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It’s almost Christmas! – the Time when we Christians commemorate the coming of Christ to our world. Christ came to us - his hands filled with forgiveness, grace and blessings. He comes to us to change our sorrows into gladness. It is Christmas – the Feast of Redemption!

I would like to share this prayer with you – as quoted from “n Bybelse dagboek: Op verke van geloof (Die kroon op 25 jaar se skryfwerk)” [meaning: a Biblical diary: On the wings of faith (The crown on 25 years of writing)] by Solly Ozrovech:

**PRAYER**

Immanuel, God with us

Christ Jesus, Child of Bethlehem, we worship You.

We look forward to the celebration of your day of birth.

Let us look forward to Christmas with sincere conviction.

Cleanse our soul of bitterness and hatred, and forgive us our sins.

Let every gift be presented in sincere affection and let every greeting card be a declaration of our faith in You, our Saviour.

Give, through Your Holy Spirit, new meaning to well known Christmas carols.

Give that Christmas will bring reconciliation between God and humans so that everyone will name You Father.

Bring about reconciliation between man and man.

May the peace that the angels sang about be a fond hope of an impossible ideal, but let us make it a reality through our faith.

Give that the wonder of Christmas not only rejoices our hearts for a short while, but that it will stay with us when we return to our daily duties, worries and responsibilities.

We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ who came to deliver us from our sins and to be present for the entire human race Immanuel – God with us.

Amen

“Even if Christ is born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but not in my heart, will I be lost” - Martin Luther.

May you and your loved ones experience Christmas cheer during the Feast of Redemption. Have a blessed Christmas Day!

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
Military exhibitions on display at Waterkloof Primary School

By Sgt Ally Rakorna
Photos by LCpl Jonathan Mogano

As part of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) efforts to strengthen community relations it recently participated in the Waterkloof Primary School Derby Day and Career Exhibitions in Pretoria.

The day presented the SANDF with a unique opportunity to present itself to the local community and in particular to the learners. Parents and visitors to the event seized the opportunity to learn more about the SANDF and were introduced to the way our military provides support to communities,

they encouraged them to study hard at school to gain entry into the exciting military world.

Speaking to SA Soldier, the Chief Director National Treasury, Dr Kay Brown, on behalf of the parents said that the SANDF continued to inspire trust in relationships with communities. She said: “We are proud of the SANDF for being part of this occasion. Youngsters learned a lot about the military. Good foundations were laid and this bears testimony to the fact that the SANDF is a national asset and a people’s defence force.”

A parent from Elarduspark, Ms Tammy Vicente, said that having closer relations with our military assisted in fostering understanding and acceptance of the SANDF. She added that participating in social activities was one of the most important communication channels as well as interacting with soldiers face-to-face.

A Grade 12 learner from Pretoria Boys High School, Hendrik Duvenhage, had this to say: “Soldiers are unique and patriotic. I am eager to join the SANDF in order to serve my country.”
IT’S NEVER TOO LATE TO OBTAIN YOUR GRADE 12

Mr Victor Mutau (55) joined the Department of Defence (DOD) in 1999 as a VIP Protector Driver in the office of the Secretary for Defence. He was in possession of a Form 2 currently known as Grade 9. He was courageous to obtain a National Qualification Framework (NQF) aligned General Education Training Certificate (GETC) in 2015.

This journey enabled him to gain entry to a Grade 12 qualification in pursuit of achieving his dream to serve the DOD diligently. Prior to registering for Grade 12 during 2016, Mr Mutau conducted research to find out how and when to register. He then contacted Chief Directorate Human Resources Development (CD HRD) offices and was advised to register with Pretoria Community Based Centre where he is currently attending classes at Army Headquarters.

His inspiration came as he realised that in order to advance in his career and be able to apply for higher posts he needed to obtain a Grade 12 qualification. Enrolling for Grade 12 made a significant impact in his life as he is currently acting as a Procurement Officer within the office of the Secretary for Defence. The subjects he embarked on addressed the skills gaps that assist in keeping abreast with what is happening in the country and around the world. As an adult learner, Mr Mutau experienced challenges while embarking on this journey. One of the challenges he experienced was the subject choices which made it difficult for him to link with the workplace experience. With the expertise of the educators from the centre, he managed to close the gap. He was not deterred as he knew the results will be worth the struggle. He always believed that “Education is the key to success”. When asked how he balanced his work and studies, Mr Mutau confidently smiled and said: “Time Management is a key factor in achieving your goals in life”. Mr Mutau emphasises the support he gets from his supervisor, Dr Sam Gulube, the Secretary for Defence, who encourages him to study further and attend developmental courses provided by the Department.

Mr Mutau wants to study further at tertiary level after obtaining his Grade 12 qualification and start his own business upon exiting the DOD. With the three subjects he passed in 2016, he proudly said that he sees light at the end of the tunnel. He encourages anyone who does not have a Grade 12 certificate to register and study as it’s never too late to obtain Grade 12.

If you aspire to obtain your Grade 12 qualification, like Mr Mutau, take cognisance of the following guidelines:

• You must be 21 years and older;
• Be in possession of a GETC or Standard 7-9/Grade 9-11 School report, or a recognised equivalent qualification at NQF Level 1 with two official languages; and
• An Incomplete National Senior Certificate.

Furthermore, the following steps are to be considered:

• Consult with your career managers/personnel officers with regard to registration of Further Education and Training (FET).
• One can finance their studies through their own funding; or apply for studies at state expense before the closing date as determined by the Study Application Board/Committee in your Service/Division.
• Enrolling for Grade 12 made a significant impact on 55-year-old Mr Victor Mutau’s life. He is currently acting as a Procurement Officer within the office of the Secretary for Defence. (Photo by Ms Aretta Marsh)

ALL IS NOT LOST

2017 is coming to an end and yes as members of the Department of Defence just like every human being we had plans and dreams that we wanted to achieve before the end of this year. Things do not always go according to our plans there is a Master Planner, God. Being alive is the greatest blessing and it is hope or a chance to do better and try again tomorrow. Our calculations do not always give us the best answers, sometimes we encounter tragedies sometimes success. Sometimes being good does not determine good outcomes because we do not control our destiny, but it does not mean we must give up trying. Whatever does not go your way just know that all is not lost, all things will work out for the best. May God make you prosperous and wipe your tears away.

Cpl David Mabusha Tshivhula, 1 Parachute Battalion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

The sad part about life is that pain will always be there, no matter how much we try, pain will always be a part of us, but suffering in pain is a choice a human allows to enter in his or her heart.

We all go through difficulties in life, finding a way out is not an easy task. Talking from experience I have been through the worse, but I had to make a choice to either rise up or blame the whole world for my misfortunes and mistakes. I decided to rise up in spite of the ache. I decided to let go of the blame and finding a way to move on, but how? That was the biggest question.

I remembered there were days I would look myself in the mirror and asked the person looking back at me as to why was I here? Why did God asked the person looking back at me would look myself in the mirror and finding a way to move on, but how? That was the biggest question.

I found myself crying and could not hold back.

I never realised that fear would actually change my life.

It might not make sense to some of you, but the honest truth is that the most things we fear in life are our greatest abilities. Since that time I had a burning desire to confront that person who ignored me years ago when I looked at her in the mirror, surprisingly that day she smiled and said: "That is your purpose, that’s the reason why God created you to be a mother and a leader; to wipe the tears of the crying ones. To lead the way to those who are lost. That boy will make you rise up because of him you would not even recognise yourself."

I found myself smiling for the first time in many years, I now know my purpose. I know why the all Mighty brought me here, my life changed drastically. From that day I realised that God works in miraculous ways; I learned that our plan is not His.

Today I am a mother, an intern, in a wonderful company. My God paved a way for me; He laid the red carpet in front of my enemies. I walk with my head held high. Rising up is not easy, but it’s a way to your freedom. I thank my boy, Itumeleng Pinga, for being a part of me. I am what I am today because of him.

Ms Beauty Pinga, Pretoria

ARMY SUPPORT BASE MPUMALANGA WARRANT OFFICERS GOLF DAY

The Warrant Officers’ Forum of Army Support Base Mpumalanga recently presented a successful Golf Day at Barberton Golf Course to raise funds for its Fund. These funds are utilised for community outreach projects to fulfill the social responsibility of the SA National Defence Force on local level.

