75th Commemoration Battle of El Alamein
South African Soldier
The official monthly magazine of the SA Department of Defence

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The first democratically elected President of South Africa, and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Nelson Mandela once said: “A great giant that strode the globe like a colossus” – these were the words Madiba used to describe Oliver Reginald (O.R.) Tambo, another prominent leader of South Africa.

South Africans in their masses remembered and celebrated the legacy of one of the country’s prominent leaders in October. It was a special month for the country as it provided an opportunity for the nation to reflect on the life and times of a leader who still commands respect globally - the late Oliver Reginald (O.R.) Tambo.

This year marks the centenary celebration of O.R. Tambo’s birth. He played a key role in liberating South Africa and was a founding father of our constitutional democracy.

The year 2017 is declared “The year of O.R. Tambo: Celebrating our liberation heritage” by Government. In October numerous events were arranged to commemorate the legacy and centenary of OR Tambo.

O.R. Tambo was born in Nkantolo village in the Eastern Cape on 27 October 1917. He had a normal rural upbringing, as all boys in that region at the time under the British colony. Owing to his peasant upbringing he became a hard worker with strong values and moral standards.

After school, O.R. Tambo studied at Fort Hare University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Maths and Science. His life as an activist started while he was a student.

He was expelled from the University for partaking in a student strike, while studying towards his postgraduate qualification in education in 1942. When his former teacher heard of his expulsion he received a job offer at St Peter’s College as a Maths and Science teacher.

He was an active member of the African National Congress (ANC) during his time as a teacher in Johannesburg. O.R. Tambo led a long and prosperous political life as a visionary leader. He and his family spent three decades in exile. He understood that going into exile, the responsibility of creating a unified front in the fight against apartheid rested upon his shoulders. O.R. Tambo spent his life to bring people together in overcoming this injustice.

Speaking to people who had the privilege of learning at his feet or people O.R. Tambo had a profound impact on, they would tell you that he nurtured and brought the best out of those around him. His warmth and wisdom gained him the respect and love of his comrades. O.R. Tambo believed in the strength of diversity and the value of education. He created opportunities for them to prove their worth because he understood their strength.

O.R. Tambo was cognisant of women’s rights. He commissioned a Code of Conduct overseeing that the rights of women were upheld and respected by each and everyone in the organisation. He stroved to stop any abuse of women.

When dealing with issues he was firm and fair. Owing to his compassion and humility all women in the camps saw him as a father figure. O.R. Tambo called the women “The almighty few”. Through recognising their voices, he could name 522 women in the camps. He always advocated development and life skills to them, as well as endlessly reminding the women not to lose focus and praised their sacrifice of leaving South Africa for the betterment of the country.

O.R. Tambo was a thoughtful person – When returning from foreign travels he would bring every woman an essential item that he knew she needed.

The country boasts with numerous military, economic, cultural and political leaders who were developed and mentored by O.R. Tambo and today occupy strategic leadership positions across gender.

These are all qualities we should all aspire to as we perform our daily duties in the Department of Defence.

We should embrace O.R. Tambo’s values on a daily basis at our work place, as these will help to drive us forward in uniting and building the country that he envisaged - as O.R. Tambo said, in April 1983: “A single, united, democratic and non-racial state, belonging to all who live in it.”

Regrettably, O.R. Tambo never got to see the advent of our democracy, as he suffered a fatal stroke on 24 April 1993.

Upon O.R. Tambo’s return from exile he spoke at the first ANC meeting in South Africa since it’s unbanning. He used the opportunity to pass on the baton to Madiba, who was elected as the National Chairperson of the ANC, and later (1994) inaugurated as the first democratically elected President of South Africa, and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force.

*Sources: Public Sector Manager, October 2017; www.tambofoundation.org.za

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
South Africa and Zimbabwe cementing relations

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photo by Mr Katiso Mabuza

The second session of the Defence Joint Sectorial Committee (DEFCOM) meeting between the South African and Zimbabwean delegations was recently held by the South African Department of Defence in Pretoria.

The South African delegation was led by the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, who chaired the meeting while the Zimbabwean delegation was led by its Secretary for Defence, the Co-Chair, Mr Martin Rushwaya. In their opening remarks, the two leaders, Dr Gulube and Mr Rushwaya, expressed their appreciation for the friendly relations between these countries whereafter they introduced their delegations.

The meeting followed the DEFCOM inauguration that took place in Harare in October last year. That meeting was aimed at strengthening relations between the aforementioned countries as well as defence and security cooperation. The meeting was also an opportunity for the two countries to finalise the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation and Technical Assistance.

Guided by the provision of the MOU, the meeting covered critical areas in terms of further collaboration by both countries concerning training, military cooperation and the defence industry.

In view of the above the Co-Chair of the meeting, Maj Gen Wiseman Mbambo, in an exclusive interview with SA Soldier, said that the purpose of the DEFCOM 2017 meeting was to review the aforementioned matters in Harare as well as to see what issues needed to be finalised and to monitor progress.

At the end of the two day-long meeting a report on the review was made available. In terms of training, the report showed that the Directing Staff Exchange Programme was being implemented as agreed. However, Zimbabwe was concerned about the challenges faced relating to the issuance of immigration permits for the seconded members.

In terms of military cooperation, the report revealed that the radio communication link at tactical level had been established and operational. In addition, it made known that the radio link operated according to scheduled timings and during coordinated patrols. The committee directed that the link should be operational continually to ensure that emergencies were attended to, should they arise.

So far, in terms of patrols, the committee noted progress relating to coordinated patrols along the common border. It was further reported that during the period review there were three successful coordinated patrols.

Maj Gen Mbambo confirmed that the relationship between the two countries dated back as far as 1994. He added that in 1999 the former Minister of Defence, the late Joe Modise, and the late Moven Mahachi expressed the wish for South Africa and Zimbabwe to collaborate in creating a defence industry that would benefit the two countries and ultimately the Southern African Development Community on issues of interoperability and common equipment such as Armoured Personnel Carriers and command and control capabilities.

Maj Gen Mbambo remarked that during the liberation struggle Zimbabwe supported the liberation movement. He added that since 1994 the relationship between the two countries had been excellent and they had shared activities formalised by the MOU. He said he was happy that the meeting had been fruitful.
As an employee of the Department of Defence (DOD), and a student at the University of South Africa (Unisa) finalising my Honours Degree in Psychological Counselling, with my background that of a BA Degree in Applied Psychology for Professional Context, I feel it is only factual to contribute my knowledge, research capabilities and interpretation of data collected during my academic years to help the organisation and fellow colleagues to a greater understanding of work related challenges and how we can manage them. With more and varied challenges that humanity is facing in today’s world wrt economic, social and personal challenges, it is important that we as the Government/Public Service Personnel are also aware and informed about the well-being of our human resources. According to the Wellness Management Policy, work is seen as central to people’s well-being and a provider of income paving the way to broader social and economic advancement which could strengthen individuals, their families and communities.

Both personal and workplace factors do influence employees’ overall wellness and performance as indicated by the afore-mentioned policy on wellness management. We are to promote the physical, social, emotional, occupational, spiritual, financial and intellectual wellness of fellow employees by creating an organisational climate and culture that is conducive to wellness and comprehensive identification of psycho-social health risks. Our working environment is one of the country’s pillars so it is imperative that we as employees act as a strong support structure in various ways regardless of our rank levels, post profiles, backgrounds and ethnicities. The DOD could be an institution where employees experience various health challenges, e.g. our soldiers (uniformed members), who are exposed to harsh environments while on deployment, not excluding Public Service Personnel, whom are also part of the DOD and who also experience challenges that could easily affect their performance in the working environment.

My main focus wrt to this topic is to share my thoughts on “Depression”, a serious health issue that is not observed as a normal health issue which can be dealt with like any other health problem, but it remains one of the causes of poor performance within the working environment. I personally find depression to be one of the major contributing factors to non-productivity, inability to work with others, inability to concentrate fully, lack of good decision-making skills and inadequate overall job performance within the working environment.

**What is depression?** Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, how you think and how you act. It causes feelings of sadness/loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can cause emotional and physical problems which can decrease a person’s ability to function at work or at home. Depression can strike at any time in our lifetime and studies show that women are more prone to depression than men. The good news is that it is treatable.

**What are the causes of depression?** Depression does not have a single cause, but could result from a combinations of various things, such as your genes, events in your past or current circumstances. There should not be a reason to have depression as it is not your fault and it is not a flaw in one’s character. It can affect anyone and, regardless of the cause, it can be treated and you can be made whole again.

Yes, there are various factors that cause and lead to poor performance of employees within the working environment. Thus it is important that we as an organisation identify the factors that have a crippling effect on the performance of employees in the working environment and their ability to make suitable adjustments. Other factors that lead to poor performance of employees could be personality or ego clashes, stress, heavy workloads, inadequate resources, poor leadership skills, lack of role clarity about accountability, lack of transparency, clash of values, gossip, out-dated technology, bullying or harassment, perceived discrimination, poor performance management and deteriorating health conditions. All these could critically impact on an employee’s ability to be productive, which would lead to cascading effects, such as high absenteeism, low morale and indifference to organisational goals.

With regard to the working environment, depression is one of the factors that most employers/employees misjudge and put it down to poor job performance, bad attitude or poor work ethics of employees. Employers find it difficult to understand a specific employee’s poor health, work attendance and ability to perform his or her daily tasks. My reason for writing about depression today is that employees/employers are finding it difficult to recognise the main cause or other causes of poor performance within their working environment.

Depression can have a bigger impact on job performance than physical health concerns. I find it extremely important that the psychological well-being of employees, especially in the DOD, is taken into consideration and respected as a way of showing responsiveness, consideration, motivation and empowerment, which will reinforce the enthusiasm, efficiency and effectiveness of employees in the DOD. Depression will not be improved by reprimanding employees with warning letters or being put on orders, but by setting employees at ease by showing awareness of the problem, as well as by being able to recognise it. It is important

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**SA SOLDIER** welcomes letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited for reasons of style, accuracy or space limitations. Letters should preferably be typewritten. All letters must include the writer’s full name, address and home telephone number. The opinions expressed in letters are not necessarily the views of the Department of Defence/SA National Defence Force. The volume of letters we receive make individual acknowledgement impossible. Please send your letters to: The Editor, SA SOLDIER Letters, Private Bag X158, Pretoria, 0001. Letters may also be faxed to (012) 355-6399 or sent via email to sasoldier@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.
that employers know that whatever poor performance they may be experiencing from an employee’s depression, the employee’s frustration is far more extreme, and the only way to control this is by seeking professional help.

My message to colleagues and the Department of Defence as a whole is: “Character cannot be developed from a life of ease and comfort. Only through trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved”. Ms Soffie L.M. Lidker, Directorate Strategy and Planning Division

UNITING SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH AROUND A COMMON VISION

First of all, as we commemorate the 41st anniversary of Youth Month, we cannot but recall and salute the contributions of the youth of 1976 and millions across the world to the great victory of the cause of freedom and democracy in our country. This youth month also provides an opportunity for the youth of today to assess the progress we have made and the problems we have experienced, as we work to build the society and consolidate the democracy visualised in our constitution. As we mark our footprint during the youth month, I would like to share what we do with my team towards creating a better SA. We collect and donate appropriate books, story books and children’s books to rural primary schools throughout the country. We have books in all South Africa’s eleven official languages and we believe in reading for pleasure in one’s mother tongue.

