Officer Commanding, she is looking forward to the new challenge and she is committed to ensuring that her regiment operates on full capacity and to perform her duties in a professional manner in order to satisfy the needs of the members of 1 SA Tank Regiment. One of her primary objectives is to ensure that the tank regiment executes its mandate which is to provide the SANDF with tank capabilities. Is also to ensure that the unit is always combat ready by means of striving towards having all the necessary resources and qualifications required for combat readiness. She aspires to have the best unit in the SANDF and she will achieve this by hard work in leading her regiment and achieving the objectives of the mandate at hand. She further said that importantly the training she received prepared her for the appointment of the Officer Commanding. She spoke at length about the qualities you need to possess as an Officer Commanding. Lt Col Shingange said: “You need to be able to listen and be available when your subordinates need you. You need to lead and put your subordinates first. You require the ability to sell the vision of the unit and to have the buy in of every unit member. You should take care of your subordinates and the rest will take care of itself. You need to be knowledgeable, meaning that you cannot rely on your position or rank to get people to do what needs to be done.” Furthermore she advised young women in the SANDF to work hard and believe in themselves; to have a dream and a destiny and to work towards it. To always remain positive and keep their heads high all the time because knowledge is power. She said people need also to change the current stereotypes especially when it comes to women who are serving. She wished them: “Happy Women’s Month!” and women must never forget their worth.

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Focus on Women

The SA Army showcasing its state of combat readiness.
SA Army yields a female Officer Commanding from the MSDS

By Lt Col Thérèse Doman,
SO1 Corporate Communication
SA Army Infantry Formation
Photo by Pte Azwinhangwisi Makhushu

The Military Skills Development System (MSDS) of the SA Army, in particular the SA Army Infantry, produced its female Officer Commanding - Lt Col Tiisetso Sekgobela. She was appointed as the Officer Commanding of 7 SA Infantry Battalion (7 SAI Bn) on 22 September 2016.

Since Lt Col Sekgobela has taken over command of 7 SAI Bn, she was determined to uplift the esprit de corps among the unit members. She has managed to establish a precision drill platoon that participated in the change of command parade of the Chief of Logistics. She also established a band under her leadership and encouraged them to participate in provincial choir competitions, where they were the overall winners. Furthermore, she re-established rugby as a sport in the unit. Two of the unit’s female members: Pte Maroeksa Harding and Pte Leandri Nicola Williams, got selected for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Women’s rugby team.

Lt Col Sekgobela was born in the Sedawa Village in Hoedspruit. Her military career commenced in 2004, when she joined the MSDS and did Basic Military Training (BMT) at 3 SAI Bn in Kimberley. Her leadership qualities were visible very early during BMT and therefore she was afforded the opportunity to participate in the Junior Leadership (JL) training at the SA Army Gymnasium later that year. Thereafter she was selected to join the SA Army Infantry. As a Candidate Officer she was given the opportunity in 2005 to study at the Military Academy for the Certificate in Organisational and Resource Management, and was chosen as the Best Student in Criminal Law, Management and Accounting. She received her commission as a Second Lieutenant and was transferred to 1 SAI Bn in Bloemfontein in 2016 as a Mortar Fire Group Commander.

In 2007 she advanced to the rank of Lieutenant and was appointed as an instructor for the Battalion Motor Crew course. Later that year she participated in Exercises SEBOKA and DIBETSA as Fire Group Commander. Initially she was deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as the Advisor to the National Contingent Commander and was later rerouted as Operational Officer of 1 SAI Bn. In 2011 she was promoted to the rank of Captain and held various posts at 1 SAI Bn, namely Company Second-in-Command of Alpha Company; Company Commander of the MSDS Training Echelon and as Adjudant. In 2011 she was appointed as best practical learner during the Integrated Sub-unit Commanders course. In 2012, during Exercise SEBOKA, at the Chief of the SA Army Open Day, she was appointed as Combat Team Commander.

In March 2012 she was introduced to motherhood for the first time and was blessed with a lovely daughter. Later that year after she returned from maternity leave she was appointed as Echo Company Commander and she was involved with the training of MSDS members in order to prepare them to participate in Exercise SEBOKA. The whole MSDS group was placed under her command at Alpha Company during the Exercise.

In 2014 she successfully completed the Integrated Sub-unit Commanders course. Four months later she was appointed as Support Company Commander and promoted to the rank of Major and later she was appointed as Battalion Second-in-Command at 1 SAI Bn. In 2015 she attended the Junior Command and Staff Duties course and excelled once more and was once again awarded as the best overall learner of the course.

In 2016 she became Acting Officer Commanding of 1 SAI Bn. Later that year, she was appointed as the Officer Commanding of 7 SAI Bn in Phalaborwa and got promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She made history in the SANDF, especially in the SA Army as she is the first female Officer Commanding in the fighting corps that was yielded by the Military Skills Development System.

Lt Col Sekgobela has realised that for being a leader it is important to have the ability to recognise and seize any opportunity afforded to you. As for future female commanders, she felt that the ball is in their court and it is up to them to play it. She elaborated that as a leader, it is imperative to be focused, to have empathy with your subordinates, as well as to maintain a high level of principles and lastly to have an understanding that members within the SANDF have a calling to serve and therefore will be able to achieve anything while doing so.