The Fund assisted different projects in the past and it will continue to render this important task in our community. They have contributed towards Herfsakker Old Age Home, Betty’s Haven (an orphanage), Prolife Pet Rescue, House Bethlehem (an orphanage), Lelievele Settlement, the Nelspruit Community Forum, Silver Days Old Age Home and the ABET School. They donate food, clothing, cleaning materials and Christmas gifts to these organisations by means of the funds raised through various projects.

Nine teams of the business community entered the Golf Day. They were Assupol, Beta Kilo Filling Station, Lowveld Canvas, McRosh Automotive, Silver Arrows Service Centre, The Worx, Nienaar Construction, PQ Maintenance & Construction and Vasbyters. The winners were PQ Maintenance and Lowveld Canvas as the runners-up and Assupol in the third place.

The Warrant Officers’ Forum would like to thank all the sponsors for assisting to make this day a success. The sponsors were: Autoway Service Centre, Battery Warehouse, Brayshaw, Silivchem, Glasfit, Koenic, Khashana Group, Kragbron, Linzee Motors, I/City Nelspruit, Motaung Auto, Lowveld Compressors, Nelgear, Performance Auto, Steel Ropes, Vleispaleis, LNM Motors, Dent Doctor, My Glass and Mare Pretorius. Ms Lize Pienaar, Army Support Base Mpumalanga

TIME IS PRECIOUS

There is a saying: “With grey hair comes wisdom” and regardless if this sounds only as a myth it is true. Sometimes the wisdom comes earlier and for some people at a very later stage, but most definitely at the right time. Therefore time is so essential in life. We as soldiers should sit still and reflect how we use our time daily. We so easily fall in the vicious cycle of accepting things as it is. We allow time to pass on by utilising precious time on things with such little value. Once time is gone and used without wisdom it cannot be redeemed. As wisdom kicks in there is still hope to redeem time. It all starts with making the right choices and decisions that will have outputs of valuable contributions. Most importantly is to have the right source which is God. “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault; and it will be given to him” - James 1:5.

Next time when you want to use time constructively, ask: “Does this add value to my life?”

Capt Chrisandyst Wilmarie Sieglaa, School of Artillery Potchefstroom

PROPER HANDLING AND TAKING OVER IN OFFICES

This letter is specifically meant for officials who are working in offices, whether Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) or uniformed members, our different jobs are meant to serve different masses with loyalty and integrity. People have faith in people who deal with their paperwork. Yes, there are courses, deployments and other commitments but it does not mean that work must stop, clients entrust officers with their documents and good services. Sometimes clients have to wait for long time for their documents to be processed as officials in the offices are not around due to commitments. In other instances an official in the office is transferred he or she goes without doing proper handing and taking over with the next incumbent. Official(s) in offices must love their jobs and take it seriously, helping clients and seeing their smile is sacred. Whether I am deployed, transferred on course or committed the job must continue. We must follow proper channels and teach subordinates work and clear our tables before leaving offices. Someone must do the work; proper handing and taking over must be encouraged at all times.

Cpl David Mabusha Tshivhula, 1 Parachute Battalion
AGA LNS ALL ODDS

Rfn Nyiko Portia Masinga who is an upcoming prosecutor in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is the first born of a family of three children with neither parent earning a living salary, which is not child’s play.

She hails from a tiny “Shabalala” village in Hazyview in Mpumalanga, raised by a mother who is a cashier in a supermarket and a father who depends on his welding and carpentry skills to make a living.

In 2005 she joined the SA Army through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS). Having a dream that one day she will become a lawyer, but owing to financial constrains after matriculation she could not enrol with any university to pursue her dream.

In 2008 she applied to register for a Law degree with Unisa, but due to her matric results she was not accepted until she completed a bridging course for a year. Rfn Masinga said: “I was a little hurt and sad when I was told that I do not qualify to enrol in the faculty I had an interest in, but that did not discourage me to pursue my passion.”

In 2009 she was admitted in the Faculty of Law and obtained her Law degree in 2015. She says that it was not an easy journey as she had to raise more money to pay for her studies and also help her parents to support her siblings, although the SANDF reimbursed her after completing her Law degree.

Rfn Masinga said: “A four year degree took me seven years to complete, however, my passion for it, together with the picture of my future that was painted in the canvass of my mind kept me going.”

In 2016 she was detached from 4 SA Infantry Battalion (4 SAI Bn) in Middelburg to the SA Army Infantry Formation Headquarters to afford her an opportunity to attend the practical legal training at the Law School in Pretoria.

Rfn Masinga says: “I do not doubt the prospect of my career in the SANDF. I will be a military legal practitioner in the near future. The SANDF taught me discipline, patriotism and the positive values of life that no university in the world could have offered me. I am privileged to be associated with this organisation.”

Maj Godfrey Letsholo, email

SA TABLE TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The SA Table Tennis Championships was recently presented in Klerksdorp where more than 1 000 participants from all age categories and from different regions competed. It has become custom for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Table Tennis Team (TTT) to participate in this prestigious event on an annual basis. The SANDF TTT has proven that they are worthy competitors and a force to be reckoned with. From the onset the SANDF made their presence known by progressing through the different rounds and what made this so special is the fact that more and more members of the SANDF TTT is coming to the fore by showing that they are no “walk overs” - meaning that the TTT in the SANDF is definitely growing in terms of performance and numbers. The competition was very tough and some of our top players had to really work hard to progress through the different rounds. This resulted in two members: Cpl Guston Koetaan (2016 SANDF Table Tennis Champion) and Mr Ithumeleng Molahlo (2017 SANDF Table Tennis Champion) being under the Top 16. A few others: S Sgt Waldon Berg, Lt Col Hennie Jooste, Sgt Lucky Mokutle, W01 Rashaad Safodien and Cpl Benedict Rhyn ended up under the Top 32 in the country taking into consideration that all the top players and teams from all the regions within the country as well as from Namibia and Botswana sent their best to participate. Once again the team members showed esprit de corps, UBUNTU and unity. They portrayed a very high level of discipline and stood out among the participants and crowd. Three of our members, S Sgt Greg Naik, Lt Cdr Monique Lentz and Capt Chantal Riddles, made us further proud by playing another important role in assisting with the set-up of the medal ceremony, including the issuing of medals. The South African Flag was also hoisted by one of our members, WO2 Dawid Kotze. This promoted the image of the SANDF and the relationships between the local controlling sporting committee and other high national portfolios within the sport fraternity.

We would like to thank our Chiefs and Commanders for allowing us the opportunity to participate in these events, as sport forms part of soldiering. This is indeed a privilege for us, especially wearing our National Colours with pride and dignity. A “Big Thank You” to all participants for their commitment and loyalty towards taking table tennis in the SANDF to another level. A “Big Thank You” to our management team, under the leadership of Col Lemme, who not only looked after our well-being during the Championships, but also assisted by acting as officials and empires.

Michael Jordan once said: “I’ve missed more than 9 000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games; 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” Lt Col Hennie Jooste, email
The nation learnt with great shock and sadness of the sudden passing of Pte Nomathemba Ngeleka on 27 October 2017.

Pte Ngeleka, a member from 5 SA Infantry Battalion in Ladysmith, lost her life while serving as a member of the Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) with the responsibility of ensuring peace and stability in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) received Pte Nomathemba Ngeleka's mortal remains on 4 November 2017 during a ceremony held at Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria. It was during that ceremony that a distraught but relieved Ngeleka family received the mortal remains of Pte Ngeleka from the SANDF. She was laid to rest with full military honours on 11 November 2017 at KwaNzimakwe Village, Ezingolweni, at the KwaZulu-Natal, South Coast. She was given a hero's send off during a military funeral.

Speaking to SA Soldier, Ms Thandeka Mthombeni, Pte Ngeleka's Aunt, said that the Ngeleka family had lost one of their greatest assets. She described Pte Ngeleka as one who loved life and they celebrated the gentle and humorous person she was.

Speaking to the media after the ceremony, Maj Gen Eddie Drost, Deputy Chief of Joint Operations, expressed his deepest sorrow and greatest appreciation to Pte Ngeleka who continue to put her life at risk for the provision of peace on the continent. He said that the greatest tribute we can pay to her is to rededicate ourselves to continuing her work of building and maintaining peace.