The Web Foundation was founded on 2 June 2009 by a group of young people who were passionate about helping and empowering their community. It is a non-governmental, non-profit and non-political organisation which helps to develop and capitalise on the talents of children and the youth in rural areas and settlements throughout SA. The Web Foundation was nominated for and received the Gauteng Youth Excellence Award on 16 July 2016 from the Gauteng Premier, Mr David Makhura, and the Gauteng MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi. We value the relationship we build with every member of every community we encounter, which is why we have created a structure that embodies strength, like that of a spiderweb, hence the name “The Web”. We remain connected and keep growing our footprint in the lives we touch.

You can support the Web Foundation by contributing financially or by volunteering or acting as a friend or agent. To apply to help a rural primary school near you, write a letter of request outlining their need for books and a plan on how the books would be used.

The Web Foundation is the brainchild of a group of young men who saw an opportunity to develop the lives of other young people with similar backgrounds in rural communities, by engaging them in various activities such as sports, the performing arts and reading programmes which help exercise their minds. This serves to expand their abilities and enables them to rise above their circumstances. John Locke said: “Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection must finish him.” The Web Foundation creates a platform for young hopefuls to be part of a structure that helps recognise, nurture and sustain the dreams and talents of the youth of these rural areas. It is a family structure that promotes creative thinking and stimulates the imagination so that the youth can feel free from relying on beneficiaries and enables them to create platforms and opportunities for themselves.

Our vision is to tackle the daily challenges that face the youth in rural areas and settlements by focusing mainly on combating illiteracy. We wish to provide a platform that grows our youth beyond their mental constraints that exist through reading, sports and the performing arts, thus ultimately enabling them to be world class citizens.

Our mission is to support, motivate and inspire children and youth in rural schools to read, participate in sports and the performing arts. Their literacy skills are enhanced when they have access to quality books and a sustainable development plan. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” - Nelson Mandela.

The Siyafunda Project represents progress; we are the embodiment of our people’s aspiration, we are committed to what we do, we are required to show the light and the masses will find the way. In the last 18 months Siyafunda, through our book sponsors Biblionef, has donated 7 000 children’s books in five provinces: Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape, as well as to 15 rural primary schools across the five provinces to the value of R150 000. We have donated 3 000 books to three rural libraries.

On International Nelson Mandela Day we took a road trip to Luphisi Primary School in Mpumalanga where we and Biblionef donated 200 books, after which we donated books to 22 other primary schools in the Pienaarsrivier community which totalled 4 900 books that day. So far we have donated books to the value of R260 000 and, of those, 250 were books about Nelson Mandela. Siyafunda achieved all of this with just one sponsor, namely Biblionef, based in Cape Town, which gave generously to see us reaching our target goal. We aim at reaching double the number of schools in 2017 because we believe that we indeed are empowering positive change. We would like to focus on making this dream sustainable so we can have a better and brighter future for all South African children in all walks of life.

Siyafunda would love to do more than donating children’s books, for these schools, but we have identified one aspect that we can focus on, namely to start school libraries. Hence we have begun by donating nine trolley libraries in Kwa-Nongoma at the beginning of the year, courtesy of the Avbob Foundation. We believe every child should get the same opportunity and material that urban children receive in private and township schools, which is why we strictly support rural primary schools. One of the pitfalls in rural schools is that they do not have proper facilities to enhance positive results. Schools in the Nongoma area are in dire need of libraries, books, and recreational facilities. There is a national crisis in education in South Africa’s schools, with less than a third of South Africa’s population completing matric. This situation is exacerbated by considerable barriers to learning: poverty, lack of textbooks, no school libraries, poor facilities, overcrowded classes, a lack of proper facilities and resources. The problem is particularly dire in primary schools in rural areas throughout SA.

We do not pretend to know what should happen and we do not expect to know all the solutions and answers, but with your full support and your assistance that we count on, we are confident we shall contribute to the less fortunate rural children across SA.

Cpl N.E. Ndlovu, SA Army College
letters to the editor

CAMERAS ARE ON

I always encourage people to be their best especially when no one is looking. Doing your best when no one is looking makes you a better person when people are present. Times have really changed, technology is our full time companion, I can do something now and within a few minutes the whole world will know about it.

Being a soldier requires high levels of discipline and the public expects a polished conduct from any soldier. Currently it seems like the world goes everywhere with their phone cameras on. There is a trend or challenge of videos of any incident or occurrences being leaked to masses thanks to smart phones and social media. Many people have lost their families, jobs, lives, etc owing to smart phones and social media. It is important to remember that whatever we do someone might be recording it through their phones to post it to the masses. It is imperative for soldiers, especially in uniform, to always be on the right side of the law and exercise high levels of discipline when in public. Good conduct does not mean that we are afraid of cameras and social media but, we are professional at all times.

Be careful cameras are on!

Cpl David Mabusha Tshivhula,
1 Parachute Battalion

RSA CULTURE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Heritage Day is a South African public holiday celebrated on 24 September. On this day, South Africans across the spectrum are encouraged to celebrate their beliefs and traditions, in the wider context of a nation that belongs to all. The South African Battalion deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) celebrated the day in style by inviting the local population of the DRC and other contingents deployed under the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC to celebrate the day with them.

The day was planned with the theme of the day in mind: “African Print”, hence all the beautiful traditional attire worn, e.g. shirts and dresses. At Sake Base, members of the community and their Chief attended the event to celebrate with the South Africans to observe different tribal activities. Different cultures were represented in speech and demonstrations. The Amazulu and Batswana stole the show with their dances and stick fighting.

Traditional food was prepared and presented to five judges from different FIB contingents, the various cultural grouping impressed with their cooking skills and displayed their colourful traditional attire.

In Mbuji-Mayi, Maj Tola Pieterse thanked all the Alpha Company members for making this day possible and successful, reminding members of the fact that being miles away from home they are still proudly South African. The day was concluded with traditional meals, music and dance.

Heritage Month ended on 30 September at Beni where Mr Wanner Kate, MONUSCO head of office in Beni, was astonished by the way South Africans celebrate their culture in different traditional activities. He said: “This is so amazing, I really enjoyed every second of this day. South Africans are so welcoming and good people to spend time with.”

Lt Col Dibuwe Tigele, Officer Commanding RSA Battalion, appreciated the efforts of the different cultures and all members that made the day possible, including invited guests from other countries. Capt Siboniso Maseko, Democratic Republic of Congo
HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE VERSUS INADEQUATE BUDGET ALLOCATION

The Department of Defence (DOD) forms part of the other departments at the national sphere of government. The DOD is anticipated to contribute to the National Development Plan (2030) by fulfilling the outcomes enshrined in it such as: Education and skills development, health and local government basic services, job creation, rural development and combating crime and corruption.

This Department is mandated to protect RSA territory and citizens. The DOD is involved in various operations externally and internally - securing the borders and sea (preventing piracy). One of the prominent operations is primarily focussed on combating rhino poaching. During the strike by Public hospital employees, the DOD was activated to operate the Public hospitals for the interim duration of the strike.

The DOD contributes to job creation through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) and Internships. The DOD engages in refurbishment or erection of the infrastructures for communities emanating from initiative.

This Department is expected to be mission ready at all times, by imparting its human resources with the necessary skills and procuring combat equipment such as aircraft, armoured vehicles and ships to ensure its military capability. Despite these commitments, the DOD is allocated only 1% of the GDP which culminates into improper operation by the Department. This also includes remuneration for employees.

Government expects the DOD to scale down its force, however, this is not a sound remedy hence the DOD is expected to avail companies for various operations, including external deployments. Scaling down the department will not solve the financial constraints of the DOD.

The Department requires an adequate budget to operate optimally as expected by the National Development Programme (NDP) outcomes. The DOD requires a Fiscal intervention before the security of the country is compromised owing to financial constraints.

Capt Mondi Chaba, Directorate SA Army Human Resources

RAISE UP, TRY AGAIN

Things happen in such a way
We get disconnected from our
Dreams or our visions ... it’s life.
Yes there are those days when everything
Turns out the bad way, that time you really want
To explain what happened but no one has time
To listen to you.

Challenges that we come across in life can break you or make you a new person as difficult as things can be for you, you can still rise up and try again. I learned that life is what you make of it, the decisions you make today definitely shapes your tomorrow ... it all depends on you. Maybe yesterday you made a bad choice ... But it’s not too late to make the right choice today.

Forget about yesterday, what they said don’t matter today. What they did to you last week don’t matter anymore. Good things lie in front of you, your future is waiting. You need to take a step ... By standing up and trying again. No one can be you, no one will ever be you, and you have a purpose in life that’s a reality.

It was given to you because you are capable of living that purpose no matter what happened or what was said to you. You are the best person to make that dream come true. Remember today is a new day, don’t give up on your dream or your vision, live it and live it to the fullest. Stand up and try again. Cpl T.C. Abrahams, Northern Cape Signal Unit (currently deployed with 5 SA Infantry Battalion in the Democratic Republic of Congo)

FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME

Tennis was always in his blood, but so many things kept him away from achieving his goals. Despite that, he never gave up. His devotion, determination and mere love for the game kept him going. This member, a stalwart in his own right, goes by the name of Mr Isaac Daniels, a Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) member at Air Force Base (AFB) Ysterplaat. Every Wednesday he would stand at the tennis courts and watch the tennis players playing a match and longed to play a game. But in those days, because he was a civilian worker the Defence Force did not make provision for PSAPmembers to take part in sporting events.

One day to his surprise, one of the players approached him and asked if he was interested in playing the game. “Finally!” he thought to himself, and started playing in his overalls and safety boots. The feeling that he had when he hit the tennis ball was overwhelming. The players realised that he had real talent, but could not take part owing to the rules and regulations of that time. Then in 1990, he had a break and was allowed to play in the Western Province League for AFB Ysterplaat. That same year, AFB Ysterplaat competed well and was again the runners-up for the third consecutive year since 1992.

In 1994 Mr Daniels received a trophy for the most improved player, a singles plate winner in 1995 and as a member of the Western Province Defence Club finished top in the Western Province Defence League. He started playing in the SANDF Tennis Championships for the first time in 1996 at Groenkloof Tennis Courts in Pretoria.

In 2005 and 2006 respectively, he won the singles plate and doubles plate and was awarded a bronze medal for both divisions. Most of the championships he attended he had to put in leave and use own financial resources for registration and accommodation. But because he loved the game so much, he did not let this deter him. Mr Daniels has won many awards. In 2007 he reached a milestone in his tennis career when he received his SANDF Veterans’ Colours and thus making history in becoming the first PSAP member in tennis to achieve such an honour. He proved many people wrong, persevered in attaining his goals and all because ... for the love of the game. Mr Isaac Daniels, Air Force Base Ysterplaat

NETBALL UMPIRE

In the article “Two legends of the netball court” printed in SA Soldier (Vol 24 No 8: pages 44 and 45) it was incorrectly published that MWO Lorraine van Heerden is an international netball umpire. She is a National Umpire with a Netball South Africa B+ grading - Ed.
A hero’s farewell – goodbye
Major General (Ret) Petane

“...I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”, these words from 2 Timothy 4:7 epitomise a life of a soldier well lived. It is words befitting a gallant soldier such as Maj Gen (Ret) Mxolisi Petane who was recently laid to rest with full military honours at the Maitland Cemetery in Cape Town. Maj Gen (Ret) Petane died from natural causes in 1 Military Hospital in Thaba Tshwane.