She added that it is the responsibility of any female leader to leave a legacy and be able to identify and mentor other female members. Lt Col Sekgobela would like to encourage all female members in the organisation to reach out to their female counterparts. She is a true inspiration to all aspiring female commanders within the SANDF. She has demonstrated in her career that it is possible for any ambitious young female SANDF member who has a vision and a dream to be developed as a commander through the Military Skills Development System.
Female air force pilot makes history – and a difference

By Noluthando Motswai (Courtesy Public Sector Manager magazine)

The C-130 is one of the largest military aircraft in the SA Air Force. It’s a rugged aircraft, able to land and take off from the roughest terrain. For the first time in the history this tough aircraft is being flown by a black woman, Maj Makhmamandi Zama.

At the age of just 31, Maj Zama says flying the C-130 is all in a day’s work. She says: “I am a professional, irrespective of my race and gender. I am here to do a job to the best of my ability.” She adds the C-130 has the largest airlift capability in the SA Air Force. Maj Zama states: “It’s a very special aircraft to those who fly it. It has extreme durability and workmanship.”

The country at heart

Recently, Maj Zama had to fly the C-130 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), making her responsible for the safe arrival of the aircraft and crew on board. She made a solid landing.

“It was a very satisfying feeling to upgrade to C-130 command. The making history part, I do not know,” she says with a smile. “If it inspires someone else to want do this work, then that is great.”

Maj Zama says military pilots are like all pilots, but with the major difference that they have the interests of the country’s sovereignty at heart. She adds: “Military aviators are a unique group of people, with specialised skills and high demands made of them.

“Aviation is not easy. It requires an individual to strive to learn and want to improve their skills. I am still learning, a work in progress. Flying the C-130 is a great accomplishment - if this achievement also inspires other young people that is a bonus.”

A girl from KwaMashu

Maj Zama was born and raised in KwaMashu in KwaZulu-Natal. She joined the SA Air Force in 2003 after matric. After her basic military training she enrolled at the SA Air Force Central Flying School, and got her wings in December 2006.

The following year she was transferred to her current posting at 41 Squadron at Air Force Base Waterkloof. At 41 Squadron, Maj Zama has flown the Cessna Caravan, another aircraft designed for rough landings. She has also piloted the Casa 212, used for VIP transport, paratrooper drops and logistical air support into other African countries. Maj Zama says: “Flying an aircraft is not something you can explain in words. You just have to be there to experience it.”
Dreams come true

Flying military aircraft gives her the opportunity to make a difference, Maj Zama says. “The country has been experiencing a drought, and we were part of the team transporting water to the most affected areas in the country. Also, in situations of poverty, we are part of food-relief missions. My job can be very rewarding.”

As South Africa recently celebrated Youth Month, she says, she is proud to be one of the young people who have been given opportunities – thanks to the struggles of the youth of 1976.

Maj Zama points out: “If people see me doing my job – and I am just a girl from KwaMashu – this is proof that anyone can make their dreams come true, with a little hard work.”

Maj Makhamnandi Zama.
passion for law

Capt Dorothy Kgosana, who hails from Mmakau village in the North West Province, completed her matric at Lot Mashiane Secondary School in Letlhakaneng in 1998. In 2002 she enrolled for an LLB degree with the North West University in Mahikeng and graduated in 2006.

From 2004 she worked as a student assistant at the University and also did field work for Price Water House Coopers before joining the Legal Aid Board to do her articles in 2006 and completed her articles in October 2006. In 2009 she joined the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development as a High Court Registrar in Polokwane.

She started her military career in 2010, after applying for advertised posts for Prosecutors. In 2010 she was appointed as Prosecution Counsel in the SA Air Force and subsequently at the Legal Satellite Office (LEGSATO) Polokwane. She completed her six-month Basic Military Training at the SA Air Force Gymnasium in Hoedspruit in June 2011. She later went on the Officers’ Formative course in July at the SA Air Force College which she successfully completed in December 2011. Upon completion of this course, she was awarded the Old Mutual Floating Trophy for Officership being the overall second best student on the course.

Capt Kgosana is currently serving as a Prosecution Counsel at LEGSATO Polokwane and is passionate about her work. When not in her office, she spends most of her time presenting Military Law and running marathons and representing the SANDF Athletic Club in road races. As a long distance marathon runner she ran her first Comrades Marathon in 2016 and managed to finish just under 12 hours, she finished the Two Oceans Marathon in 2016 and the Old Mutual Om die Dam in Hartebeespoort. She also participated in the SANDF Athletics Championships and had the opportunity to represent Limpopo Province in the Cross-country Championships held at Hoedspruit in August 2016. She also ran the 21.1km Championship held at Oudtshoorn in October 2016.

She runs a programme called the "Dream Girls Programme" which she started in 2011, in which she mentors young girls in Grades 11 and 12 and assists them to attend universities such as the Stellenbosch University, the University of Cape Town and others.