The family of the late Pte Nomathemba Ngeleka speaking to members of the media after receiving her mortal remains. Ms Zimaphi Ngeleka, Pte Ngeleka's mother, and Ms Thandeka Mthombeni, her aunt, accompanied by members of the SA National Defence Force.
Maj Pearl Block scoops the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award

By Sgt Ally Rakoma

Our very own SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Officer, Maj Seitebatso Pearl Block from 46 SA Brigade in Johannesburg, has raised the South African Flag high by being recently awarded the 2017 United Nations (UN) Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

Maj Block received the accolade during the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference held in Vancouver, Canada, on 15 November 2017. The conference is the largest gathering of Defence Ministers dedicated to UN peacekeeping efforts.

The Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award recognises the effort of an individual peacekeeper promoting the principles of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 within a military context, as nominated by Force Commanders and Heads of peacekeeping missions. The award also raises the profile and understanding of what mainstreaming a gender perspective within a military context in peacekeeping mission means.

In 2000 the seed for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was sown when the Security Council formally acknowledged the changing nature of warfare, in which civilians are increasingly targeted, and women continue to be excluded from participation in peace processes. The Resolution addresses not only the negative impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace and post-conflict architecture.

UN peacekeeping operations have evolved from simply monitoring ceasefires to protecting civilians, disarming ex-combatants, protecting human rights, enforcing the rule of law, supporting free and fair elections, minimising the risk of land-mines and much more.

Maj Block was commissioned as an officer in 2007. She has been deployed twice to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO). Her first deployment was in 2010 when she was an Information Operations Officer. Her second deployment, in 2016, saw her working as a Force Intervention Brigade Planner for the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade.

She is hailed for developing a number of strategic projects adopted and launched by MONUSCO. During her tenure as Information Operations Officer, she worked closely with different MONUSCO sections such as Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation,
Reintegration, Resettlement, UN Mine Action Services, Protection of Civilians and Gender and Child Protection.

Maj Block was also instrumental in the implementation of a bulk SMS project aimed at reaching out and disseminating information to women’s organisations in far-flung areas of the DRC.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, said Maj Block was to be saluted for her hard work and dedication in the DRC. The Minister said: “Her commitment to the protection of civilians, especially women and children, has been inspiring. As a peace and goodwill ambassador in her own right, she is the epitome of what every member of the SANDF should be. The country is proud of her for flying the South African Flag high.”

During an interview with SA Soldier, Maj Block said that as peacekeepers we have to be beneficial to the people and communities we serve, create conditions on the ground to enable solutions to emerge and take root.

**Asked why do women need to be critical actors in peace building?** Maj Block replied that the presence of women increases the chances of sustained peace while reducing incidences of sexual abuse and exploitation. She said that the experiences of men and women in war are different. Maj Block pointed out: “In these differences, women offer a vital perspective in the analysis of conflict as well as providing strategies toward peacebuilding that focus on creating ties across opposing factions and increasing the inclusiveness, transparency and sustainability of peace processes.”

**When asked how important the role of men and women in peace operations is,** Maj Block mentioned that peace-building requires an awareness of how men and women together can better contribute to sustainable peace and security in conflict areas. She said: “In current peacekeeping operations, it is vital that peacekeepers understand how women and men experience conflict differently. Resolution 1325 calls on all actors to adopt a gender perspective to better understand the special needs of women and girls and ensure their participation, protection from and prevention of sexual violence in conflict. It will be meaningless if any peacekeeper abuses the trust of the vulnerable population they are deployed to protect.”

**Why is Resolution 1325 important?** Maj Block said it is a landmark resolution that has impacted on international law, and has changed the way the international community thinks about peace and security agenda, acknowledging women in peace-making roles and how they can make sustained progress.

**Asked how she was received by the local population and other troop contributing countries?** Maj Block said: “Firstly, the importance of partnerships with member States is key in the intergovernmental processes and strengthen our operations in the field to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping. Secondly, I interacted extensively with Congolese women, men, girls and boys to better understand their concerns.” Maj Block invested her personal time to train fellow Staff Officers and troops to be more aware of gender dynamics within the peacekeeping mission. This led to the military component developing more inclusive community engagement projects. Upon receiving her award, she said she was honoured and privileged and hoped the award would encourage other women to serve as peacekeepers. Maj Block added: “I know I had to take action from the many conversations I had with women’s groups. As a peacekeeper, and as a woman, I think we have much to contribute to making the UN more inclusive and in tune with the communities we serve.”

Maj Block is married to a fellow SA Army Officer, Capt Sandile Block. They are blessed with two daughters. Her personal motto is: “If you do good, good will follow you”. She believes that if there is peace in the heart, there is peace in the family. If there is peace in the family, there is peace in the community. If there is peace in the community, there is peace in the nation. If there is peace in the nation, there is peace in the world.
Ministry of Defence computer donation to Leoma Secondary School

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

Information Communication and Technology (ICT) has become the driving force for change in the modern world and plays a vital role in the growth and development of any nation. This is why the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, recently donated 25 computers to two rural schools near Hoedspruit, namely Leoma Secondary in Finale Village and Maahlamele High School in Oaks Village.

During the handing over ceremony, the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Mamello Morobe, said that the ICT offered exciting opportunities. She said that if we equipped youngsters with technology skills suitable for the job market and empowered them to be innovative we would see them do amazing things.

Ms Morobe said community members, parents, school governing bodies, teachers and learners that care deeply for one another and the environment in which they live is good for everyone and broadens opportunities for a better life.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, on behalf of the Minister handed over the computers to the two schools. He said that as part of enhancing social inclusion Minister Mapisa-Nqakula deemed it important to make a contribution to address the digital divide within our communities, as recommended by the United Nations.

Lt Gen Msimang said that in

ENHANCED LEARNING: The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang (third from right), handed over the computers on behalf of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula. He is flanked by Mr Moses Mogale, an educator at Maahlamela High School (first from right), Councillor Dipuo Thobejane, Mayor of Maruleng Local Municipality (fourth from right), Mr Peter Sekete, Principal of Maahlamela High School (fifth from left), Mr Ishmael Kgetjepe, Limpopo MEC for Education (second from left), Ms Matema Moagi, Lepelle Circuit Manager-Mopani District (first from left), and jubilant learners.

WO2 Andre Nortje, Curator of Air Force Base Hoedspruit Aviation Awareness Centre, and Sgt Hanroh Nortje, A109 Flight Engineer at 19 Squadron, exposed learners to aviation simulation.
partnership with the Defence Industry, we reach out and identify areas where we could make a difference. He added: “We are hopeful that with the provision of these computers, you will be able to make full use of them to ensure your goals are realised of completing your studies.” He urged them to obtain good results through the adventure and thrill of utilising these resources.

The SA Soldier Team met with the Limpopo Provincial MEC for Education, Mr Ishmael Kgetjepe, who said that the Department of Defence (DOD) had brought courage in the midst of hopelessness. He stated that technology tools would bring about positive change in the lives of learners and would motivate them to participate in educational projects and thanked the DOD for the effort to improve the socio-economic conditions of communities through outreach initiatives. She said: “This donation will go a long way towards easing the burden on teachers.”

When asked what prospects for broad-based socio-economic and human development these innovations open up in Finale and Oaks Villages, Mr Peter Sekete and Mr Moses Mogale, both educators at Maahlamela High School, mentioned that the sustainable use of these technological innovations would open new possibilities for the learners and communities at large, and lift them up, as at present they are trapped at the bottom of the rural social pyramid.

They further stated that the learners of Maahlamela High School and Leoma Secondary School faced many challenges, but despite this they are the best performing schools in the Lepelle and Makhutswe districts. “We are grateful for this noble gesture that will serve as a link through which surrounding schools will have reliable access to the ICT and serve as a catalyst to deliver good matric results. Hopefully a lot is still to come from this important gesture by the DOD.”

The atmosphere was jubilantly electrifying and underscored the saying: “Education Liberates”. Asked how the computers would assist them in their studies, Clement Mokgotho and Debora Malapane, both Grade 11 learners, replied that IT would enable them to do research projects, have greater access to information and serve as a catalyst to achieve good results.

This development heeded the call of the late Mr Nelson Mandela who once said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

The Mayor of Maruleng Local Municipality, Councillor Dipuo Thobejane, pointed out that Finale and Oaks Villages are low income areas where many families live below the poverty line. She added that equipping the young people with IT education was vital in creating a brighter future and reducing the digital divide.

Councillor Thobejane said that the event was indeed an occasion to promote fraternal relations and thanked the DOD for the effort to improve the socio-economic conditions of communities through outreach initiatives. She said: “This donation will go a long way towards easing the burden on teachers.”