Maj Gen (Ret) Petane was born in Retreat, Cape Town, on 2 August 1958. He joined Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1976 and integrated into the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1994 with the rank of Colonel and was appointed as the Assistant Senior Staff Officer Operations at Western Province Command.

Between 1994 and 1999 he successfully completed all prescribed military promotional courses up to the level of Senior Command and Staff Duties. He also completed Military Law as well as Defence Attaché courses.

On 19 March 1999 he was appointed as the Commandant of the SA Army College and promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and held this position until 2002. In 2002 he was appointed as Director Planning at the Joint Support Division. In 2003 he was appointed as the RSA Defence Advisor to the United Kingdom in London.

Maj Gen (Ret) Petane played a monumental role in the establishment of the SADC Defence Inspectorate Working Group and forged good diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. He held the position of Inspector General of the Department of Defence, until his retirement. At the time of his passing away he had attained a Bachelor in Social Sciences and Masters in Management degrees, a Defence Management
Delivering his tribute, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, voiced his sadness in that to this day since the advent of democracy in South Africa there is no hero’s and heroine’s monument where our children and the generation to come could go and look back in history that they can associate themselves with and draw inspiration from.

In the context of the youth lacking heroes and heroines to emulate, Gen Shoke lamented that they (the youth) do not follow the ideals and do not pursue the objectives that the late Maj Gen (Ret) Petane stood for and pursued. Gen Shoke said: “It is painful when people such as Mxolisi fought for a better education for all yet today we see our children burning institutions of learning and I think it’s about time South Africans that we should stand up and defend the gains of our revolution.”

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, indicated that the late Maj Gen (Ret) Petane’s contribution to the SANDF and legacy must be valued and protected. The Minister said: “The contribution of leaders such as General Petane ensures that the SANDF remains the epitome of transformation and a reflection of progress being made in our country, in honour of his legacy we need to make sure that we do not allow military institutions to fall into disrepair as long as we live. His departure from among the living and his deeds while he lived tells us that to honour his memory, we must develop new patriots to take his place and to continue with his legacy.”

Maj Gen (Ret) Mxolisi Edward Petane is survived by his wife, Zimasa, two children, Refiloe and Zweli, and two grandchildren, Sitha and Canzi.

May his soul rest in peace. Hamba kahle hlati, Mfene, Lisa, Jambase, Msuthu, Canzi. Lala ngxolo qhawe lamaqhawe.
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, voiced her sentiments of the gallant heroes of the South African Native Labour Corps who died after joining the then South African Union Defence Force in the North African campaign at the Battle of El Alamein in Egypt during World War II, 75 years ago.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission earlier had coordinated the ceremony of the Commemoration of the 75th Battle of El Alamein, which preceded the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) commemoration parade on behalf of the more than 35 countries that participated in the war, including South Africa, France, India, New Zealand, England, among others.

More than 7 350 soldiers have been buried in the El Alamein war cemetery of the commonwealth nations that participated in the war.
including more than 800 unidentified soldiers. It is said that the battle marked a turning point in the course of World War II.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “We are gathered here on this solemn occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein to pay homage to the fallen heroes of this battle, in particular South Africans. Our country’s participation was as a colony of the British Empire and member of the Commonwealth nations.

“IT is important to note that over 500 South African soldiers lie in this cemetery whereas some 1 200 were declared missing in or unaccounted for. South Africa must be proud to have been part of the battle that made history; a battle that marked the defeat of Nazi forces.” She said.

The South African elements that were part of the North African expedition were the 1st Infantry Brigade, Second Infantry Brigade, Third Infantry Brigade, Tank Regiment, Engineering Companies, Armoured Reconnaissance among other.

She, however, indicated that South Africa’s racial dynamics then were clearly noticeable, even in the theatre of war. Black soldiers who enlisted for war were not expected to bear arms as their white counterparts and only supported the war effort as labourers, trench and grave diggers.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula explained that it was unfortunate for them as the opponent did not discriminate or distinguish if they were enemies or not. She added that the South African Government at the time did not honour some of the promises which were made to them.

The Minister said: “The irony of this war is that very little is said about black South African soldiers’ involvement or even acknowledged. We need to let our people know that all South Africans were part of the war effort against Nazism.”

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, who accompanied the Minister on her visit to Egypt said the South African soldiers’ remains that lie in the cemetery represented the fight for preservation of peace and
prosperity of human kind. He said the concerted effort in engaging in military campaigns is part of an obligation as part of the international community to prevent conflict and attain peace.

Lt Gen Yam said that the SANDF is commemorating the Battle of El Alamein and other campaigns to give hope to soldiers who are still active within the SANDF ranks and involved in operations and, in a way assure them that they would always be remembered in the same manner.

The Chief of the SA Army said: “Besides the SS Mendi tragedy, the Battle of El Alamein had the biggest number of members who were part of the South African Native Labour Corps of whom mostly were people of African origin. Their contribution was excluded in the country’s history, so we are here to commemorate and celebrate their involvement in the Battle of El Alamein and other campaigns. We have become a good example as the South African Military because we are an embodiment of what people in our country aspire to, which is a non-racial society.”

The SANDF participation in the 75th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein was in collaboration with the Department of Military Veterans and the Reserve Force Council Association. Lt Col Molofe Diseko, who oversaw the SANDF ceremonial participation of the commemoration, said over 500 remains of South African soldiers lie in the cemetery.

Lt Gen Yam said: “Most were from the South African Native Labour Corps, the Coloured Corps and other South African regiments at the time. Most of them fought in the front lines and as a result suffered a huge number of casualties. Their contribution to the battle actually prevented the Nazi forces to further advance in other territories. As a way of recognising their brave deeds, the South African government is honouring all these fallen heroes in the actual sites where the battle took place.”

The Second Battle of El Alamein began on 23 October 1942 with a huge Allied artillery bombardment – the first seen since World War I. Lasting 12 days, the battle marked a turning point in the North African campaign fought between Commonwealth forces and German and Italian forces. For both sides the ultimate aim was control of the Mediterranean, the link with the East through the Suez Canal, Middle East oil supplies and the supply route to Russia through Persia.

El Alamein War Cemetery is the largest Common Wealth Graves Commission cemetery in Egypt. The cemetery contains more than 7 200 Commonwealth burials of World War II of which more than 800 are unidentified. It contains the graves of servicemen who died during all stages of the campaigns in the Western Desert and whose remains were brought into the cemetery from a wide area, but especially those who died in the Battle of El Alamein at the end of October 1942 and in the period immediately before. There are also some 100 war graves of other nationalities.

At the entrance to the cemetery is the Common Wealth Graves Commission El Alamein Memorial. It bears the names of almost 12 000 British and Commonwealth servicemen who have no known grave. Like the cemetery, the memorial was designed by Worthington and both were unveiled on 24 October.
1954 - the 12th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein - by Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, who commanded British forces in the desert during the war.

The memorial takes the form of a cloister, some 80 metres long, and is entered through three arches which lead to a wide hall where the names are inscribed in stone. Within the cloister are Land Forces panels commemorating more than 8 500 soldiers, and Air Forces panels commemorating more than 3 000 airmen of the Commonwealth. Broad stairs lead to a roof top terrace with stunning views across the desert and in the distance, the Mediterranean Sea.

The Alamein Cremation Memorial, which stands in the south-eastern part of El Alamein War Cemetery, commemorates more than 600 men whose remains were cremated in Egypt and Libya during the war, in accordance with their faith.

RIGHT: Fltr: The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, and the South African Ambassador to Egypt, Mr Vusi Mavimbela, after laying a wreath during the wreath-laying ceremony.

LEFT: Sgt Vusi Mavuka was a sentry at the SA National Defence Force commemoration parade of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein in Egypt.
Department of Defence and Stellenbosch University sign a memorandum of agreement

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

In all highly developed economies, as well as countries with sustained high level of economic growth, there are significant levels of national investment in higher education. Higher education institutions make significant contributions to democratic processes through fostering informed citizenship, critical debate and intellectual life.

Recently the Department of Defence (DOD) and the Stellenbosch University signed a Memorandum of Agreement at Defence Headquarters in Pretoria to reinforce the mutually agreed strategic relationship between the two institutions dating back since the 1960’s.

Prof Wim de Villiers, the Rector of the Stellenbosch University, Dr Sam Gulube, the Secretary for Defence, and Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, the Chief of Staff of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), were accompanied by Prof Samuel Tshehla, the Dean of the Faculty of Military Science, Maj Gen Lawrence Mbatha, General Officer Commanding of Training Command, and Maj Gen Ansuyah Fakir, Chief Director Human Resources Development.

In his opening remarks Prof De Villiers said that the partnership between the two parties lays the strongest possible academic foundation for the professionalisation of military education. He said that the Stellenbosch University is the only university in the country offering Military Science, and a leading research-intensive higher education institution on the African continent. He mentioned that the revised agreement between the Stellenbosch University and the DOD will take us into the future. He said: “Stellenbosch University is honoured to be the preferred higher education partner of the DOD and the SANDF. We are committed to strengthening the quest of the SANDF to promote comprehensive security on the continent, helping to make Africa more peaceful and secure, as expressed by the African Union in Agenda 2063 - the Africa we want.”

Among others, the agreement stipulates the roles and obligations of the two parties such as the financial obligations of the DOD and that of the University of Stellenbosch with regard to academic quality of its Faculty of Military Science. The Memorandum of Agreement also makes reference to appointments, remuneration and service conditions, admission and treatment of Military Science students as well as the establishment of a Joint Advisory Committee accountable to the parties simultaneously. The Joint Advisory Committee will advise the University and the DOD on the policies, management and implementation of the Agreement.

During an interview with SA Soldier the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube said that the Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Defence (DOD) and Stellenbosch
University is a significant level of national investment in higher education. “It is a continued and important investment in the most valued resources of the SANDF”, he said.

Dr Gulube emphasised that no military can neglect either the training or the education of its officers, they are key areas in terms of skills requirements. Dr Gulube said: “We aim to develop our officers with flexibility to look beyond the horizon, to anticipate and shape the future. Education will be the key to develop the cognitive flexibility of the officers and their ability to deal with unforeseen and complex security challenges across the spectrum of conflict.”

Key areas include military science, military affairs, research, technology, information and communication, management sciences, military strategy and security issues that has become a cornerstone concept in the national security architecture. The Secretary for Defence further stated that officers are also afforded the opportunity to do research. He said: “Our officers should have the intellectual expertise required to deal with economic, technological and other societal changes in an intellectual manner and also employ our SANDF with all its military resources in support of national security.”

The Chief of Staff of the SANDF, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, highlighted to SA Soldier that as part of the SANDF programme for the development of young officers, the need for education becomes more important. He said that the role of education is critical in ensuring that the SANDF remains intellectually prepared for any eventuality it might face in future. Lt Gen Masondo said: “This partnership between the DOD and the Stellenbosch University is a reflection of the willingness of the SANDF to become a learning and intellectual organisation.”