Her wish is to be admitted as an Attorney of the High Court of South Africa. Her short-term goal is to become a Military Judge or a Legal Operations Officer, while her long-term goal is to become a Director in either the Military Prosecutions Offices or Military Defence Council or a Military Judge. In the long run she would love to see herself heading one of the Directorates in the Defence Legal Services Division.

Capt Kgosana has made an impression in cases involving sexual offences and financial misconduct in the Military. Her daughter, Atlegang (17) is in high school.
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.
- Civilian members of the Department of Defence (DOD) killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, while deployed during official SANDF operation.
- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, during official SANDF operations provided that such citizens are not engaged in activities opposing the SANDF.

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

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

The banking details are as follows:

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Reference: SANDF Edu Trust and Donor Name

For further enquiries and to obtain application forms please contact:

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We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.

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the sandf
Department: Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Regional Works Unit Gauteng celebrating Women’s Day

The Officer Commanding Regional Works Unit Gauteng, Col Zukiswa Willie, said that the unit members celebrated Women’s Day to uplift the spirits of the women. She said women in the unit were excited about the event taking place during a month meant to recognise them.

Col Willie said: “As you know, Regional Works units are mostly male-dominated as the tasks require some sort of physical strength. So by organising this event we are trying to demonstrate that women also have a role to play, even in such environments.” She indicated that women were coping well in a male-dominated environment as they were strong and able to perform both heavy duty and lighter tasks.

She said: “The General Officer Commanding of Defence Works Formation, Maj Gen Joseph Ledwaba, has to be praised as 90% of the unit members are women, some of whom are in command structures. The unit has also taken steps to equip women with the necessary skills so that they are able to make a significant contribution in playing their part.”

Col Willie believes that women should continue to educate themselves in order to keep up the pace with the ever-changing and demanding work environment. This will enable them to run projects of any kind, and not merely be placed in positions because they are women.

She said: “We thank God for giving us another day that has afforded us a chance to celebrate Women’s Day. Being a woman is a blessing from God. Women in their nature are strong and not easily broken. There is no situation too difficult for women to handle.”

LEFT: Women from Regional Works Unit Gauteng during the unit’s Women’s Day celebrations.
Southern African Development Community Extraordinary Defence Sub-committee meeting

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano


The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, hosted the meeting with his SADC counterparts from Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe at the SA Army Foundation in Centurion on 15 August 2017.

The key issues discussed at the meeting were the proposed budget of the SADC Standby Force for the command post exercise in 2018 and the outcome of the Engagement Meeting between the SADC Chiefs of Defence and the United Nations Secretariat concerning the Force Intervention Brigade held in New York on 10 July 2017.

Defence Foreign Relations arranged, coordinated and managed the event by supporting the Department of Defence principals and by affording protocol courtesies, administrative tasks and by coordinating all logistical arrangements for foreign dignitaries.

The Chief of the SANDF opened the Summit and warmly welcomed his SADC counterparts, thanking them for putting their busy schedules on hold to attend. He remarked that the 37th SADC Summit was highly organised. He stated that future members would reap the benefits of their present input. General Shoke urged them to work tirelessly to help one another, as they could achieve more in a united effort. He said: “As a region we need to work as a collective towards a common goal. What remains critically important is how we are collectively going to realise the goals we have set for ourselves. We require a lot of courage, hard work and support for one another.”

The member states then deliberated on the aforementioned objectives of the extraordinary Defence Sub-committee meeting, guided by the draft annotated agenda.

At the end of the day-long meeting, despite the fact that there were still areas to be covered and undertaken, the Defence Chiefs pledged to close the gaps in the current SADC Standby Force.
The Permanent Defence Force Service Commission (DFSC) was established in terms of Section 62 of the Defence Amendment Act 22 of 2010. It is mandated in terms of 62B(1) of the Act to make recommendations to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans on matters related to the improvement of salaries and service benefits of members.

The Defence Force Service Commission (DFSC) delegation arrives at Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo in Musina, front, middle (in SANDF uniform): the Officer Commanding Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo, Col Joseph “Joe” Tshugulu, flanked on his right by the Chairperson of the DFSC, Prof Edna van Harte.

Pte Rangaka Kolwane, a chef at Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo, preparing spinach to form part of lunch while WO2 Tommy Cridland, a chef, L Cpl Emily Mashioane, the chef leader, and Pte Charmaine Jantjies, a chef, look on.

The DFSC has three committees established in terms of Section 62G of the Defence Amendment Act 22 of 2010. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Pay and Service Benefits Committee makes recommendations on the review of pay and service benefits. The Conditions of Service Review Committee makes recommendations on the review of the Conditions of Service. The Policy Review Committee makes recommendations on the review of policies aimed at improving conditions of service, including pay and service benefits. To achieve its mandate the DFSC researches and consults with internal key stakeholders of the Department of Defence (DOD) and external experts and pays visits to military units/bases and other government departments.

In pursuit of Section 62 of the Defence Amendment Act 22 of 2010, the DFSC visited the Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo (J Tac HQ LP) of Operation CORONA on 23 and 24 August 2017. The visiting delegation comprised the Chairperson of the DFSC, Prof Edna van Harte, Maj Gen James April (Ret), Prof Renfrew Christie, Ms Margirly Mokoape, Mr Ian Robetson and the DFSC secretariat personnel headed by Mr Philemon Motsepe. Upon arrival at the Musina Ops Base the DFSC delegation went to Alpha Company’s operational room where the Officer Commanding J Tac HQ LP, Col Joseph “Joe” Tshugulu, gave a presentation to the DFSC on the mission, vision, role and functions of J Tac HQ LP, including the status of the facilities and...
the general conditions of service.