When asked what prospects for broad-based socio-economic and human development these innovations open up in Finale and Oaks Villages, Mr Peter Sekete and Mr Moses Mogale, both educators at Maahlamela High School, mentioned that the sustainable use of these technological innovations would open new possibilities for the learners and communities at large, and lift them up, as at present they are trapped at the bottom of the rural social pyramid.

They further stated that the learners of Maahlamela High School and Leoma Secondary School faced many challenges, but despite this they are the best performing schools in the Lepelle and Makhutswe districts. “We are grateful for this noble gesture that will serve as a link through which surrounding schools will have reliable access to the ICT and serve as a catalyst to deliver good matric results. Hopefully a lot is still to come from this important gesture by the DOD.”

The atmosphere was jubilantly electrifying and underscored the saying: “Education Liberates”. Asked how the computers would assist them in their studies, Clement Mokgotho and Debora Malapane, both Grade 11 learners, replied that IT would enable them to do research projects, have greater access to information and serve as a catalyst to achieve good results.

This development heeded the call of the late Mr Nelson Mandela who once said: “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

An impressive display by members of the SA Air Force simulating a combat attack and demonstrating firing movement.
The Chief of the SANDF annual Thanksgiving Service

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

Psalm 100:4-5 states: “Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”

As the year winds down and we approach the festive season, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, hosted his annual Thanksgiving Service at Defence Headquarters in Pretoria.

The aim of the Service was to afford the Chief of the SANDF a platform to convey his message of goodwill and spread Christmas cheer to all SANDF members and their civilian counterparts before their well-deserved end of the year vacation.

A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of all those who had died. The Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, and his team of Chaplains together with speakers representing other faith traditions shared wonderful life-changing messages of God’s peace and led the service in songs of praise and prayers.

During the sermon, Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile encouraged members to work for peace and to strive for divine fellowship and have eternal joy of a relationship with God in the midst of every situation. He said that God brings peace that prevails in the face of adversity regardless of challenges and circumstances.

The Chaplain General posed a thought provoking question – How do we connect between our inner peace and outer peace with the world? He urged everyone to make an effort to keep unity through the bond of peace. He told the members to be peaceful first before ensuring there was peace across the continent. Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile said: “As the SANDF we are peacekeepers all over Africa, and we can only go and keep peace if we have peace in ourselves, so we must maintain peace. Those soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and on the borders must make sure they operate in peace for they...
are the peacemakers. Let everybody be filled with peace and, if I had the authority, I would indoctrinate you with the importance of peace.”

The Chief of the SANDF thanked members for having worked exceptionally hard throughout 2017. He said: “Today I stand before you to say thank you for what you have done during very difficult circumstances in achieving our constitutional mandate and I think you deserve applause. It is important to say thank you to everybody who made it possible for us to achieve what we have achieved.”

General Shoke pointed out that SANDF members are the custodians of peace and highlighted the significance of exercising peace. He added: “For us as soldiers who are custodians of security and peace in our country, it is important to emphasise inner peace because once we have inner peace we will look at the world in a positive light.”

He added that people who have not yet found peace always look at the world negatively and focus on the negative even if there is light. He told those who would be going on holiday to rest and enjoy the time with their loved ones and come back rejuvenated and to work hard in 2018.
In order to enjoy public confidence and ensure accountability in a democracy, it is important for any organisation to communicate its actions, intentions, challenges and successes to the citizens. To achieve this result, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, accompanied by Chiefs of Services and Divisions and other senior members of the SANDF recently hosted and addressed members of the media at Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria.

This event afforded the SANDF an opportunity to interact and engage with members of the media on key issues pertaining to the SANDF. The purpose of the briefing was to inform the media and the public regarding the role that the SANDF plays in executing its Constitutional mandate. The Chief of the SANDF also highlighted the successes and challenges pertaining to security in the Republic of South Africa.

General Shoke also highlighted the developments that have and that continue to take place in the SANDF, its current state of affairs, SANDF operations and exercises, operational readiness of all Services, discipline and
mapping of a new path for the SANDF to meet future requirements as spelt out in the 2015 Defence Review, including the budgetary constraints that contribute negatively to the readiness of the SANDF.

Speaking to the media, Gen Shoke said they were deeply disturbed by the events that recently took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). One SANDF member shot and killed another soldier in the DRC and later shot himself. Pte Nomathemba Ngeleka passed on when she was shot by a fellow South African soldier. The Chief of the SANDF said our hearts and prayers are with the Ngeleka family during this time.

The Chief of the SANDF said: “If members of the SANDF deploy to a foreign country, and incidents of this nature happen, then there is a lapse in discipline. Even here in the country, an increasing number of SANDF members are arrested by the SA Police Service for numerous reasons. This is certainly unacceptable behavior and we will not tolerate any criminal elements within the SANDF. The SANDF ought to be structured and managed as a disciplined military force. Discipline is paramount for us to succeed in our endeavours.”

General Shoke said that the country’s borders had to be safeguarded to ensure freedom of trade, including the free use of land, air and sea trade routes, and the safety and security of trade and transport hubs. However, securing South African border posts is a mammoth task. The SANDF was faced with a dilemma due to an inadequate budget; defence is consistently underfunded, with compounding effects on our ability to conduct operations. But he said that the SANDF was trying hard to do more with less under the circumstances. Gen Shoke stated that so far the SANDF was making considerable headway in executing operations within the constraints of a tight budget.

The Chief of the SANDF said: “Despite these budgetary constraints, we have put more members along the borders and we have some successes against cross-border crimes. Part of the challenges of operating on the border is the deteriorating state of the border fence, the large numbers of illegal entries of undocumented persons and a lack of resources that increases the burden of border protection.”

General Shoke said that in order for the SANDF to contribute to the economy of the country, the SANDF has initiated and embarked on Project Koba-Tlala, which is a nationwide project that started in the North West province in 2016. The aim of this project is to train the youth in agricultural aspects such as water purification, and to empower youth from all provinces through character building efforts.

Later that day Gen Shoke and members of the Military Command Council met with all commanders of SANDF units across the country to address issues of mutual interest. Some of the issues discussed were issues of discipline and misconduct, unfortunate incidents that happened in the DRC, operational issues both internally and externally, border safeguarding, budgetary constraints such as how best to execute with the resources at hand their mandate, the impact of the Defence Review, upcoming Armed Forces Day celebrations and the SANDF participation in the Opening of Parliament.

The Chief of the SANDF affirmed the SANDF’s deepest commitment to achieving the full spectrum of its Constitutional mandate in ensuring the successful attainment of its objectives. It includes meeting its commitments, mission ready defence capabilities, and sound defence direction and defence compliance within its Regulatory Framework. This will be underpinned by a value system which first and foremost upholds such values as discipline, transparency, fairness, excellence through leadership, honesty and integrity.
Opening of the long-awaited Chief SANDF Prestige Week

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala and Mr Katiso Mabuza

As Madiba said: “Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire; it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to the youth in the language they understand; sport can create hope where once there was only despair.”

The long-awaited annual sporting, recreational and cultural event - the Chief SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Prestige Week - was recently officially opened by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, at the Pretoria Military Sports Club in Thaba Tshwane.

Addressing the participants and spectators during the opening ceremony, Gen Shoke said that in the SANDF sport is part and parcel of force preparation. He said that the aim of the Prestige Week was not merely to keep soldiers away from the office, but to encourage them to:

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, addressing the participants attending his Prestige Week.

Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, blessing the Chief SANDF’s Prestige Week with the word of prayer during the opening ceremony.

A capability demonstration by Military Police members captured the attention of the crowds.
Where words fail, music speaks.

participate in sport to be physically and mentally fit and healthy. The Chief of the SANDF encouraged members to embrace active lifestyles as part of their daily activities in order to improve their health and wellness status.

General Shoke added: “Sport is part and parcel of the wellness of soldiers and encourages and deepens social cohesion, which are among the fundamentals of a combat-ready military force. It helps people work as a team and requires discipline, as discipline is the cornerstone of any military organisation.”

First staged in 2014, the Prestige Week has made its mark as one of the Chief of the SANDF’s premier sporting events. This year’s Prestige Week was staged under the theme: “Showcasing the SANDF unique character through military excellence”.

The opening ceremony which included a performance by the combined military bands (National Ceremonial Guard, SA Navy and SA Military Health Service) and a capability demonstration by Military Police members set the mood for an exhilarating week which became a beehive of activities featuring different sporting codes, music and a variety of cultural events. All four Services of the SANDF (SA Army, SA Air Force, SA Navy and SA Military Health Service) competed for the top accolades.