Front, fltr: The Rector of the Stellenbosch University and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Wim de Villiers, the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, and the Chief of Staff of the SA National Defence Force, Lt Gen Vusi Masondo. Back row, fltr: Chief Director Human Resources Development, Maj Gen Ansuyah Fakir, Stellenbosch University Vice Rector, Social Impact Transformation and Human Resources, Prof Nico Koopman, Legal Advisor Office of Secretary for Defence, Adv Simphiwe Mkhosana, General Officer Commanding of Training Command, Maj Gen Lawrence Mbathe, and the Dean of the Faculty of Military Science, Prof Samuel Tshehla. during the signing ceremony.
Medals bestowed on committed soldiers

By AB Samuel Ramonyai and Ms Beauty Pinga
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

“I am happy to have been the recipient of the Good Service Medal for 50 years. I share my excitement and that of my fellow soldiers who are also medal recipients today. I would like to congratulate them on their hard work and dedication and I want to let them know that the sky is the limit,” said WO2 Contantie Palos to SA Soldier at the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Medal Parade held in Simon’s Town.

WO2 Palos said that joining the Defence Force had not been an easy road to walk. He had to make sacrifices for our country and put our country first at all times.

Though it was not easy, WO2 Palos said he had always seen the Defence Force as a family or club, a place where one gets to meet different people from different cultures and backgrounds. It was a place where he met each and every individual’s culture and learnt from each one. WO2 Palos added: “The SANDF is a family I never thought I would find comfort in. I am very happy to have served my country for 50 years and I will forever remain grateful.”

S Sgt Godwin Motsokwane from 4 Special Forces Regiment became one of a few SANDF members to receive the Iphrothiya yesiliva (merit) Medal for his individual contribution and participation in an SANDF operation. At the end of the medal parade an interview was conducted with him about how he felt as the only member to receive the Iphrothiya yesiliva Medal during the medal parade. He replied: “I am very proud that my hard work has been recognised and it feels good to have received such a medal. I do feel special as I am the only one to have been awarded the Iphrothiya yesiliva Medal.”
He pointed out that the Iphrothiya yesiliva Medal is a medal for bravery that one receives for persistent bravery and extraordinary activities performed during operations. He believes that this is a medal that one can only receive through discipline and determination. A passionate soldier, S Sgt Motsokwane concluded by encouraging every member to find an interest in his or her speciality.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, on behalf of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, bestowed medals on men and women in uniform who have over the years served this organisation with discipline, dignity, professionalism and patriotism.

One member received the Good Service Medal for 50 years, ten members received the Good Service Medal for 40 years and 176 members received the Good Service Medal for 30 years and one member received the Iphrothiya yesiliva Medal.

After conferring the medals, the Chief of the SA Air Force stated that recipients should wear their medals with pride and dignity as a pledge to themselves as well as to the nation. He further thanked them for their personal commitment in striving for excellence and defending our democracy.

Lt Gen Msimang believes that a soldier is that extraordinary being who answers to our nation’s call - which is service to our country. He added: “We as women and men in uniform symbolise South Africa’s strength, dignity, selfless and patriotic service to our nation.”

The Chief of the SA Air Force concluded with a quotation by Tata Mandela made on 20 April 1964, long before he became our first Commander-in-Chief of our democratic South Africa – lest we forget: “During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die for”. ⚔
Serving and retired Generals and Admirals meet

The Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, officially opened the Academic Days of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) at the School of Armour in the Big Willy Auditorium in Bloemfontein from 19 to 21 September 2017.

The Generals and Admirals Club was established in 1977 exclusively for Generals and Flag Officers of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

The club continues to exist exclusively for Generals and Flag Officers of the SANDF with the objective to promote the camaraderie among serving and retired Generals and Flag Officers.

The club luncheon was recently hosted by the Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, at the Naval Mess in Pretoria and was attended by 69 Club members. The purpose of the event was to create a platform for serving Generals and Admirals to learn from their retired predecessors, share ideas and learn from other Services and Divisions.

Capt (SAN) Johannes Roux who was the Officer Commanding of the SAS AMATOLA during Exercise KETANE presented a briefing on the SA Navy’s participation in the exercise during the centenary commemoration of the sinking of the SS Mendi.

His presentation focused on the SAS AMATOLA sailing trip earlier this year to commemorate the centenary of the sinking of the SS Mendi – the largest naval disaster in the history of South Africa. On 21 February 1917, the SS Mendi, a steam driven troopship that set sail from Cape Town for La Harve (France) sank in the British Channel within 20 Minutes after being rammed by the SS Darro. Her cargo included 824 Army personnel, 803 of which were soldiers from the South African Native Labour Corps (SANLC).

Academic minds converse on improving the military health care system

The Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, officially opened the Academic Days of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) at the School of Armour in Bloemfontein from 19 to 21 September 2017.

This auspicious event was hosted by 3 Military Hospital and coordinated under the watchful eyes of Director Ancillary Health, Brig Gen Xolani Currie, in conjunction with the scientific committee who delivered an exceptional event. The SAMHS academic conference involves different health care practitioners who are subject specialists in their fields of expertise. Their drive
was to discuss their research papers and share experiences with the ultimate aim of improving the health care system within the Department of Defence.

Addressing the attendees, the Surgeon General explained the reason and the importance of the conference. He said: “I am without a doubt looking forward to the discussions and encounters of brilliant academic minds gathered here over the next three days. As Health Care Practitioners, we know life - long education is part and parcel of the life we have chosen for ourselves. The need being continued preservation and re-invention to meet the health challenges and technological developments happening around us”.

The Surgeon General highlighted the importance of research in the health sector environment. “Research has proved that the improvement in the quality of healthcare service delivery stems from advances made in evidence-based healthcare, which leads to better clinical practise and consequently, better health and also, how to put this evidence-based healthcare into everyday practice. It is therefore imperative that, the research studies presented in this conference are implemented in our everyday practices.

As individuals here today, you all have a responsibility to implement ways to improve our healthcare system”, said Lt Gen Sedibe. More than 200 participants attended the Academic Days under the theme “Standard of Care, a Health Service Delivery Imperative”. In conclusion, Director Military Health Force Preparation, Maj Gen Zola Dabula, had words of praise to the attendees and said: “First of all, I would like to thank the presenters for a job well done in putting together excellent research papers. I am pleased to know that as an organisation, we are imbued with immense talent that has been demonstrated in this very hall. The unblemished oratory, research content and understanding of research methodologies cannot be ignored. The standard was pitched where it truly belonged. Learning has indeed taken place”.

Attendees at the Opening of the Academic Days of the SA Military Health Service.
It is indeed true that no person was ever honoured for what he or she received; instead honour has been the reward for what he or she gave.

During a medal parade recently held at the Military Health Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane Chief Director Military Health Force Support, Maj Gen Lesley Ford, on behalf of the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, awarded Good Service Medals for 20 Years and the Mandela Bronze Medal to deserving men and women of the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) in various rank groups as a token of acknowledgement and recognition for their diligence in carrying out their duties selflessly in the organisation.

Maj Gen Ford extended his hearty congratulations to the recipients. He said that serving the country for 20 years was a confirmation of one’s contribution towards the organisation and selflessness in its purest form. He said that they exemplified the finest qualities of the “health warriors, serving the brave”. He added: “In these 20 years you have had to act beyond the call of duty and these medals will now and forever form part of your history as soldiers.”

Speaking to SA Soldier shortly after the parade Lt Col Suzan Joubert, SO1 Pharmacy, Tertiary Military Health Formation, who received the Good Service Medal for 20 Years, said that the military offered her the opportunity to have a dual career, both as a medical professional and a soldier. Asked what kept her going for all these years, she proudly replied: “I lasted this long because of the love I have for the organisation and the opportunities that came my way. It’s been my calling”.

Asked what the highlight of her career has been during the past 20 years, she said: “Participating in SA National Defence Force (SANDF) peace missions to promote peace and stability on the continent. I have been deployed externally on peace support missions in Burundi in 2003 and 2004 and in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006 and 2011. In 2013 to 2014 I was part of the SANDF first contingent of the Force Intervention Brigade for the United
Members salute after receiving the Mandela Medal Bronze.

Lt Col Suzan Joubert, SO1 Pharmacy, Tertiary Military Health Formation, received the Good Service Medal for 20 Years.

Lt Col Thobile Ndlovu, SO1 Social Work, Area Military Health Unit Gauteng, was presented with the Mandela Medal Bronze.

Nations”. She said she was proud to look back with admiration at what the SANDF had achieved on the African continent and beyond.

Another recipient, Lt Col Thobile Ndlovu, SO1 Social Work, Area Military Health Unit Gauteng, who received the Mandela Medal Bronze, said she felt proud to have been awarded the Mandela Medal for the work she did following the death of Tata Madiba. Asked what her responsibilities were, she said that she had been tasked as a Military Liaison Officer responsible for receiving foreign dignitaries from various countries that came to mourn the statesman’s passing. Her message to other members is: “We should not be weary of doing good. Out of small things procedeth that which is great”. 👁
The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) contribution towards humanitarian assistance in 2017 unfolded in a series of crisis-events that threatened human and animal lives. The Area Military Health Formation, 7 Medical Battalion Group, the School for Military Health Training and the Area Military Health Unit Western Cape collectively earned themselves the Sword of Peace during the SAMHS annual Corporate Awards 2017 at the SAMHS Officers Club in Thaba Tshwane for responding to crisis-stricken areas around the country.

These formations and units were acknowledged for providing relief to human suffering and assisting bereaved families during the Forensic Pathological Services strike and the humanitarian assistance at the Health Centre South Coast during the Knysna fires.

The Sword of Peace Award is presented in the form of a sword as a floating trophy. The 2017 Sword of Peace Award was awarded for the first time to more than one worthy SA Military Health Service grouping for exceptional contributions in the humanitarian field.

The Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, addressing members attending the SA Military Health Service annual Corporate Awards ceremony.
multi-faceted humanitarian support includes, inter alia, combating and treatment of illness and epidemics, emergency medical treatment, relief actions and multi-disciplinary team support during disasters.

During June 2017 Forensic Pathological Services, mostly in the Gauteng region, were affected by a national strike. The Forensic Pathological Services in Diepkloof, Hillbrow, Johannesburg, Roodepoort and Germiston were brought to a complete standstill by a strike of the forensic officers. The Department of Health approached the Department of Defence to render assistance to the mortuaries. The SAMHS was requested to act as a collateral utility.

Initially 14 qualified operational emergency care practitioners consisting of seven Reserve Force members from 7 Medical Battalion Group and seven Regular Force members from the School for Military Health Training were tasked to assist in the mortuaries. The initial group of 14 members was reinforced by Emergency Care Technician students from the School for Military Health Training.

After induction training in mortuary processes at the Hillbrow Forensic Pathology Service the members were deployed to render services at all affected mortuaries. During this intervention that lasted five weeks the SAMHS members were exposed to long working hours in dreadful circumstances and were alerted to dangers such as needle prick injuries.

In another incident, the Knysna area on the Garden route in the Eden District was ravaged by fires. Calls were received from the Local Disaster Management Office in Oudtshoorn and from the Mayor of Knysna requesting humanitarian assistance.

Human resources and medical equipment from the Health Centre South Coast were placed on two-hour standby after interim approval was obtained from the General Officer Commanding of the Area Military Health Formation to prepare for the deployment. Once approval was received the Disaster Manager of the Knysna Municipality was consulted on requirements in terms of medical support. Follow-up meetings took place with the Mayor of Knysna, the Disaster Manager, the Fire Chief and members of the Emergency Medical Services. The appreciation required that an intermediate health care facility be established to take care of patients that required primary health care, which resulted in a decrease in the number of patients needing to be sent to the provincial hospital.