The Commissioners interacted with the deployed soldiers in their varying hierarchical rank categories to find out their challenges pertaining to their service conditions. The Commissioners encouraged the soldiers deployed in Musina and Madimbo border line of the J Tac HQ LP areas to be frank without fear of reprisal in telling the DFSC about their wide spectrum of challenges including, but not limited to, Human Resources issues, conditions of service they work under, as well as occupational health and safety issues.

It was critically important to the Chairperson of the Defence Force Service Commission, Prof Edna van Harte, hands over a token of appreciation to the Officer Commanding of Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo, Col Joseph “Joe” Tshugulu, after the visit.

The Commissioners who visited Operation CORONA at Joint Tactical Headquarters Limpopo, fltr: Mr Ian Robertson, Ms Margirly Mokoape, Prof Edna van Harte, Maj Gen James April (Ret) and Prof Renfrew Christie.

visited the various “sticks” where soldiers were deployed performing patrols to curb illegal crossing of the border and the transporting of illegal goods and narcotics.

After all deliberations the visiting DFSC told the soldiers that they will write a report and recommendations to the Minister, the Chief of the SANDF and the Chiefs of Services and Divisions. In order for the DFSC to achieve the best possible results in resolving all the challenges raised Prof Van Harte appealed to the soldiers to be patient while the DFSC meticulously do their job.

The Commissioners congratulated the soldiers for the sterling job they were doing despite their challenges. Prof Van Harte further congratulated the Officer Commanding of J Tac LP for being a good and steadfast leader who continuously instil hope in the midst of all disheartening challenges that the Operation CORONA deployment is faced with.

Chairperson of the DFSC that female soldiers were afforded an opportunity to express their unique female work environment challenges separately from their male counterparts. To empower the female soldiers on deployment for Operation CORONA, two Commissioners: Prof Van Harte and Ms Mokoape, had an in-depth discussion about consequences of workplace fraternisation, sexual exploitation and abuse. The two Commissioners were quite frank in their discussion to comprehensively unpack the ills of women allowing workplace fraternisation, sexual exploitation and abuse to go on unabated. Prof Van Harte and Ms Mokoape indicated that women must not be silent about these issues if they want it to come to an end. The Chairperson of the DFSC said: “You need to realise that the only way that someone will get to know your pain and challenges as women in the SANDF is by talking about it, otherwise whatever is inside yourself remains inside and eats you up but if you tell someone, the likelihood that someone will help you to find a solution is high.”

During the discussion with all the soldiers the general concerns of the deployed soldiers were mainly related to resources and a lack of proper support from the higher HQ, promotions, and support to the Defence Reserve members when they are not active during a call-up.

Furthermore, the Commissioners
The ABC’s of common gynaecological problems

By Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA) on behalf of Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS)
Photos by Mr Witney Rasaka

From thrush to missed periods, fibroids to low libido and perimenopause, Dr Joe has the needs of our female members fully covered. In this article we touch on a number of gynaecological issues, their symptoms, possible remedies and when you should book an appointment to see your family doctor.

Candida (thrush/yeast infection)

Thrush is a fungal infection which can affect any moist, wet area of the body like the mouth, skin folds and genital area. Vaginal thrush is not a sexually transmissible disease (STD). It is caused by an overgrowth of the yeast Candida albicans. This overgrowth may be due to antibiotic uses, oral contraceptives, an acid imbalance, diabetes, perfumed bath additives, changes in the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, excess sugar intake, stress and a compromised immune system.

Symptoms in the mouth can include a sore tongue and throat, hoarseness when speaking and white patches on or under the tongue and cheeks. In the skin – especially under the breasts and in the groin - watch out for a rash, itchiness and/or an odour; and in the genital area redness, itchiness, yeasty odour and discharge that looks like “cream cheese”.

The conventional medicine approach

First-time infections are generally treated with an antifungal cream or vaginal pessaries (tablets) that put inside the vagina with a special applicator. If the infection is persistent, your doctor will take a swab and send it to the laboratory for testing. Chronic infections are generally treated for one to three months with antifungal cream once medical conditions such as diabetes, poor hygiene and over-enthusiastic hygiene have been excluded.

What you can do to alleviate symptoms and prevent vaginal thrush

• Avoid using soap or perfumed products to wash the genital area. Soap substitutes can be used.
• Avoid using antiseptics, douches or perfumed sprays in the genital area.
• Avoid wearing tight-fitting pants and try wearing cotton underwear.
• Consider changing your washing detergent and do not use fabric softeners.

When to see your doctor

If you have yeast infections that keep returning or the infection worsens and becomes uncontrollable, your doctor may run more tests to confirm the diagnosis and rule out other conditions. Your doctor may suggest trying a longer course of anti-thrush treatment or give you a prescription you can use whenever the symptoms return.