Lt (SAN) Lindela Madikizela from the SA Navy Band directing the combined military bands during the opening ceremony.

Lt (SAN) Lindela Madikizela from the SA Navy Band directing the combined military bands during the opening ceremony.

OPENING CEREMONY: Combined military bands demonstrating that music is a piece of art that goes into one’s ears straight to one’s heart.
Celebrating diversity

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
and Ms Beauty Pinga
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

Our humanity is strongly influenced by our diverse cultural heritage. Culture implies a shared bond, diversity and belonging. It represents our history and identity. South Africa is regarded as a rainbow nation owing to its diverse cultures.

This typified the recreational and cultural activities taking place during the 2017 Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Prestige Week. The event was not to be missed and fun-filled as different cultural groups from within the SANDF were competing against each other by building and decorating their villages, performing cultural dances, wearing traditional attires and cooking traditional dishes according to their specific culture.

The main aim was to preserve and educate each other about African values and to ensure that historical traditions were honoured and culture and indigenous knowledge were used to instil pride in African culture and traditions.

It afforded an opportunity to individuals to learn about African values in ensuring that one does not only know the culture they belong to but also learn the importance of everyone’s culture in our country.

Pte Nomza Magubane, one of the participants, said: “The most outstanding thing I liked and appreciated about this event was that we celebrated ourselves. We celebrated the culture that our forefathers taught us when we were young. The most important thing was that this day was very important and special to everyone, it’s not about which culture or tradition you belong to, but what I like about this day is that we all belong to one culture - rainbow nation - as South Africans.”

The idea to introduce recreational activities during the Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week was the brainchild of members of the Chief Human Resources Command Council, said Lt Col Brenda Mutunghtungu, when speaking to SA Soldier. She said the idea of presenting recreational activities during this week is to promote awareness of our diverse cultures and recreation to the members of the SANDF.

Lt Col Mutunghtungu stated that she was pleased to witness the recreational day unfolded according to her expectations. She further indicated that the event was divided into two parts, namely a cultural competition during the day and an evening filled with choral music, including the Correctional Services’ Choir. The SA Army was the winners of the cultural competition with the SA Air Force as the runners-up and the Chief of Human Resources in the third place.

The Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week was strategically planned to allow members of the SANDF to appreciate the participation of athletes in the various sporting codes in a relaxed atmosphere.
A week of unity

By Ms Beauty Pinga
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

"It has been a fruitful week for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF); this Prestige Week has been a week where our soldiers took part in various sports activities. It's not about who is strong and who is weak; it's about being united and having fun while exercising, as a family," said the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke.

General Shoke hosted the Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week where members competed in various sporting codes such as netball, rifle shooting, swimming and soccer. This week brought SANDF members together where unity and a bond of friendship were created.

Sport is very important and each member should endeavour to belong to a certain sporting code; being a soldier does not only involve going to war, but to being fit also improves one's concentration.

The Chief of the SANDF said: “I would like to conclude by saying that you are all winners; the SANDF is honoured and proud of its soldiers. I am proud of everyone’s effort and discipline, during the whole week I did not hear of any bad behaviour by the participants. This proves that you are disciplined; and for that I am very happy.”

The overall results of the Prestige Week are as follows:

- **Winners:** SA Army
- **Runners-up:** SA Air Force
- **Third position:** SA Military Health Service
- **Fourth position:** SA Navy
- **Fifth position:** Joint Operations
The Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, hosted a Prestige Week gala evening and awards ceremony at Logistics Support Formation Combined Club in Tekbase which was the culmination of sport and recreational activities. The Prestige Week is a concept that the SANDF as a whole has embraced and implemented.

During the gala evening, the Chief of the SANDF acknowledged top achievers in various sporting codes and recreational activities which saw the SA Army being the overall winners of the Prestige Week. The event drew many people across the business fraternity, academics and sports fanatics. The ceremony involved entertainment from the SA Air Force Entertainment Band and the SA Air Force Choir, an awards ceremony and a speech from Gen Shoke.

The Prestige Week games were held to help raise the standard of sport in the SANDF and to provide a platform for members of the SANDF around the country to compete with their peers. It also provided an opportunity for sport enthusiasts in the SANDF to come together and share in their passion. It also addressed sport development in the SANDF.

Commenting on the overwhelming success of the Prestige Week, Gen Shoke said that the participants were united under the ideal of friendship through sport. The Chief of the SANDF said: “The end state of the Prestige Week is to enhance soldiers’ performance in the battlefield. Furthermore to allow soldiers to improve their general fitness level that is conducive to better health. Sport helps people to work as a team and requires discipline. Participating in sport would ensure improved levels of discipline in the SANDF, as discipline is the cornerstone of any military organisation.”

General Shoke added that the SANDF has very talented soldiers with a
promising sporting future, and his aim as the Chief of the SANDF is to promote, advance, administer, coordinate and generally encourage the development of sport in the SANDF. He hopes that the Prestige Week games would provide an important springboard for future sporting stars.

The Chief of the SANDF said that he cannot express enough appreciation, acknowledgement and recognition for the excellent conduct and performance of the committee members and all teams. He prides himself to be associated with the organisation with such cohesion, esprit de corps and pride, and is proud to have hosted this event.
The 2017 Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Prestige Week, the fifth of its kind, was held recently at the Pretoria Military Sports Club in Thaba Tshwane. Soldiers from all Services competed in sport, arts and cultural events. The week was staged under the over-reaching theme: “Showcasing the SANDF’s unique character through military excellence”. The Prestige Week is an annual athletic festival where men and women in uniform participate in sport and recreational activities to build friendship and enhance social cohesion which are fundamental to a combat-ready military force.

The week-long Prestige Week sporting festival comprised of 24 sporting codes ranging from athletics, fresh water angling, swimming, bowls, cycling, walking, basketball, handball, jukies, bisley shooting, table tennis, practical shooting, pistol and combat rifle shooting, squash, soccer, rugby, netball, volleyball, cricket, golf, martial arts and a variety of cultural activities.

It was a fantastic week of competition and friendship. The inclusive atmosphere throughout these games has all been about fun, respect, friendship, striving for excellence and great sportsmanship. It’s been wonderful to witness the transforming power of sport as many of our athletes have simply flourished and done so well. SA Soldier conversed with some SANDF members who participated in the games.

F Sgt Ralph van Jaarsveld from 1 Air Servicing Unit said that the participation was very good, but the spectator support was very disappointing. He reiterated the Chief of the SANDF’s words, when he said during the opening ceremony that members from units around
Members of the various Services and Divisions competing against each other during the Prestige Week at the Military Bowling Sport Club in Thaba Tshwane.

must be allowed to attend and support the events during the Prestige Week. He added that the Prestige Week was an opportunity to meet members from other Services and to build comradeship and friendships.

WO1 Mathebula Morale from Naval Base Durban said: “The event was well organised. I enjoyed watching athletics and walking; it was good to see that the SANDF has men and women who are talented. We do have good athletes and we need to support them.”

Sgt George Hendriks from 2 Military Hospital had this to say about the event: “I started participating in the Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week in 2016; the planning and structuring of the event was well organised. This year the standard has improved even more, although more participation is needed from different bases. In general the whole event was a success”.

Sgt Msizi Shamase from Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal said that the event was good for social cohesion. The standard of walking in the SANDF is very high and the participants took the competition very serious. It motivates one to improve when seeing others excelling in sport.

Capt Seal Tlhakuli from Air Force Base Hoedspruit said: “As an athlete when you are called up to participate with other great fellow serving members, you honour the call and participate at the best of your ability to represent your Service in the best possible way. The Prestige Week is becoming an event of the highest magnitude where the Services showcase their top sportsmen and women. The event is also providing a platform for cohesion among members of the same Service around the country. What I would like to see in the future is that most sporting codes are held in a centralised space in order to gather more spectators to support the competitors.”

CO Sanele Mlaba from the SA Military Health Service Nursing College said that soldiers must be allowed to use opportunities like these to compete with one another. He said one needs such events to improve. His concern is that the SANDF only has clubs for long and short distance runners. He said the SANDF needs to establish a club for track and field athletes to assist them to be able to participate nationally and to represent the SANDF in national sporting events.

CO Nsuku Mdu Mela also from the Nursing College said that the event gave them an opportunity to participate with other athletes from other Services. He agreed with CO Mlaba that the participation in track and field items was very poor.