Nine members of the Health Centre South Coast were deployed at the local squash courts at Loerie Park. They consisted of nursing staff, operational emergency care practitioners and a medical officer. An ambulance and a mobile clinic of the SAMHS were also deployed.

Medical care was provided for patients with burn wounds and those suffering from smoke inhalation. Patients that required secondary and tertiary care were evacuated to the Life Health Clinic by the Emergency Medical Services and ER24.

A further request was received to extend the humanitarian services and a marquee tent was erected with space for patient administration, a waiting area, observation, treatment, a dressing area and a dispensary.
The Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Jabulani Mbuli, hosted the 5th Department of Defence (DOD) Suppliers Day recently at Logistics Support Formation Combined Club under the theme “Improving on procurement ethics for a fair and competitive business in the DOD”. The aim of the event was to ensure that the DOD stays in touch with its suppliers that provide the DOD, through the DOD procurement process, with commercially-of-the-shelf products.

The objectives of the DOD Suppliers Day were to afford DOD suppliers the opportunity to exhibit their goods and services and to afford the DOD an opportunity to articulate its procurement processes and DOD personnel to discuss details of certain goods and services with the suppliers. In addition, it was held to communicate challenges which suppliers and the DOD experience during their interactions and to articulate National Treasury, the Department of Trade and Industry and the SA Bureau of Standard procurement processes and requirements to the suppliers. Furthermore, the occasion provided the DOD with an opportunity to interact and strengthen their relations with their most valued stakeholders through the establishment of efficient and effective communication lines. The DOD took the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions by its stakeholders in the quest to support them to deliver on its constitutional mandate. The DOD value these relations as a foundation on which it can build a solid National Defence Force that is fully capable to defend the country’s territorial integrity and its people. The Commander-in-Chief, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma, has on numerous occasions emphasised the important role that Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) play in addressing economic challenges the country is facing today. The DOD is duty bound to manage its procurement process in a manner that is aligned with and promotes the economic development programmes of the Government through deliberate action by supporting the commercial viability of the SMMEs.

During the event, the DOD imparted information relating to procurement prescripts by means of presentations and workshops by the different procurement environments. The Directorate Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption of the DOD Inspector General explained the relationship between corruption and procurement – a distressing aspect which must be eradicated at all cost by all stakeholders. The DOD will ensure zero tolerance for corruption and stressed that eliminating corruption was a double-edged sword. It will cut both the DOD members and the suppliers found to be corrupting the procurement system.

Speaking to the delegates, the Chief of Logistics said that to guarantee service delivery in the DOD and to the broader South African public, the Department and its suppliers must always work closely in a corruption-free environment. The DOD believes that if a corruption free environment is created, progress can be made with quicker economic growth that will lead to more job opportunities.

Lt Gen Mbuli said: “The DOD expects suppliers and service providers to adhere to procurement prescripts and to avoid unnecessary legal disputes that may be detrimental to the creation of a healthy relationship. This approach will ensure the growth and sustainability of the SMMEs and at the same time contribute to Government’s objective of stimulating the economy and job creation.”

The Chief of Logistics believed that since the first DOD Suppliers Day the relationship between the DOD and its stakeholders was moving away from an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust to a more professional and business orientated relationship.
Paying tribute to fallen Military Police members

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

It was an emotional and spirit-filled remembrance service as the Military Police School in Thaba Tshwane honoured those who departed.
Chaplain Fuzile Ntshona began his sermon by reading Acts 2:25 and concluded by quoting Satchel Paige: “Never let your head hang down. Never give up and sit down and grief. Find another way”.

Relatives of the fallen were overwhelmed and thankful that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) held the commemoration service in honour of their children who unselfishly laid down their lives for the country.

Among the attendees was the mother of the late Sgt Nomthandazo Mngomezulu who died at the age of 36 in 2014, Ms Mariam Mngomezulu from Tembisa in Gauteng. Asked how she felt to see the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) paying homage to her late daughter? She said: “The Commemoration attest to me that my daughter was a valuable asset to the SANDF and her dedication and hard work was not forgotten and meant something to her colleagues.”

Asked how she continued with her life without her daughter, Ms Mngomezulu emotionally replied: “Losing my daughter had been the most difficult thing to ever happen to me and to this day I had not entirely made peace with the fact that she was gone. The pain does not go away, we are shaken as a family. Her sudden passing was a shock, as at that time she was in good health”.

She said that though life is not the same anymore and it’s hard to deal with their loss, she appreciates that the SANDF still checks-up on the family and ensures that they are still holding on and keeping strong.

Describing the type of person her daughter was, Ms Mngomezulu said: “She was so strong; a hard worker. She always put her family and work before everything else”.

Her colleagues at the Military Police School shared the same sentiments that the late Sgt Mngomezulu was a disciplined and hard worker, who always wanted things to get done and was skilled at what she did. She was a motorbike instructor at the Military Police School and was also part of the Military Police ceremonial bikers who rode during the Opening of Parliament and other presidential events performing escort duties.

The Lord knows best and paves the way for those He wants to have in heaven. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them.
Environmental Scan Seminar zoomed in on cyber security threats

By Col Sammy Mudau,
Senior Staff Officer Military Policy, Strategy and Planning
Photos by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The Department of Defence (DOD) Environmental Scan Seminar was held at the Peace Mission Training Centre at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane on 13 October 2017. The aim of the seminar was to contextualise the future, considering that a leader’s job is to look into the future and see the organisation, not as it is, but as it should be. The seminar was attended by the DOD Generals and Flag Officers as well as planners. The Chief of Staff of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, welcomed the attendees and urged them to use the forum to deliberate on the current security threat realities and the future security challenges within the battle space where the SANDF operates, specifically the internal security situation. The Environmental Scan Seminar was centred on cyber security threats and political implication on security.

Dr Jabu Mtsweni, a guest speaker from the CSIR, addressed the attendees on the topic “Cyber Security Threat”. It is imperative that the members of the DOD understand cyber security threats and its realities, considering that the world of today is characterised by digital networks. The DOD should be proactive and ready to combat cyber security threats. Awareness on how to secure critical information against cyber-crime is vital. Members of the DOD should be aware of the risk associated with mobile devices as most people use it for various reasons in their every day lives. He gave many examples: worldwide cars have been hacked, a popular US smart home alarm system was hacked, implantable medical devices, such as pacemakers have been hacked, aircraft systems have been hacked, critical infrastructure, such as a power grid and a dam were hacked, mobile banking apps have been hacked, smart city technology has been hacked.

In 2009, broadband connectivity in Africa was very minimal with only one under sea high speed cable connecting many countries in Africa to the outside world. Mostly, African countries relied on the slow satellite connectivity, Africa did not have equal connectivity as compared to the rest of the world, and this is still the case in some other parts of the continent. By 2012, Africa
and passengers in touch with their lives keep pilots informed about the weather, citizens. Cars talk to drivers and each they need it. Cities adapt to the needs of the information they need, right when all get through the day with greater easily.” Better connections mean we world, people move through life more 2020. Panasonic says: “In a connected a 100% penetration is predicted by mobile devices, estimated at over half a billion unique access to the Internet. It is estimated of a billion citizens in Africa who have to consider. Currently, there is a quarter of service started to increase. He said: “To avoid cyber threat attack, the greatest advice when dealing with the cyber-security challenge is that members should not own a computer, should not switch it on, and should not use it.” This is mainly because no computer programmes or associated solution is full-proof. He said that only 6 out of 53 anti-virus programmes were able to detect RANSOMWARE attacks.

The above advice is really impossible to consider. Currently, there is a quarter of a billion citizens in Africa who have access to the Internet. It is estimated that there are over half a billion unique mobile devices, estimated at over 50% of the population numbers and a 100% penetration is predicted by 2020. Panasonic says: “In a connected world, people move through life more easily.” Better connections mean we all get through the day with greater ease and convenience. People receive the information they need, right when they need it. Cities adapt to the needs of citizens. Cars talk to drivers and each other to avoid collisions. And aircraft keep pilots informed about the weather, and passengers in touch with their lives today have a cyber dimension. War traditionally was viewed as kinetic (physical) – dropping of bombs, shooting bullets, and in some cases also throwing spears at each other even when better ways could suffice. The other perspective is that with traditional warfare, we can bomb a target and possibly see if we have succeed or not without any shadow of doubt from both parties. Cyber war fare is a reality. These attacks maybe in the form of RANSOMWARE attacks: Control centre systems are encrypted by an external source demanding a payment for the reconnection of services. Data transmission monitoring: Data coming to and from the control centre is monitored by an external to determine peak network hours for further attacks or extract confidential customer data. Denial of service: External actors can take control of the grid and cut off supply to the customer base. Physical tampering: Smart meters can be tampered with to hide true consumption readings or diversions within the known network structure. Deception attacks: Malicious technologies masquerading as a true component can be inserted into the network to feed incorrect data or instructions. Behaviour alteration: Network components can be compromised to act in a malicious manner to disguise true, but anomalous network conditions as expected network conditions. Man-in-the-middle attacks: Data and instruction transmissions may be diverted through to an unknown, malicious third party, allowing for undetected alterations. Malware distribution: Infected network components can be used to spread malware through the network and into the wider cyber environment through other internet-capable devices such as user smart phones and PCs. The appropriate level of military involvement needs to be informed by both the dangers to national security and the alternatives available (including the risk of misemploying the military).

The reality is that the DOD should treat cyber as the operational domain to ensure security of the Republic of South Africa (RSA): The appropriate level of military involvement needs to be informed by the dangers to national security. In the RSA, the DOD is mandated to address national security threats in cyber-space, combat cyber-warfare, cyber-crime and other cyber ills, build confidence and trust in the secure use of information and communication technologies develop and review as well as update existing substantive and procedural laws to ensure alignment. Furthermore, the Defence Review suggests that South Africa requires the protection of its cyber-domain, through a comprehensive information warfare capability, integrated into its intelligence-related information systems at the international, national and defence levels. Both defence and wider-government capabilities must be enhanced to secure vital networks.

Mr Mathekga deliberated on the political issues in the world, Africa and the RSA and what impact it has on security. The more the political instability the more the security implication therefore there is a need for the SANDF to be well prepared to cooperate with the police to ensure internal stability.
Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality under the leadership of Executive Mayor Councillor Vusimusi Tshabalala joined hands with the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) during the launch of Maluti-a-Phofung Dipontsho Cultural Festival recently held in Phuthaditjhaba.

People from in and around the Free State Province, Basotho royals, indigenous academics, elders and youth flocked to the Charles Mopeli Stadium to celebrate this cultural festival.

Addressing the Free State residents, Councillor Tshabalala said that they should look forward to another outstanding edition of the festival with the SANDF career expo. He said: “We are grateful for the partnership with the SANDF for the contributions that will benefit our young people and the community at large.” He thanked the SANDF for taking the initiative to empower the youth of the community by disseminating information informing them about the various career opportunities available in the SANDF.