You should also see your doctor if you are not sure you have thrush, have had recent unprotected sex with a new partner or you have pain in your pelvic area or abnormal bleeding.

Fibroids or fibromyomata

Fibroids are non-cancerous growths in the womb (uterus). They are common and usually cause no symptoms. Their size can range from that of a pea to as large as a football. Many women are unaware they have fibroids as they do not have any symptoms. However...
women who do have symptoms may experience:

- Heavy periods or painful periods
- Pain in the lower back or abdomen
- A frequent need to urinate
- Constipation
- Pain or discomfort during sex

The causes for fibroids are unknown, however they are linked to the hormone called oestrogen, which is the female reproductive hormone produced by the ovaries (the female reproductive organs). Fibroids usually develop during a woman's reproductive years when oestrogen levels are at their highest. This is approximately from 16 to 50 years of age. They tend to shrink when oestrogen levels are low, such as after menopause, when a woman's monthly periods stop at around 50 years of age. There is also evidence that fibroids run in families.

Treating fibroids

Treatment depends on the symptoms. If you do not have any problems, your doctor may decide that you do not need any treatment as the fibroids may disappear on their own. However, if you do have symptoms, medicines to help relieve these symptoms are usually recommended. If these medicines do not work, surgery to remove the fibroids or other less invasive procedures to shrink the fibroids may be recommended, especially if you are unable to fall pregnant.

When to see your doctor

As they commonly cause no symptoms, fibroids are usually diagnosed by chance during a routine gynaecological examination, test or scan. If your doctor thinks you may have fibroids, you will usually have an ultrasound scan to confirm the diagnosis. You should see your doctor if you have pelvic pain that does not go away, very heavy or painful periods, spotting or bleeding between periods, pain during intercourse, a swollen abdomen or difficulty urinating.

Low libido or low sex drive

Low libido is a lack of desire for lovemaking, which can cause problems in a relationship. A woman's sexual desires naturally change over the years. Both men and women can be affected by low libido but in women it is usually caused by stress, major life changes such as death or the beginning or end of a relationship, an abusive relationship, pregnancy, menopause, poor body image or illness. Some medicines such as antidepressants and anti-seizure medications can also cause low sex drive in women.

Causes of low libido

A woman's libido can be affected by many things such as her physical and emotional wellbeing, experiences, beliefs, lifestyle and current relationship. Physical causes of low libido usually include sexual problems, such as the inability to orgasm, which can decrease a woman's desire for sex. Chronic medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity can also have a negative effect on your libido.

In addition, drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs can inhibit or reduce your sex drive. Many people lose some interest in sex as they get older, mainly due to decreasing levels of sex hormones, age-related health problems, or the side effects of medicines. For example, as women start to approach menopause, levels of the female hormone oestrogen begin to fall, which can affect libido. Women can also suffer from low testosterone levels, another hormone that affects sex drive, especially after a hysterectomy.

When to see your doctor

If you are concerned about your libido, especially if your low sex drive is affecting your relationship, you should make an appointment to see your doctor to discuss any underlying causes and possible medical or psychological treatments. You should also see your GP if you are worried that the medicine you are taking is causing your low libido. Your doctor will review your medicine and maybe change your prescription to something that is less likely to affect your sex drive. You should also consider going to see a relationship counsellor or sex therapist if your relationship with your significant other is suffering.

Perimenopause

Perimenopause refers to the stage where a woman’s body starts changing
towards permanent infertility, known as menopause. Once a woman does not have a period for a year, she is said to be in menopause. Perimenopause is also called the menopausal transition. Women begin perimenopause at different ages. During perimenopause, levels of oestrogen rise and fall unevenly.

Symptoms of perimenopause

Symptoms usually begin with irregular periods. Other symptoms of perimenopause include:
- Hot flushes and sleep problems;
- Mood changes such as mood swings, irritability and depression;
- Vaginal and bladder problems caused by lower levels of oestrogen which results in vaginal dryness and urinary or vaginal infections;
- Decreased fertility as ovulation becomes irregular;
- Changes in sexual function;
- Loss of bone also caused by declining oestrogen levels which increases your risk of osteoporosis;
- Changing cholesterol levels.

Irregular periods can also be caused by a variety of other reasons that may not necessarily be a symptom of perimenopause. A few of the other possible reasons for irregular periods include:
- Poor nutrition
- Eating disorders
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Smoking
- Drug use
- Caffeine
- Excessive alcohol use
- Increased stress
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Uterine abnormalities
- (fibroids/cysts/polyps/endometriosis)
- Certain medicines
- Chemotherapy
- Breastfeeding

When to see your doctor

If symptoms of perimenopause are causing you distress and interfering with your life or wellbeing, you may want to consider making an appointment with your doctor.

Vaginal odour

It is perfectly normal for a woman’s vagina to have a slight smell or odour. However, a very strong vaginal odour usually associated with other vaginal signs and symptoms such as an itching or burning sensation, irritation or vaginal discharge could indicate a problem. The most common causes of abnormal vaginal odour include:

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

Pelvic inflammatory disease, commonly called PID, is an infection of the female reproductive organs. It can lead to irreversible damage to the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, or other parts of a woman’s reproductive system and can cause infertility in some women.