Pte Mohammed Nhleko from 1 Special Service Battalion who competed in track and field items (such as the 800m, 400m, 200m, 100m relay, cross-country and 10km) won all his races. He said: “It felt like participation was lacking in the track and field items. Participants must be well informed about the items so that they can prepare properly.” Pte Nhleko is currently running and training with the University of Free State to be able to compete in December 2017 to qualify for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Pte Nhleko was also a member of the SANDF Military Pentathlon Team that took part in the 5th CISM Military World Games in South Korea.
Chief SANDF Prestige Week

Improving the health and well-being of our soldiers

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala and Mr Katiso Mabuza

Owing to the nature of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) physical training, sport and recreation are at the centre of force preparation, combat-readiness and the maintenance of readily deployable forces.

During an interview with the Director Physical Training, Sport and Recreation (DPTSR), Brig Gen Andries Mauyoma, he outlined the role of the DPTSR as responsible for the provision of strategic direction and guidance in improving the health and well-being of our soldiers promoting social cohesion. He added that another key area is the enhancement of mass participation in sport.

Asked what is the Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week, Brig Gen Mauyoma replied: “The Chief of the SANDF Prestige Week is an initiative of the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, and is aimed at giving all SANDF members the opportunity to compete against each other in a variety of sporting and recreational activities; thereby enhancing the concept of ‘Friendship Through Sport’.” He stated that the event is celebrated annually during the month of October.

Brig Gen Mauyoma pointed out that it is the strategic intent of the Chief of the SANDF that the Services sport throughout the SANDF, which are also aimed at resuscitating and revitalising physical training.

Brig Gen Mauyoma added that physical training, sport and recreation are not just about fun and games. It plays a pivotal role in improving the health and well-being of an individual, creating liveable communities and

The SA Navy (navy blue shirts) soccer clash against the SA Army.

RIGHT: A men’s netball game between the SA Navy (blue shirts) and the SA Army.
Chief SANDF Prestige Week

The SA Army Cricket Team (red/yellow shirts) spot on during their match against the SA Military Health Service.

The SA National Defence Force Martial Arts Team demonstrating their skills.

The SA Army Basketball Team.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and its divisions play a leading role in reviving sport. He said that another objective of this prestigious event is to encourage healthy, active living and mass participation.

He added that this grand occasion comprise of a total of 24 sporting codes, musical and cultural activities. Brig Gen Mauyoma said: “The week-long Prestige Week sporting festival featured a number of active and fun games ranging from athletics, fresh water angling, swimming, bowls, cycling, walking, basketball, handball, jukies, bisley shooting, practical shooting, pistol and combat rifle shooting, squash, soccer, rugby, netball, volleyball, cricket, golf, martial arts and a variety of cultural activities.”

Asked how important the participation in international sporting events to the SANDF is, Brig Gen Mauyoma replied: The SANDF, through sport, demonstrated to both ourselves and the world how committed we were to participate in international military sporting events, such as the International Military Sports Council (CISM) Military World Games.

Brig Gen Mauyoma pointed out that the SANDF has become a greater force in the CISM Military World Games. He said: “We started participating in the International Military Sports Council (CISM) Military World Games in 1995. This provided a friendly platform into the international military circles and military sports community.” He also stated that in terms of world rankings the SANDF is progressing well.
For the year 2017, the Chaplain General Division adhered to the mandate given by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, at the 2016 annual Chaplain General Symposium, to embrace the impoverished communities of South Africa. Therefore, taking that mandate very seriously, the symposium committee reached out to the community of Mangaung and Heidedal in Bloemfontein. The symposium was recently held at the Combined Mess in Tempe, Bloemfontein. The theme for this year was: “Chaplains of the SA National Defence Force answering the call of servanthood”.

It was a practical and interactive symposium, where the senior minister of the Christian Revival Centre International, Pastor At Boshoff, opened the Symposium. He spoke from Matthew 5:13-16 about restoring hope to South Africa, and to ask why are we here and the role we play in the future of South Africa.

We heeded the call of service through our interaction with the disadvantaged communities of Mangaung and Heidedal in Bloemfontein. It was both empowering and humbling at the same time as the Chaplaincy not just “talked the talk” but also “walked the walk” of meeting the practical needs of both the youth and the elders of these communities.

The Chaplains ministered to seven schools around Mangaung and Heidedal at the Clive Solomon Stadium. The Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, motivated the youth to reach for the stars, saying that they were special. They were encouraged never to think that their disadvantaged communities could hold them back from achieving greatness. They must strive against all odds to become our future leaders. The Chaplains ministered to more than 3 000 children in the community.

The Chaplaincy, in conjunction with the SA Military Health Service, provided grocery parcels, and the testing of blood sugar levels and blood pressure for the elderly of the community. The other highlight of the symposium was the SA Air Force taking groups of learners for a flight in an Oryx helicopter.

The amazing support that was given by the SA Army Infantry Formation, the SA Army Armour Formation, the SA Army Support Formation, the SA Military Health Service, the SA Air Force, the Military Police, the SA Army Foundation, the Bible Society, the Christian Revival Centre, Prof Edna van Harte, the Chairperson of the Defence Force Service Commission, Lt Gen Temba Matanzima (Ret), the Military Ombud, Rev Monty Mabale and the Municipality of Bloemfontein allowed the Chaplains to excel in their quest of reaching the impoverished communities of South Africa.

We, the Chaplains of the SA National Defence Force, serve with dignity and pride, and pledge to serve our soldiers with humbleness and by spreading the Word of Truth.
ARMED FORCES DAY

21 February 2018
KIMBERLEY

MILITARY PARADE AND PRESENTATION OF MEDALS TO OUR SERVING HEROES
BY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

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It was nearly impossible to believe the ultimate level of fitness displayed by Lance Bombardier (L Bdr) Irin Leonard, as he completed twenty land obstacle crossings which included running, hill climbing, wall jumping, belly crawling, island hopper, hip hip and body balancing beam in 2 minutes and 38 seconds.

This happened during the annual SA Military Skills Competition recently held in Potchefstroom. The competition included South African and international soldiers. Asked how he completed twenty

RIGHT: The winning team for the land obstacle crossing relay, fltr: L Bdr Irin Leonard, Gnr Muzi Dlamini, Gnr Tebogo Sedumedi and L Bdr Ronaldo Links. (Photo by Mr Katiso Mabuza)

L Bdr Irin Leonard in action. (Photo by Sgt Niko Malatji)
obstacles in such a short time, L Bdr Leonard replied: “Speed, pushing one’s limits, hard work, training and many techniques for crossing obstacles are needed to save time”.

L Bdr Leonard said to reach his fitness level took many hours of training. He added: “I have been preparing for this competition for about three to four months crossing the same obstacles.” He explained that the quality of one’s training is revealed only on the day of real competition.

The enthusiastic L Bdr Leonard believes that obstacles help in terms of stability. Furthermore he said time spent doing obstacle exercises helped him to stay fit. He added that the competition helps soldiers to be combat ready, as it entails all exercises that help soldiers to stay fit, such as water obstacle crossing, hand grenade throwing, rifle and pistol shooting, 8km cross-country and military land obstacle crossing.

The tough land obstacle competition started with individuals in pairs of two completing twenty obstacles against time. It was indeed a good competition to watch, as soldiers showcased their fitness level in accordance with their total body strength.

Seeing them pushing their bodies to their maximum strength, one could clearly tell that South Africa has soldiers who are combat ready. It is believed that soldiers who finish the entire land obstacle crossing are considered super fit as the exercise deals with the whole body from head to toe.

The strenuous day ended with a land obstacle crossing relay in which four members per group had to work together to win. Each member had to finish five obstacles before handing over a baton to the other until a total of twenty obstacles were completed.

At the end of the competition, the land obstacle crossing relay was won by L Bdr Leonard, Gnr Tebogo Sedumedi, Gnr Muzi Dlamini and L Bdr Ronaldo Links with a time of 2 minutes and 10 seconds.

The winning group commended their coach, L Bdr Leonard, for pushing them to unlock their physical strength.

Gnr Sedumedi said: “It was not easy even in our training; our training was as if we were in a real competition. Every day we were training for about 4-8 hours under the leadership of L Bdr Leonard.” Adding to Gnr Sedumedi’s sentiments, Gnr Dlamini said: “Our team proved we are indeed fit and ready when measured against international standards.”

The organiser of the competition, Lt Col Ju van der Westhuizen, said: “The competition evaluates the many and variety of skills soldiers need to be combat ready.” He further explained: “Any competition or event we do, we make sure it contributes to the upliftment of basic military skills.”