When speaking to SA Soldier, the Executive Mayor indicated that owing to the fact that the majority of the residents in this area were young people naturally they were the ones who were mainly affected by socio-economic challenges such as joblessness, inequality and poverty. He said: “Military exhibitions will attract youngsters and expose them to the Military Skills Development System.”
Members of the SA Navy making people aware of careers in maritime electronics, technical and combat occupations.

Explaining the importance and relevance of the Maluti-a-Phofung Dipontsho Cultural Festival, Brig Gen Setete Malakoane, Director Supply Support in the SA Air Force, highlighted that the career exhibition was pivotal in pursuing the SANDF’s skills acquisition programme and an effective way of investing in young people.

“Heritage is a means for us to express our identity. Our indigenous languages, clan names referred to as diboko in Sotho, traditional food and music are part of the rich history of our country. It is important that we celebrate our heritage because it bears the imprint of our humanity,” said Ms Mmamohau Mampesi (69) from Thabana Tshwana in Thabong, a Phuthaditjhaba resident.

Expressing his delight, Phumane Mokoena from Mampoi High School in Namahadi said: “I am fascinated by the military exhibition. This is an exciting event for us (young people) as it comes once in a lifetime. We do not have access to see these military hardware and technologies. The SANDF has brought vibrancy into our township.”

Another attendant was Mr Makhetha Thabana, Community Development Supervisor from the Department of Social Development (Thabo Mofutsanyana District in QwaQwa), who had the following to say: “I am so impressed with the SANDF and the demonstrations continue to blow me away. We are proud of our soldiers; they give us a real treat.”

The week-long festival programme included the SANDF Career Expo, capability demonstrations and sporting activities, such as tug-of-war, an obstacle course, martial arts and self-defence classes.
Strengthening the military culture

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

It was an evening of fine dining and leisure. Glam brought a lot of vibrancy, class, showcasing of success and an unmistakable sense of style for the Directorate Human Resources Divisional Staff Formal Guest Evening at Gerbera Officers Mess in Thaba Tshwane.

The intention of the guest evening was to relax, dine, strengthen esprit de corps and military culture. It was a prestigious event where officers, non-commissioned officers and civilian members accompanied by their spouses mingled and got to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Brig Gen John Andrews, Director Human Resources Divisional Staff, expressed his gratitude to all members for their hard work in pursuit of the Human Resources Division’s mandate. He handed out certificates to members for their dedication and commitment to their duties during the year.

Brig Gen Andrews said that everyone had a responsibility and a role to play and thanked them for their dedication, passion, professionalism and commitment in serving the Divisional Staff with excellence. “We must be creative and inventive. Individually we are one drop, one can do so little, but collectively we can do so much more through teamwork to accomplish organisational objectives”.

He also thanked the spouses of the members of the Divisional Staff and other guests. Brig Gen Andrews said: “Thank you for your support and know that in your silent way you are making a difference.”

To the sound of bagpipe music, sherry and port were served and glasses rose as a toast to the Mess President.

SA Soldier conversed with CPO Johnny Maboela, Chief Personnel Clerk Career Management, who received a commendation certificate to acknowledge his outstanding contribution. CPO Maboela said that he was honoured and appreciated the recognition of his hard work. It gives a sense of fulfilment and encouragement when the organisation applauds good efforts. His message is: “A little progress each day adds up to big results. Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Do not let anyone define you. You define yourself through your hard work.”

THE STRENGTH OF EACH MEMBER IS THE TEAM: It was a night to remember for members of the Human Resources Divisional Staff.
Southern Military Police Region triumphed

By Ms Reinet Pieterse, Secretary at the Southern Military Police Region

The Southern Military Police Region (S MPR) stood the test of time, it proved for the fifth year that victory is inevitable when people work together as a team. The members of S MPR did not lose focus on their objective of directing all their efforts into being the best Military Police entity in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and walked away again with top honours during the 2017 Military Police Division Gala Awards ceremony.

Not only was the S MPR the Best Military Police Region but also the Best Regional Headquarters and the Best Shooting Region.

Not only has the S MPR excelled in terms of the above results, but this Region was also commended by the participating shottists from the other regions and independent units that this year’s Military Police Division Shooting Seminar hosted by the S MPR at the De Goede Hoop Shooting Range in Atlantis was the overall best planned and presented seminar.

The aim of the shooting seminar was to test the members’ weapon proficiency and marksmanship. Members competed in various categories. The S MPR was crowned the Best Shooting Region and Langebaanweg Military Police was chosen as the Best Military Police Area Office and Saldanha Military Police Detachment as the Best Military Detachment while the Southern Military Correctional Facility was chosen as the Best Military Correctional Facility.

To date there is no other region or unit in the Military Police Division that has beaten the record of the Southern Military Police Region. Well done South!

To our Regional Provost Marshal, Col Franz Viljoen, who is a true leader – we salute you Sir for leading the way – your staff is proud to be associated with this Region.

Members of the Southern Military Police Region – the cream of the crop at the Military Police Division Gala Awards ceremony.

Shottists participating at the Military Police Division Shooting Seminar at De Goede Hoop Shooting Range at Atlantis.

obtained the first and third place in the Prestige Individual category. In addition, the Prestige and Development Teams of S MPR obtained an overall first place while its Developing Shottists obtained a second place. The S MPR also achieved an overall third place in the Masters category.

Langebaanweg Military Police was chosen as the Best Military Police Area Office and Saldanha Military Police Detachment as the Best Military Detachment while the Southern
A night filled with splendid military music

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by LCpl Paul Mpangala

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Combined Services Band formed part of the entertainment at the Gaufestival that was recently hosted at Fort Schanskop Amphitheatre at the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

To many this was an unforgettable evening of entertainment with the SANDF Military Band, as the programme embraced military marches, film music, including vocal and pipe band items. The band consisted of members of the SA Army, the SA Air Force and the SA Military Health Service. The band conductors were Maj Andrew Strugnell from the National Ceremonial Guard and Maj Loren Almer from the SA Air Force Band who ensured organised notes and splendid musical instrumental sounds.

Maj Strugnell in an interview with SA Soldier said that they were ecstatic to have been invited as military musicians to participate and contribute to this auspicious occasion. He remarked that the event was organised to promote local and international artists, hence it was an opportunity to perform and show their musical talents.

Asked about the outcome of the performance, Maj Strugnell said that he was thrilled by their superb performance that night. He believes that their performance promoted the image of the SANDF within the community that formed part of the event.

He thanked the military band members for turning the night into a dazzling one. He highlighted that they could not have succeeded as conductors without the support and dedication of their band members.

At the end of the two hour-long musical concert members of the audience was interviewed about the performance of the military band. Many remarked that they have enjoyed the performance thoroughly. Others highlighted that the sound of the military pipe band made them emotional though it was a good feeling. They added that they were eagerly awaiting another military band concert.
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Military Attaché and Advisory Corps embarks on the Garden Route tour

In a sovereign democratic state it is absolutely necessary for defence force relations with different countries to be well managed, promoted and maintained. To this end military attachés are appointed and deployed in different host countries. A military attaché is a military officer or expert who is attached to a diplomatic mission (hence the name “attaché”). This post is normally filled by high-ranking military officers who represent their countries in foreign host countries. In addition to the duty to represent his or her country an attaché plays an important role in advising the ambassador and embassy staff.

Defence Foreign Relations (DFR) in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) exists to execute its primary responsibility which is to promote and maintain healthy relations with foreign representatives of the Military Attachés and Advisory Corps (MAAC).

Lt Col Willem van Wyk, SO1 MAAC in the DFR, hosted the military attachés of different countries in South Africa. In fulfilling its primary responsibility the DFR, under the leadership of Col Van Wyk, embarked on the MAAC Garden Route tour from Oudtshoorn to Port Elizabeth from 1 to 7 October 2017.

In Oudtshoorn, known as the capital of ostrich country, the military attachés visited Infantry School where they were briefed on the responsibilities of the unit. Simultaneously their spouses and children visited the Oudtshoorn old age home. The spouses each donated R100 to the Little Angels, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the upkeep and well-being of frail senior citizens. “It is indeed touching to see these frail elderly who are happy regardless of the state they are in. They are so appreciative of little acts of kindness such as visiting them,” said Ms Sanan Ali Zaidi, Secretary of the MAAC Spouses Forum and wife of the Pakistani attaché, the Naval and Air Advisor Group Captain, Syed Ali Zaidi.

On 2 October 2017 the military attachés and their families visited the Cango Caves where the tour guide
Military Attachés’ children in the Cango Caves in Oudtshoorn.

gave a short lecture on the formation of caves and on flowstones, stalactites, stalagmites, helictites, soda straws and columns. Being the capital of ostrich country it would have been an injustice not to visit an ostrich farm. After the caves they therefore visited an ostrich farm where they enjoyed feeding these big birds and learning about them. To conclude the day they visited the Cango Wildlife Ranch where they learnt about different indigenous endangered and foreign animals.

In Port Elizabeth the MAAC group paid a courtesy visit to Mr Athol Trollip, Mayor of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality. While the military attachés were visiting the Mayor the spouses and children went to the Bay World Oceanarium, home to several species of fish, turtles, fur seals, cape gannets, and South Africa’s second largest captive population of African black footed penguins.

The Mayor welcomed the MAAC group to the city and assured them of his assistance. He added: “I hope you enjoy our city, the only city in the world that has the big seven animals. I encourage you to come back here in your private capacity so that you can enjoy the sounds and sites of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality.”

The MAAC tour was concluded by a visit to the Addo Elephant National Park where from the safety of the bus the military attachés with their families enjoyed watching various wild animals and birds.

Col Isaias Martins Junior from Brazil at Infantry School dancing to a song of the late Brenda Fassie after the official gala evening.

“This tour served its purpose and presented a great opportunity to learn about our host country South Africa. We regard trips like this as an informal benchmarking opportunity,” said Col Isaias Martins Junior from Brazil.
Meet your representative at the Government Employees Pension Fund

By Col Gys du Plessis, Senior Staff Officer Liaison (Directorate Physical Training, Sport and Recreation)

Col Johan Coetzer is the current elected Trustee Substitute for the Permanent Force members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) on the Board of Trustees of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF). Col Coetzer was elected as the Member Trustee Substitute together with Brig Gen A.L. De Wit (Ret), Member Trustee, during the trustee elections back in 2013.

Col Coetzer joined the SA Air Force in 1989 for his compulsory National Service and has since served the Department of Defence (DOD) in a variety of capacities. At present he occupies the post of Senior Staff Officer Military Defence Counsel on the staff of Chief of Defence Legal Services where he is overseeing proper legal representation at Military Courts and Boards of Inquiry.

He obtained his B Com (Law) and LLB degrees at the University of Pretoria, where he also completed the Certificate Programme in Advanced Labour Law (with distinction) and the LLM degree (with distinction) in 2015. His dissertation dealt with the controversial topic of the Right to Collective Bargaining in the SANDF. Back in 1994, he obtained a LLM Degree at the University of Johannesburg, where he also completed two Post Graduate/Advanced Diplomas in Labour Law (with distinction). He has also completed the Advanced Labour Law Programme (with distinction) at the University of South Africa and in 2017 the Certificate in Labour Dispute Resolution Practice (with distinction) at the University of Stellenbosch.