The symptoms of PID usually include chronic pelvic pain, pain in the lower abdomen, lots of vaginal discharge with a foul odour, pain during intercourse, fever and painful urination.

Bacterial vaginosis

This is one of the most common vaginal infections and it is also a sexually transmitted disease. Many infected patients will not have any symptoms, as there is no irritation or inflammation of the vagina. However, a characteristic “fishy” smell is often a symptom accompanied by a small amount of thin greenish vaginal discharge. This condition results from an overgrowth of unusual bacteria in your vagina. It is not dangerous and can be successfully treated with a dose of antibiotics.

Other sexually transmitted diseases

Trichomoniasis is another sexually transmitted disease that can cause a foul-smelling vaginal discharge, which may be white, grey, yellow or green in colour. It can also cause genital itching, burning and redness, painful urination or pain during sexual intercourse.

The condition is especially dangerous for pregnant women because they may deliver prematurely, give birth to a baby with a low birth weight or transmit the infection to the baby as it passes through the birth canal. The disease also increases your chances of contracting HIV.

Rectovaginal fistula

Less commonly, abnormal vaginal odour may result from a condition called rectovaginal fistula, which is an abnormal opening between the rectum and vagina that allows faeces to leak into the vagina. In some cases this can also result from cervical or vaginal cancer.

Tips to avoid vaginal odour

You can lessen your discomfort by doing these small things:
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting underwear
- Maintain good hygiene
- Change your underwear frequently
- Avoid excessive washing, using antiseptics, deodorants
- Avoid douching (rinsing out the vagina), which may irritate the vagina and vulva. Rather use clean, warm water to clean the area around your vaginal area.

When to see a doctor

If you suspect you may have any of the above conditions you should make an appointment with your doctor to discuss all your symptoms. Make sure you give your doctor a detailed history of your general health and sexual activity. He or she will perform a pelvic exam to check the health of your reproductive organs.

For any Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) member queries please phone the GEMS call centre on 0860 00 4367 or send an SMS to 083 450 4367. GEMS will assist you in every way possible to ensure your family’s health and wellbeing.
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Golf team recently participated in the annual Inter-forces Golf Tournament in Robertson in the Western Cape Province.

During the event the golf players of the SANDF, the SA Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Correctional Services competed in the two-day golf tournament. The tournament started on the Wednesday with two rounds of golf (36 holes). The first day’s competition was a better-ball match play and foursomes’ competition. The second day consisted of only 18 holes in the form of singles.

The tournament was closed on the Thursday by the SANDF Golf Committee, who was the organisers for the 2017 Inter-forces Golf Tournament. During the prize-giving function, both the SANDF Women’s and the SANDF Men’s teams were announced as the winners in their respective categories.

The Golf Management and players participated in the 2017 Inter-forces Golf Tournament, back row, fltr: Lt Col Wiekus Schoeman (Team Manager), S Sgt Emil Gordon (player), Lt Col Ronel Janse van Rensburg (SANDF Golf Chairperson and player), Col Albert Truter (player), Sgt Sipho Nkambule (player), Col Karin Watts (player), Maj Tinus Jacobs (Tournament Director), PO Natasha Bosman (Secretary), Col Tol Snyman (Regional Representative), Maj Rijkie Terblanche (player), Lt Col Leigh van der Berg (player), CPO Solly Solomons (player) and Lt Col Derick Schoonwinkel (player). Front row, fltr: WO1 Frans Smith (player – Team Captain), Sgt Patric Mbatha (player), Maj Jay van der Walt (player), Cpl Dennis Williams (player) and Lt Col Nico Swarts (player).
In celebrating the brave women of South Africa and the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in Women’s Month, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, extended his support and appreciation to all women by hosting his first ever Ladies Golf Day on 31 August 2017.

This properly organised event took place at Services Golf Club in Thaba Tshwane. The event provided an opportunity for all women involved in the military milieu and corporate world to network and to share experiences in their area of expertise.

During his interview that headed the Ladies Golf Day, Gen Shoke said: “I have instructed my Command Council to mix sport and combat. Sport to me is part and parcel of force preparation as sport itself builds discipline, because any sport one plays requires one to prepare oneself in terms of training and so on. Also sport builds cohesion and team work. Sport in general is fundamentally important in the SANDF and it is my wish to see all sporting codes being practised and promoted.”

Furthermore the Chief of the SANDF said women in the SANDF are free to participate in any sporting code of their choice as we have many sporting codes, such as volleyball, cricket, rugby, etc. Gen Shoke added: “We have tennis and golf as well, something which I am trying to promote among the SANDF women and as you might be aware that the month of August is Women’s Month, I decided to organise this day exclusively for ladies to play golf. It’s not only members of the SANDF, but also of the corporate world and of course women across the spectrum who will be participating.”

Gen Shoke prides himself for focusing on growing women’s sport and actively encourages women to engage and to participate freely.