During his presentation of the land obstacles, Lt Col Van der Westhuizen highlighted that the obstacles were not only addressing physical fitness. He said it was also addressing psychological fitness and how to tackle the obstacles. He believes that the inclusion of all land obstacles tested a soldier’s fitness level from head to toe.
The military tradition of learning from other institutions by exchanging students and instructors between staff colleges has contributed towards the current standards at African armed forces colleges. The pioneering colleges had the desire to improve on these standards established by the African Conference of Commandants (ACOC) at their first meeting in 2007 in South Africa.

The ACOC was initially established under the auspices of the Institute of Security Studies Africa and the offices were moved to South Africa by the Secretariat in May 2014.

Delegates of the 11th African Conference of Commandants.
The 11th conference was recently held at the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Pretoria where delegates representing the different regional blocks on the African continent met to shed light on the following topic: Relevance of African Military Security, Historical Cases and Scenarios.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, said South Africa was honoured to host a gathering representing 23 countries with over 43 participating delegates. She said the ACOC was formed to enhance military professionalism, training and the development of officers at staff colleges. She believes that the exchange of directing staff and learners among staff colleges has contributed immensely to the development of confidence and security building measures.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Since 2007 we have had an organisation representing all regional blocks. This meeting of Commandants also helps us observe and monitor progress made and enables us to provide assistance where needed. In the spirit of regional and international cooperation, I hope that the ACOC’s next meeting will take place in another region of the continent. This will augur well for cooperation and progress towards the full establishment of the African Standby Force.”

The ACOC seeks to develop cooperation among African staff colleges through benchmarking, staff exchange programmes, academic accreditation and the Combined Joint African Exercise (CJAX). This will result in the development of a curriculum to meet professional military standards.

The Commandant of the SA National War College (SANWC), Brig Gen Sisseko Nombewu, explained: “The technical teams have advised that we need to continue educating our officers for campaigns on the African continent. The war, command and staff colleges must commit to this endeavour and leave a legacy for the generations to come. I believe that this conference was established with the greatest ideals and a vision of enhancing education in our colleges with a mission of ensuring interoperability and building a peaceful region.”

With the ACOC chair under the leadership of the Commandants of Southern African Development Community (SADC) colleges, he proposed that they should advance towards home-based scenarios which should be at the core of the curricula of staff colleges. To this end, the SANWC has embarked on an exploratory exercise to focus on home-based military history scenarios and case studies within the battle space of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Brig Gen Nombewu said: “The cooperation and relationship between regional power blocks on the continent, especially from East Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa are manifested in the cooperation we see during CJAX with the attendance of senior officials from these regions.”

He added: “We will continue to be equal strategic partners with all African countries, irrespective of their size. This calls for a principled decision by sponsors and participants to have all staff colleges in Africa treated as equal partners at the annual ACOC. Going forward we need to build sufficient capacity to allow for a situation in which all scenarios, case studies and narratives are generated by regional organs, for example the regional peace training centres and brigade planning elements.”
Programme members of the Security Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) took time off from their long-haul to acknowledge the support staff and the sponsors who have contributed to the success of their programme completion during a Formal Guest Evening at the SA Air Force Gymnasium.

The SDSP is an annual programme that is presented at the SA National Defence College (SANDC). Selected officers and officials in the rank group of Brigadier General, Colonel or civilian equivalent from the Department of Defence and other government departments attend the programme.

The curriculum of the SDSP prescribes study tours to both regional and international countries to broaden the exposure of programme members to aspects of national security, which include security policies and strategies. Study tours also broaden their horizon in terms of security trends and concepts.

The Chairperson of the Archives Committee and a programme member, Col Jurgens Prinsloo, explained that within the SA National Defence Force, a Formal Guest Evening represents and signifies a formal ceremony for military members and invited guests. He said it fosters camaraderie, esprit de corps and preserves military traditions. Col Prinsloo said the ceremony originated from many customs and traditions as it dates back to the pre-Christian Roman Legions where victory feasts were celebrated.

Col Prinsloo said: “This was incorporated in the unique South African military traditions as it is today.”

Addressing the guests, sponsors and programme members, Senior Directing Staff, Col Robbie Blake, said the purpose of the SANDC is to make SDSP members intellectually resilient. He said they needed to operate effectively under stressful situations and still be productive.

Col Blake explained: “This is the ability that you will be able to use to propel yourself into the next level of your education. The SANDF has provided you with education and the next level is your responsibility. I urge you to take your intellectual resilience and build on it and share it with colleagues and subordinates.”

The SDSP, which commenced in 2015, deals with national security in its widest context and concentrates on strategic issues affecting South Africa from a regional, continental and global perspective to establish the implications for South Africa’s national security.

The Programme consists of academic and experiential learning which takes place over 47 weeks. Contained within the 47 weeks is the outsourced Post Graduate Diploma in Management in the field of Security from the Witwatersrand University’s School of Governance, which consists of eight Modules, presented by the School.
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In 1982 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly unanimously adopted the “World Programme of Action concerning Persons with Disabilities”. In 1992 the Assembly proclaimed, by resolution 47/3, that annually 3 December be observed as International Day for People with Disabilities. Observance of this day aims to promote and increase awareness and understanding of disability issues and trends and to mobilise support for practical action at all levels for persons with disabilities to improve their well-being and livelihoods on the basis of equality.

When adopting the World Programme the General Assembly defined equality for persons with disabilities as equity based on equal opportunities to those of the entire population. Equality in this instance is viewed not as a static phenomenon, but one that evolves and changes as countries develop.

According to the report of Statistics South Africa based on data of Census 2011, the national disability prevalence rate is 7.5% in South Africa. Disability is more prevalent among women compared to men (8.3% and 6.5% respectively). Persons with disabilities increase with age. More than half (53.2%) of persons aged 85+ were reported to be living with some form of recognisable or non-recognisable disability. The African population reported the highest number of people with disabilities at 5.2%, followed by white at 4.5%, coloured at 4.2% and Indian 3.7%. These percentage differences are customarily due to a variety of socio-economic and demographic factors, as well as unique social-cultural perceptions and inhibitions with regard to reporting on disability.

Human Resources Division recognises the abilities of people with disabilities

Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
People living with disabilities face many barriers related to inclusion in many key aspects of society. Consequently, people with disabilities do not or have limited options of access to society on an equal basis with others, including areas of transportation, employment, education, as well as social and political participation.

The right to participate in public life is essential to create stable democracies, active citizenship and reduce inequalities in society.

2017 is a significant year as it signifies the 10th anniversary of South Africa as a signatory of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities that took place in 2007.

It was against this background that on 2 November 2017, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) under the guardianship of the Chief Human Resource Division hosted an early commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at the Pretoria Military Sport Club in Thaba Tshwane.

Officially opening the day Brig Gen Phage Mosianedi on behalf of Chief Director Transformation Management, Maj Gen Elsie Mahlangu, emphasised the importance of adopting positive attitudes towards people living with disabilities. Brig Gen Mosianedi indicated that abled people must not undermine people living with disabilities and not be ignorant of the various forms of disability which includes mental diseases and disorders.

Brig Gen Mosianedi said: “It is indeed painful to see an elderly and the young treated badly alike and referred to by some uncouth names owing to their mental condition such as Dementia or Schizophrenia. It is a pity that one finds the elderly accused of witchcraft because of their mental condition and or physical deformity brought about by aging. Accusations of witchcraft are unfortunately endemic in most South African black communities. This is due to a number of reasons that include, but are not limited to, ignorance, unfounded stereotypes and cultural embedded myths.”

On this day Chief Directorate Transformation Management invited Mr Benny Palime as the keynote speaker to present the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Mr Palime who is blind is a man with many talents. He is a renowned professional singer for many years and a recipient of the South African Music Awards, a keen advocate of the rights for persons with disabilities and Director in the Disability Branch of the Department for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities.

In his presentation Mr Palime indicated that the South African Government has taken concrete efforts to recognise, protect as well as respect the rights of persons with disabilities. Recognising and respecting the rights of persons with disabilities include budget allocation, removing barriers to access and participation, protecting the rights of persons with disabilities at risk of experiencing compounded marginalisation, supporting sustainable integrated community life, promoting and supporting the empowerment of persons with disabilities, reducing economic vulnerability and releasing human capital, strengthening the representative voice of persons with disabilities, building a disability equitable state machinery, promoting international cooperation and monitoring and evaluation.