As member on the South African Society for Labour Law, he has a special interest in labour law and has appeared in various labour matters on behalf of the DOD at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC), GPSSBC and the CCMA. Two of the CCMA matters were reported in the Juta Labour Law Library and Industrial Law Journal respectively. [See PSA obo Moller v South African National Defence Force (Case No: WE 11389) dated 11 August 1998; Public & Allied Workers Union obo Orgill v SA National Defence Force (2000) 21 ILJ 2123 (CCMA)]

He completed the Practical Law School at the Law Society of South Africa and passed the Board Exam whereafter he completed his articles at the Office of the State Attorney. He was soon thereafter admitted as an Attorney of the High Court of South Africa.

Col Coetzer was a tutor/marker/moderator/examiner for more than 10 years at the Technicon RSA and Unisa in respect of the subjects Labour Law; Advanced Labour Law, Safety Management Law I, II and III and Fundamental Rights. He was co-author of a Manual on Functional Training for Labour Inspectors in the Department of Labour and assisted in their training.

He is currently a member of the Institute of Directors in Southern Africa. He recently became a member of the International Pension and Employee Benefits Lawyers Association (IPEBLA) after attendance of the 16th IPEBLA International Conference in Prague.

Although he played rugby for his Unit/Base in his younger days, he is also a keen chess player who has represented Northern Transvaal/Gauteng North and Mid Gauteng in many inter-provincial team competitions. He has been the Pretoria Military Chess Club champion on many occasions. At the end of 2005, he was awarded the Pretoria Military Sport Club Gold Colours for chess. His highest CHESSA rating of 2097 brought him under the top rated chess players in South Africa.

The Board of Trustees of the GEPF is responsible for the proper and efficient management of the GEPF. The Board of Trustees consists of eight persons (the employer nominees) designated by the Minister of Finance and eight persons (the employer nominees) consisting of six representatives elected by the labour representatives in the PSCBC, one pensioner representative elected by pensioners and one person elected by members employed by the SANDF, the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service.
Rule 4.1.19 to the Government Employees Pension Law, 1996 (GEP Law) provides that each trustee or substitute shall:

- "Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the interests of members in terms of the rules of the Fund and the provisions of the Law are protected at all times;
- Act at all times with due care and diligence and in good faith;
- Avoid conflicts of interest;
- Act with impartiality in respect of all members and beneficiaries;
- Ensure that proper control systems are employed by or on behalf of the Board;
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the rules of the Fund comply with the Law, and all other applicable laws;
- Ensure that adequate and appropriate information is communicated to the members informing them of their rights, benefits and duties in terms of the rules of the Fund;
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that contributions are paid timeously to the Fund in accordance with the provisions of the Law;"

(Own emphasis)

The GEPF is currently the largest pension fund in Africa and under the top ten in the world. It has assets of over R1.8 trillion rand. The GEPF has over 1.2m active members (including members of the SANDF) and over 437k pensioners and beneficiaries.

It is the vision of the GEPF to be a global leading and reputable pension fund that delivers quality service to beneficiaries. It is further the mission of the GEPF to ensure sustainability of the Fund, to provide efficient delivery of benefits and to empower their beneficiaries through effective communication.

Although Col Coetzer only attends Board meetings in the absence of the Member Trustee, he is member of two Board Committees (Governance and Legal and Benefits and Administration).

The GEPF is continuously striving to improve the benefits of members and pensioners. In this regard the Board of Trustees approved changes to the Rules which will allow for the reinstatement of the pension benefits of demilitarised finance officials. The implementation thereof is still a matter to be resolved between the DOD and the Department of Public Service and Administration. [See in this regard the DOD Newsflashes dated 04/04/17 and 28/06/17]

There are also a number of changes to the benefits of members and pensioners that have been agreed to and concluded by the parties to the PSCBC. The PSCBC Resolution 01/2017 makes provision for the following changes:

- An increase in funeral benefits
- The replacement of the Orphans pension with the Child’s pension.
- The establishment of an Additional Voluntary Contribution Scheme.
- The establishment of a Preservation vehicle.
- The amendment of the so called clean break principle in respect of divorce matters from the debt model to the service adjustment approach.
- Addressing the discharge benefit anomaly.
- Addressing the market value adjustment application in respect of transfers.

These benefits shall come into effect after the Rules of the GEP Law have been amended accordingly.

It is very important to take note that each active member or pensioner of the GEPF has the right to communicate directly with the GEPF in regard to any matter which affect him or her personally. [See Rule 22 of the GEP Law]. The toll free contact number at the Call Centre is 0800117669. Please remember to provide your pension number, force number and identity number. Members of the SANDF are also welcome to engage with Col Coetzer at pwjcoetzer@gmail.com for advice and assistance.

An election will take place in due course where members of the SANDF can nominate and elect one member of the SANDF to represent them at the GEPF Board of Trustees for the next term. With a nearly hundred present attendance record at the Committee meetings and training events, Col Coetzer has demonstrated his commitment to the GEPF the past four years. His election as the Member Trustee for members of the SANDF would ensure continuity. As a member of the Board of Trustees he will have oversight in respect of the decisions made by the Board. He will also be co-responsible for the proper and efficient management and functioning of the GEPF. He will have the fiduciary duty to act independently and in the best interest of members of the SANDF.
Support epileptics and know how to help if you witness a seizure. Approximately 50 million people worldwide live with epilepsy, a type of neurological disorder that causes seizures. While awareness of this relatively common medical condition is growing, people who are ignorant of the condition may not know how to assist someone who is having a seizure.

Epilepsy is a condition affecting the brain and nervous system. There are many different types of epilepsy, some of which are more easily managed through prescribed medicine than others. There are also different kinds of epileptic seizures, ranging from short, almost indiscernible episodes to longer seizures characterised by uncontrolled convulsions. Epilepsy can affect people of any age.

Epileptic seizures are caused by misfiring neurons in the brain, with the result that the person may lose control of their muscles and be unable to process sensory stimuli. However, not all people who experience seizures are necessarily epileptic, as seizures may also be caused by other conditions.

It is important to remember that epilepsy is not contagious. Furthermore, epilepsy should not be confused with mental illness.

People who do not understand epilepsy may find it frightening to see someone experiencing a seizure. In reality, there is nothing to fear if you familiarise yourself with a few basic guidelines of how to help someone get through a seizure safely.

- Stay calm.
- Do not try to restrain the person during the seizure.
- Move away any objects that might harm the person while they are convulsing. If possible, place a cushion under their head.
- Call emergency services.
- Do not put anything in the person’s mouth, as this can cause injury.
- Once the seizure has stopped, position the person on their side (the recovery position) and tilt their head to one side so that any vomit can easily drain from their mouth. Check to see if they are breathing normally.
- Do not give the person liquids, medication or food until they are fully alert.
- Stay with the person until he or she recovers, which should be within five to 20 minutes.

Everyone should learn about this medical condition and what to do if they see someone having a seizure. Parents should inform their children about epilepsy and the steps to follow to help someone having a seizure, as most people will witness this at some point in their lives.

Seizures can take many different forms and can affect different people in different ways. Some seizures are mild; the person may freeze or lose sensory awareness for a few seconds, without even realising that they have had a seizure. In other, more major seizures, the individual may lose consciousness, their body may become rigid and they may make jerking or convulsive movements.

Seizures may have specific triggers in certain affected individuals, for example flashing lights, alcohol or drugs, insufficient sleep, or stress, among others. If you are epileptic, identifying these triggers may help you to avoid them or be better prepared in the event of a seizure. It is a good idea to keep a diary in which you record the time and date of your seizures and note any related details, as such information may also assist your doctor to help you better manage the condition.

In a small minority of cases, epilepsy may be accompanied by seizures that are so frequent and severe that the condition can have a major impact on the person’s life. Fortunately, such cases are relatively uncommon and in most cases epilepsy can be managed and controlled with prescribed anticonvulsant medicines or other medical treatments. Usually epilepsy cannot be cured.

Some of the causes and risk factors for seizures include:
- Genetic factors – epilepsy may be inherited
- Infections of the brain such as meningitis and encephalitis
- Tumours
- AIDS and AIDS-related neurological conditions
- Developmental neurological disorders, such as cerebral palsy
- Chemical imbalances in the brain caused by conditions such as low blood sugar and diabetes
- Withdrawal from alcohol
- Use of certain street drugs
- Exposure to toxins, such as lead or carbon monoxide.
The purpose of a funeral benefit is to help pay the funeral costs when a member or pensioner dies. The funeral benefit is also payable for the death of a spouse, life partner or eligible child of a member or pensioner.

We are pleased to inform you that the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) Board of Trustees has decided to increase the funeral benefit amount payable for a member or pensioner to R15 000 (fifteen Thousand Rand). The same amount is also payable for the funeral of a member or pensioner’s spouse or life partner. For the funeral of an eligible child of a member or pensioner, the benefit has been increased to R6 000 (Six Thousand Rand).

An eligible child is considered to be:

- A natural or legally adopted child under the age of 18 years
- A natural or legally adopted child between the ages of 18 and 22 years, who is a full-time student
- A still-born child. This is a child born after 26 weeks of pregnancy who shows no signs of life. The child must have died of natural causes (in a miscarriage) and not as a result of an abortion.

Step children and children of other family members do not qualify for this benefit, unless the member or pensioner has legally adopted them. The funeral benefit is paid out as a taxable cash lump sum. The amount can be paid into a bank account or via the Post Office.

The person submitting the claim to the GEPF must complete the following forms and make copies of the specified documents, as follows:

- The Funeral Benefit Claim form (Z300 form) If the payment must be made into a bank account, the Banking Details form (Z894) should be completed. If payment must be made via the Post Office, faxed or emailed copies of all the original documents must be presented at the Post Office
- A certified copy of the ID document or valid passport of the applicant and the person who died
- A certified copy of the death certificate
- A Proof of marriage.

Please note that the following documents must also be submitted if the person who died was an eligible child:

- A certified copy of the birth certificate
- Medical proof of disability if the child was over 18 and disabled
- Proof of student registration if the child was over 18 and a full-time student at a recognised institution
- Medical proof from the hospital or doctor if the child died in a miscarriage after 26 weeks. This proof could be a letter from the hospital confirming the age and cause of death of the child, as well as the date and place of death
- If the person claiming is a major child, he or she must provide proof of the relationship with the person who died.

*For more information on the GEPF services contact the call centre on 0800 117 669.
Hepatitis B and C - virtually unknown yet dangerous

By Martina Nicholson Associates (MNA) on behalf of the Government Employees Medical Scheme

Approximately 500 million people worldwide are living with chronic Hepatitis B or C. And yet, awareness of these potentially life-threatening viruses is so low that the majority of those infected do not even know they have it.

Hepatitis B
Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, or a liver infection, caused by a number of viruses or toxins. Hepatitis A, B and C are the most common of the six hepatitis viruses, while the B and C strains are viewed as the most dangerous. Both Hepatitis B and C viruses can have a major impact on your health and lead to liver scarring (cirrhosis), liver cancer or liver failure. Approximately one million people die from these two hepatitis strains every year.

Hepatitis B is one of the most common viral infections in the world and is 50 to 100 times more infectious than HIV. It is found in bodily fluids such as blood, semen, sweat, tears and breast milk of infected people, which is why it is easily transmitted to newborn babies. It can be spread by the use of unsterilised tattoo needles and through contact with bodily fluids.

PHOTO POSED. Hepatitis B is diagnosed by a simple blood test and further tests may be carried out to determine the severity of the infection, liver inflammation and extent of the damage to the liver.