One of the participants, R Adm (JG) Monica Josias, Director Maritime Diplomacy and Strategy at Navy Headquarters, in an exclusive interview with SA Soldier confirmed that the day was indeed her first time to play golf. “Though I had a lot of pressure when playing, I tremendously enjoyed the day. This day afforded me an opportunity to engage with ladies in this organisation from all Services as well as ladies from the corporate world. I saw the golf day as an opportunity to represent my Service,” said R Adm (JG) Josias.

To bring about cohesion in an organisation, R Adm (JG) Josias encourages all women to play golf or to be part of any sporting code in which as colleagues they can come together in a socially and relaxed environment. “I am thankful...
The Chief of the SANDF added: "Through fundraising and donations from Government and private business entities the SANDF Education Trust seeks to provide financial aid in the form of bursaries and scholarships for study purposes to the dependents of the Department of Defence Public Service Act Personnel and uniformed members of the SANDF who perished while executing their duties.’’

The busy day of golfing was concluded by the hosting of a gala dinner where the overall winners were recognised accordingly with prizes from sponsors. The sponsors of the day were: Community Investment, Liberty, Maxi Credit Solutions, ASSUPOL, AHANANG Hardware and Construction, Adcock Ingram, Discovery, Old Mutual, Sanlam, Avbob, Metropolitan, SA Army Foundation, MFS Retirement Advisory Services and Community Investment Holdings.

During the gala dinner and prize-giving ceremony, the Chief of the SANDF expressed his gratitude to all the women participants, friends of the Department of Defence/SANDF, sponsors and all the stakeholders for taking the time off from their busy schedules in order to make it to the Golf Day and for contributing to the success of this prestigious event. Gen Shoke commended all the participants for the fine example they displayed to all the women across the spectrum. He added that the Golf Day stands to reaffirm the SANDF’s commitment to enhance and strengthen the excellent relations that already exist between our communities.

General Shoke alluded that the Ladies Golf Day was not only arranged and hosted to bring women across the spectrum together in order to network and build relations. He highlighted that the main objective was to raise funds for the SANDF Education Trust of which the sponsors have made pledges worth more than R100 000 that night.

The Chief of the SANDF added: “Through fundraising and donations from Government and private business entities the SANDF Education Trust seeks to provide financial aid in the form of bursaries and scholarships for study purposes to the dependents of the Department of Defence Public Service Act Personnel and uniformed members of the SANDF who perished while executing their duties.”

Members of Adcock Ingram presenting gifts to participants of the Chief of the SA National Defence Force Ladies Golf Day.
Netball is fast becoming one of the most popular sporting codes among SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members. Traditionally netball was a sport for women and girls. Today men across the world, including our country, embrace netball.

SA Soldier caught up with two renowned SANDF senior netball players: Col Debbie Janse van Rensburg, a SANDF veteran netball player and Chairperson for Pretoria Military Netball, as well as MWO Lorraine van Heerden, an international netball umpire.

A formidable netball player

Col Janse van Rensburg (59), Senior Staff Officer Signal Operations at the SA Army Signal Formation Headquarters, is a SANDF netball player in the Veterans’ category - an athlete on the netball court distinguished by precision. She is tall, strong and courageous. She plays in the positions of Goal Keeper and Goal Defence.

Asked when did it all start for her? The talented player’s netball career began at Milnerton High School in the Western Cape in 1974. Col Janse van Rensburg said: “In pursuing my dream, the same year I started playing in the senior netball league for the Harlequins Netball Club after school hours. As I was the tallest among my peers, netball just got itself a giant killer. Netball is a great part of my life and it brings me so much joy and peace.”

What is netball all about?
Netball is passion, love, friendship, teamwork and the will to achieve. It keeps you fit, healthy and companionship. It is an exciting team sport which involves running, jumping, throwing and catching. It consists of up to 12 players and each player has a designated playing area.

What are the benefits of netball? Netball is an all-inclusive sport that can be played by women and men of all ages. It has a wide range of positions allowing for different skill levels. Netball maintains a competitive environment.

Is the level of netball improving in the SANDF? Yes, it is improving in the SANDF and we have nine regions, namely Gauteng, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Western Province, Northern Cape, North West, Free State and sometimes West Coast which comes as a separate entity. Netball is recognised as an Olympic sport. The SANDF participates in the Inter-forces Netball Championships with other government departments or the Security Cluster: the Department of Correctional Services, the SA Police Service and others.

We also compete competitively against international defence force teams in bilateral and trilateral netball games. In 2016 we participated in the trilateral games in Gaborone, Botswana, where the SANDF competed against Botswana and Lesotho.” She also stated that SANDF netball has different categories, the senior women’s category ranging from 18 to 30 years,
are ideally positioned to apply the rules of the sport to the best of their ability, without fear or favour and to make decisions in the interests of the game. She added that skilled umpiring enhances the standard of the game by complementing and encouraging fair play for the enjoyment of participants and spectators alike.

How has netball helped you develop as a netball player and umpire?

Everything started when I joined the military in 1977, at the then SA Defence Force Women’s College in George. The Defence Force netball team fell under the South Western District in the Southern Cape Area. I played the game ever since. SANDF Netball has enabled me to reach my goal of becoming a netball player and umpire and reach my full potential.

What advice do you have for netball players and aspiring umpires?

Umpiring needs a lot of dedication, sacrifice and never underestimate yourself. Have positive energy and work towards achieving your dreams and aspirations. It does not matter where you come from, if a girl or a boy can play or officiate in a professional league, you can too. It will take time, and requires hard work.

Our own international netball umpire

SA Soldier caught up with our SANDF Netball Umpire, MWO Lorraine van Heerden who has reached a significant point in her netball career. She is a qualified umpire and also part of the elite umpires who have represented the SANDF at local championships and at international netball showpieces, such as the bilateral and trilateral games and the CISM ESALO Military Games.

Asked what is an umpire?

MWO Van Heerden, the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Department of Defence Headquarters Unit, said that an umpire is an integral component of netball and are independent arbiters. She mentioned that umpires

MWO Lorraine van Heerden in action during the SA National Spar Netball Championship in Durban.
Ezek 24:18 says: “So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died. And on the next morning I did as I was commanded”.

Dissolving earthly ties is difficult. Perhaps the most difficult relationship to dissolve is that with a companion whom we have come to love and depend on through the years. Jeremiah had no wife and therefore never experienced the death of a spouse. And Hosea’s domestic tragedy took a different form, his wife left him for another lover, but Ezekiel, however, lost his wife through death. God came to Ezekiel with a strange command. He was to show no grief but continue “business as usual”. Was God cold-hearted? Not at all! The people were in exile and needed an object lesson of one who could handle his grief and still be true to God. Ezekiel was the man, and his demonstration must have meant much to those who heard him.

Look at history and you will discover that most people who have achieved greatness had the help of a good companion. Sometimes we forget to love those who mean much to us, or at least we fail to express our appreciation to them. Cherish what is dearest while you have it near you, and wait not till it is far away.

Death comes to all

For the true believer in Jesus, death is a blessed and glorious event, the most wonderful experience that could come to anyone. Paul said that “to die is gain” (Phil 1:21). To the unbeliever, however, death is a nightmare. One skeptic said on his deathbed, “Until this moment I thought there was neither a God nor a hell. Now I know and feel there are both, and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the Almighty. Whatever our attitude toward Christ, death is certain. Life must go on. Each of us has a work to do, even if our dearest friends leave us. A sense of duty pursues us always, omnipotent like God himself.

Daniel Webster said: “If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed or duty violated is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light, our obligations are yet with us. Ezekiel, being dedicated to God, continued his work though he did not understand why his companion was taken away.

So often we do not have the answers to why a painful thing happens. We must walk blindly in the darkness and pray that dawn will turn into daylight. Sorrow can motivate. The record does not tell us why God took Ezekiel’s wife from him. Neither does it tell the end result of the bereavement.

We can, however, be certain of one thing: When sorrow comes, we often become tender and more usable in the Lord’s Service. Someone has said that suffering either makes us bitter or better. If we recognise God’s wisdom in all things, we can learn great lessons from suffering and use them to serve the Lord more faithfully. Jean Paul Richter said: “Sorrows gather around great souls as storms do around mountains, but like them, they break the storm and purify the air of the plains beneath them.”

It is too easy to give clichés, and we should refrain from doing so. On the other hand, everyone, pastor or layperson, who has been a Christian for a long time, has seen examples of how suffering has made one more mature. Ezekiel refused to resign from the human race just because suffering came. He looked at his grief, but he also looked at God and decided that the latter was bigger than the former. He brushed his tears away and found comfort in his God and in his work. So does everyone who follows his example.
Women are stronger than we think

The Chief of Human Resources, Lt Gen Norman Yengeni, recently held a Consensus Building Workshop on the incorporation of gender perspectives and in military development at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane.

The workshop was attended by the nominated Officers Commanding, Staff Officers, Directing Staff, Warrant Officers and Instructors from the various Services around South Africa. The workshop was aimed at reaching consensus on the incorporation of gender perspectives and dynamics in all military courses as requested by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in her 2015 Budget Vote.

Maj Gen Rudzani Maphwanya, the General Officer Commanding of SA Army Infantry Formation, gave a presentation on the performance of female soldiers in the SA Army Infantry Corps.

He alluded to the fact that a lot of women contribute to the economy and to the social, security and political development of the country. Regrettably they still do not benefit from economic growth and development in that they are not part of the decision-making sphere and hardly enjoy the same rights and respect accorded to their male counterparts. Maj Gen Maphwanya remarked that this situation should come to an end as women are also human beings. They should be treated with respect and must also benefit from their contribution to our country. He mentioned that conflicts could not be resolved if half the population was not contributing to the solution and if their needs were ignored.

Maj Gen Maphwanya said that there would always be a need to mainstream gender equality in military education, as women should be included in all training courses from basic to executive level. He added that women needed to be integrated into the curriculum course plan and should be part of leadership, budgeting and operational planning classes as well.

He said: “Everything considered, today we can claim that our government has tried to prioritise gender equality. We train women to be successful leaders and to fill all posts. He added that they have introduced gender training in all their units.

Maj Gen Maphwanya remarked that he has seen women doing what he thought they would not do and that the issue of discrimination concerning gender equality should be erased immediately from our minds. It was about time that women stopped being undermining by their male counterparts. He said that 2 183 women were now in command.
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