Most common symptoms of infection with the hepatitis viruses.

GET THE RIGHT TREATMENT
Treatment for hepatitis B or C lowers the chance that you pass on the infection through sex.

GET TESTED
Encourage your sex partners to have a blood test for hepatitis B and C.

GET VACCINATED
If your partner tests negative for hepatitis B, they can be vaccinated to protect them against the virus.
and body piercing instruments.

Not all people will have signs of infection, but symptoms can typically include nausea, fatigue, yellowing of the skin, stomach ache, diarrhoea and aching joints. There is a vaccine available that should ideally form part of the childhood vaccination programme. Those who are not vaccinated should remember that it is never too late.

Hepatitis B is diagnosed by a simple blood test, and further tests may be carried out to determine the severity of the infection, liver inflammation and extent of the damage to the liver. Most people with acute Hepatitis B do not need treatment and do not develop long-term liver damage. However, if the infection becomes chronic, treatment with antiviral medication will be required to prevent further damage.

Hepatitis C
Just like Hepatitis B, people can live with the hepatitis C virus for many years before symptoms appear. During this time the infected person can spread the virus to others. Hepatitis C is mainly spread through blood-to-blood contact.

Symptoms include: nausea, fatigue, aching muscles and joints, anxiety and depression, poor concentration, stomach ache and loss of appetite. There is no vaccination against Hepatitis C, but you can safeguard yourself against it by leading a healthy, responsible lifestyle.

Hepatitis C is not treated unless it becomes chronic and then it is treated with medicine that slows or stops the virus from damaging the liver. Should there be extensive damage to the liver upon diagnosis, you may have to undergo a liver transplant.

It is recommended that you visit your doctor should you have any of the symptoms mentioned. Should you be faced with a healthcare concern such as hepatitis, GEMS will be there to assist you, especially in times of crisis when you need healthcare assistance urgently. By remaining well informed and by taking charge of your health you can go a long way towards avoiding serious illnesses, which will prevent you from working towards your dreams and spending time with those you love.

Sources:
The World Health Organization, www.who.int
WebMD, http://www.webmd.com
The South African Medical Research Council, http://www.mrc.ac.za
It’s always fulfilling to help a person with disabilities

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos courtesy of WO1 Michael “Bylies” Byleveld and WO1 Hugh du Toit

“It is always fulfilling to contribute to the lives of people with disabilities,” said Johannes Mohamed in his book title “The Joy of helping the disabled”. These words were true and relevant to the cycling tour that WO1 Michael “Bylies” Byleveld and WO1 Hugh du Toit voluntarily undertook from Pretoria to Lyfontein in Kimberley, in spite of a knee replacement, with the purpose of raising enough money to donate for surgery for a little girl, Sené de Wet. She was born with a tumour on her hands rendering them dysfunctional and she needs to undergo corrective surgery.

These two compassionate and courageous soldiers, who are over 60 years, cycled for six days with the sole unwavering objective of raising awareness about Sené’s condition. At the end of the campaign an amount of R16 000.00 was collected on their way to Lyfontein.

WO1 Byleveld mentioned that they had always wanted to take a cycling tour to Kimberley. What was more interesting was that they wanted to take a tour for a good cause. He indicated that one day as they were in an idle moment with his Chaplain, Cornelis Oberholtzer, he (Chaplain Oberholtzer) mentioned that his wife was assisting the De Wet family in Kimberley who has a child born with dysfunctional hands and had a tumour that had to be removed by surgery. During this conversation the Chaplain told WO1 Byleveld that the De Wet’s medical fund was drained and more funds were needed for further operations.

It was with the above circumstances in mind that WO1 Du Toit and WO1 Byleveld decided to undertake their cycling tour they have always wanted to raise funds for Sené. They contributed to making this awareness campaign for little Sené’s condition by putting her photo on their trailers from Pretoria all the way through to Lyfontein.

Blessed be the name of the Lord that through their fitness they finished their tour, that made a difference in someone else’s life. Along their way to Lyfontein, little Sené’s photo touched people’s hearts and they gave money generously.

The success of the campaign and contributions were made by the residents at the five pit stops on
their way to Lyfontein, namely Coligny, Ottosdal, Bloemhof, Jan Kempdorp and Delportshoop. The tour started from Coligny to Ottosdal of which at the end of the day they covered 69km; from Ottosdal to Bloemhof (113km); from Bloemhof to Jan Kempdorp (92km), from Jan Kempdorp to Delportshoop (78km) and from Delportshoop to Lyfontein (64km).

Reaching their destination they participated in the Tour De Ghaap Race for two days covering approximately 112km - the overall kilometres totalling 528km.

WO1 Du Toit and WO1 Byleveld highlighted that contributing to the life of the little girl was not the only thing they enjoyed. They indicated that most of the time on the road God blessed them with very good weather. Nevertheless, at some stages the temperature was up to 40 degrees Celsius with the wind blowing into their faces, but they endured all of that.

They said that they did not even have one mechanical problem during the whole distance, including the race (528km) of which 220km was covered on gravel road.

WO1 Du Toit said: “The road users were very friendly and not once did we experience traffic. We covered a distance of 40km in the midst of road construction. At some point one lane was closed for about 5km and it was too dangerous to cycle with a trailer because of one way traffic.”

Furthermore WO1 Du Toit and WO1 Byleveld encouraged SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members to continue giving towards changing the world. They proud themselves by representing the SANDF with what gave peace to their hearts. More so, they thanked the SANDF for providing them leave to cycle and help the little girl.

They believe that through collaborative giving it could impact positively on the world as well as bringing change in the lives of our own people.
Choose to speak life

By Chaplain Elizna du Randt, Chaplain at 3 Military Hospital

“Speak life” - a song by Toby Mac is about people who “die” every time they speak negative things about themselves. At the end a little girl comes and whispers a word that brings life and then they are raised from the death. The Word of God says in Proverbs 18:21: “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit”. The tongue has that much power? Yes, it does. How do I use that power? We live in a society where we are surrounded by social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, the Internet and newspapers and magazines - every day we are fed with words that are negative that basically speaks death and destroys one another.

But when we look at God in Genesis 1 we see that every time He spoke He brought something to life. The question I would like to ask and challenge you with is: “Do you speak life or death?” when you open your mouth. Do we leave a scar on people’s lives when we open our mouths or do we uplift them? Maybe you ask if it is even possible in the time we live in? Maybe you must decide for yourself after you have read this verse in Psalm 19:15 "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You” (TLV translation) another translation talks about “Be pleasing unto You.”

Every word we speak must be pleasing Jesus Christ. Toby Mac sings “Speak hope, speak life, speak love. Hope can live or die” - what powerful words it is to speak life.

Words of hope, life and love can be words that would be pleasing unto the Lord. These words can be like tissue-oil that we put on a scar and eventually it would disappear. Words of life can make someone believe. Believe in life. Believe that we all are made in the image of the Lord and that He loves and cares for us. James 3:9 "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness.” When we were in our mother’s womb God already spoke life over our lives. So how do I speak life?

1. Your words become your reality. Every word we speak becomes a reality, in other words if I am going to tell my children you are dumb and naughty. They are going to believe it and are going to act in that way. Speak words of life.

2. When we speak life we declare victory in Jesus Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega and by speaking words of life we are pleasing Him.

3. When we speak life we are planting a seed. Do you plant seeds of life or death? God says you will eat the fruit that you planted. You are going to reap the exact fruit you planted. So if you want apples plant apples. Do not plant poison ivy and expect apples.

4. You cannot speak negative and live positive. Watch what words are coming out of your mouth. If you have a poor mouth you are going to live a poor life.

5. It starts with me. Please make a decision and decide to start speaking life about your circumstances, your unit that you are working in, your family, friends and each other.

May we choose to please God by the words of life we speak every day!
Casual Day is one of the biggest fund-raising events and awareness campaigns for people with disabilities in South Africa. The SA Air Force Headquarters hosted Casual Day on 1 September 2017 at the Headquarters Sports Field.

The theme for the 2017 Casual Day was to “Celebrate Diversity”. It is centred on inclusion and equity for persons with disabilities by building a society that not only embraces diversity, but actively celebrates it.

Directorates, units and sections of the SA Air Force Headquarters complex gathered at the sports field to celebrate Casual Day. Activities included a Potjiekos Competition, sporting activities, a best dressed parade, a lip sync battle and an exercise to build the SA National Flag. The theme “Celebrate Diversity” was demonstrated by members of the Headquarters wearing the different SA Air Force colours of the SA National Flag. The members thereafter convened to build the flag puzzle to demonstrate strength and unity in diversity. It was evident that whenever people came together for a common goal, they were able to achieve more in unity.

The day was particularly special because it was also the birthday of the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang. The members also sang for Gen Msimang and wished him well. He enjoyed the birthday cake that was specially baked for him. The Officer Commanding SA Air Force Headquarters Unit, Col Jacobus Janse van Rensburg, challenged the members of the SA Air Force HQ to raise an amount of R22 000. Various fundraising activities were held on the day, resulting in the target goal being exceeded and an estimated R25 000 collected.

The aim of the fundraising was to raise funds for the Curamus Association for Security Force Disabled. The Curamus Association provides physical, financial, social and development support to military veterans and their dependants. Proceeds generated contribute towards wheelchair maintenance, special mattresses, cushions and other equipment need by disabled persons where such equipment is not supplied by medical institutions. Curamus also supports many rehabilitation projects at 1 Military Hospital’s Department of Occupational Therapy. Members of the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) also attended the event.

The Officer Commanding thanked all the members and reminded them that they were part of a group of thousands of South Africans who were demonstrating that small actions can make a huge difference. He concluded by quoting the late President Nelson Mandela: “It is not a question of patronising philanthropy towards people with disabilities. They do not need the patronage of the non-disabled. It is not for them to adapt to the dominant and dominating world of the so-called non-disabled. It is for us to adapt our understanding of a common humanity; to learn of the richness of how human life is diverse; to recognise the presence of disability in our human midst as an enrichment of our Diversity”.

The event was also graced by professionals from various fields, including team players from the Proteas Women National Cricket team, Ms Odine Kristen and Ms Nadine de Klerk, including members of the Gauteng Provincial Women: Ms Delmi Tucker and Ms Ingrid Smit. The women were invited as team members and guests of 33 year-old Cpl Marcia Letsoalo. Cpl Letsoalo serves in the Reserve Force as a Sport Clerk at the SA Air Force Headquarters Unit. She has served in the Proteas Cricket Team for ten years and made her first debut in 2007 against Pakistan.

Another highlight of the day was the presence of the Honorary Colonel of SA Air Force Headquarters Unit, Col Yvonne Chaka Chaka. She serenaded members by giving a spectacular performance from her latest single “Keep looking at me” which was released on the very same day. Also performing on the day was Jay du Plessis, the well-known Afrikaans singer and former lead singer of Eden, a famous Afrikaans band. Jay was a former SA Air Force member who was a member of the Canaries, a former musical competent in the SA Air Force. He was also a judge on Casual Day.
The South African National Defence Force is a pillar in the reactive physical campaign being fought against poaching on the ground and in the skies. We also engage in proactive educational campaigns to spread awareness about the intrinsic value of this magnificent animal.

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Medicinal myths and a lack of care for our natural environment will be the forces behind the extinction of this magnificent animal.