When asked during the question and answer session about how the general population could be assisted in changing their attitude towards people with disabilities, Mr Palime indicated that change of attitude should start within oneself; people with disabilities should stop self-pity because self-pity erodes their sense of pride and dignity resulting in low self-esteem.

In conclusion Mr Palime encouraged all people with disabilities present that regardless of what their disability was, they can achieve anything they wish to achieve.
Botswana Defence Command and Staff College on study tour

The Commandant of the Botswana Defence Command and Staff College, Brig Gen Papadi Monnatlhare, accompanied by his Directing Staff and Programme members who enrolled on the 2017 Senior Command and Staff Programme, visited South Africa recently to broaden their exposure on aspects of national security, including security policies and strategies, also to broaden their horizon in terms of regional and global security trends and concepts.

The visit also gave the programme members an opportunity to learn about political, socio economic and security issues of South Africa with the aim of drawing lessons for Botswana and to allow members to understand these issues from a South African perspective. The visitors also used the opportunity to benchmark with other institutions within the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). While in South Africa, the delegation visited among others military and government institutions, developmental projects, historical sites and defence industries.

During their visit, the delegation visited the Peace Mission Training Centre (PMTC) and were received by Col Edward Ramabu, Officer in Charge of the PMTC, Brig Gen Mafi Mgobozi, Director Defence Corporate Communication, and Col Sehularo Pelekekeae, Defence Attaché of Botswana to South Africa.

To ensure that the delegates had a good understanding of the working and responsibilities of the SANDF, they interacted with SANDF senior leaders among them the Director Policy and Strategy, Brig Gen Les Gardner, who provided a comprehensive and informative presentation on the 2015 Defence Review, the application of national guidelines, efforts to ensure socio-economic and political inclusivity, as well as an overview of budget and expense priorities.

The delegation were also briefed on the SANDF’s operational, service delivery programmes and its current progress characterised by different activities such as the professionalism of the SANDF, contribution to border safeguarding, peace support operations and humanitarian assistance.

SA Soldier conversed with the Commandant of the Botswana Defence Staff College during their visit to the PMTC who was impressed with the professionalism of the SANDF. He said they chose South Africa because it has moved swiftly to democratise its institutions and that the SANDF was a people’s defence force not only for South Africa but for the whole continent.

Brig Gen Monnatlhare said that the Botswana College was established following a decision taken in 2004 by the Defence Council of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) owing to a limited number of vacancies offered at foreign staff colleges, which resulted in high costs to train a person. He added that the BDF will, however, continue to send a limited number of officers to foreign staff colleges on the principle of exchange programmes and to continue...
to benchmark on international best practices.

He pointed out that since the BDF does not operate in isolation, in addition to the purely military training content, there is other relevant training provided by other agencies where other relevant government departments occasionally present on issues that can affect military operations. The College is also in partnership with the University of Botswana, in particular the Centre for Strategic Studies, which delivers approximately 30 percent of its curriculum.

At the end of the course they expect programme members to conduct military planning at the operational level, staff functions at brigade level, joint task level, command, unit level and they are also expected to operate at multinational level.

SA Soldier also spoke with Lt Col Silas Mankge, SO1 Ceremonial at SA Army Headquarters, who is also enrolled at the Botswana Defence Command and Staff College. Lt Col Mankge said he exploited the foreign learning opportunity provided by the SANDF to empower himself with vital skills necessary to negotiate intricate people management, leadership and command functions within a dynamic military. Lt Col Mankge is also enrolled with the University of Botswana for his Masters in Political Science.

Lt Col Mankge said the course is very challenging and demands a lot of his time. He pointed out that as a learner one must be able to think adequately under pressure due to the heavy workload. He said the course has opened his scope of work of how other militaries conduct their training and sharing ideas with other defence force members.

Furthermore he said that he is exposed to a rich and comprehensive curriculum that will stand him in good stead when he assumes senior leadership positions and is appointed in the senior echelons of the SANDF. His attendance at the Botswana Defence Command and Staff College was due to cordial bilateral military relations South Africa enjoys with Botswana.

The Botswana Defence Command and Staff College was established in 2008 with the purpose of training and developing officers to command and lead units of the Botswana Defence Force in the defence of the nation. The College benchmarked with other regional premier institutions such as the SA National War College and the Zambian Command and Staff College. The College presents two courses per year, namely the 48-weeklong Senior Command and Staff Programme and the 22-weeklong Junior Command and Staff Programme.
War against poverty and hunger – restoring people’s dignity

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo by Cpl Paul Mpangala

The rise in poverty in South Africa is of concern to government. The statistics South Africa records shows that more than half of South Africans were poor in 2015, with the poverty headcount increasing to 55.5%. This translates to approximately over 30.4 million South Africans living in poverty and this is on the rise.

When citizens live in poverty it reflects negatively on government. A poverty stricken nation is an indictment on government and proliferation of such phenomenon cannot be allowed to continue unabated. Thus it must take all measures to curb the upward trend of poverty that disenfranchise its citizenry. Inter alia the National Development Plan (NDP) was fundamentally founded on six pillars to robustly pursue objectives to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

Declaring war against poverty and hunger while aligning the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) with Outcome 11 of the NDP: “Create a better South Africa, contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world”, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, initiated Project codenamed “Koba-Tlala” (curb hunger).

The Project was approved by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, that SANDF will use its footprints in rural and semi-rural areas in terms of units, land and spending of resources in conjunction with local communities, rural towns, provincial governments and other stake holders to augment rural and semi-rural development by providing facilities that can be catalyst to trigger advancement of local economies.

Though it is a national project in all provinces, Project Koba-Tlala, is initially targeted at the poorest provinces of the country as the critical areas to benefit from this project. Brig Gen (Dr) Gerhard Kamffer, Project Director, indicated that while the SANDF’s constitutional mandate within the ambit of security cluster primarily hinges upon NDP Outcome 3: “All people in South Africa are and feel safe”, Project Koba-Tlala is multifaceted in that it also supports NDP Outcome 5: “A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path” and Outcome 7: “Vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities contributing to food security for all”.

Allying the fears that given the SANDF’s budgetary constrains challenges the project might interfere with its core mandate, Brig Gen Kamffer said: “The SANDF is particularly well placed to assist in the achievement of these aims without negatively impacting on its core functions, as it is able to use its inherent collateral utility to contribute to Government’s developmental agenda”.

Benefitting local economies

Contrary to the fears that the project might tamper with the defence budget, Brig Gen Kamffer hastened to highlight that Project Koba-Tlala assists in reducing SANDF’s budget woes by procuring local goods which means getting them cheaper and quicker. This alone tremendously reduces the necessity to transport procured produce over long distances, inevitably reducing transport costs and possible price hikes by well established suppliers. While the local produce supplies the local units with their produce they (local suppliers) will increase their production to match the new demand which potentially will create employment.

Reserve Force members assist their communities

The Project also benefits Reserve Force members who are part time soldiers who depend on call-ups to perform specific military tasks. These members when not called up after undergoing re-skilling training will provide a pool of qualified and disciplined citizens who can be utilised to assist in developmental projects. During the pilot project in the North West Province resident reserve force members were trained in water purification. This creates an additional capacity that can be utilised by Provincial Government when Reserve Force members are not called-up for military purposes. In November 2016 thirty Reserve Force members completed the water purification course under the auspices of the School of Engineers in Kroonstad. An additional sixty Reserve Force members were trained in community development and liaison. This course equips Reserve Force members with necessary minimum knowledge, skills and attitudes to be competent community developers.

Brig Gen Kamffer said: “Project Koba-Tlala primarily focuses on economically and sustainably empowering small and micro businesses as well as small scale commercial and emerging farmers in rural areas. It seeks to create a market for small farmers so that they can grow and in the process create employment in these economically depressed areas.”

Poverty and hunger steals away the right to dignity of the majority of people in South Africa, Project Koba-Tlala is making recognisable strides in fighting hunger.
The Government is committed to constructing a "democratic developmental state" capable of addressing all challenges ranging from economic growth, unemployment, inequality and safety and security to education and poverty alleviation. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is particularly well placed to assist in the achievement of these aims without negatively impacting on its core functions as it is able to use its inherent collateral utility to contribute to Government’s developmental agenda. It is with this in mind that the Chief of the SANDF instructed the Chief of the SA Army to investigate the potential contribution that can be made by the SANDF.

The pilot phase of the project in the North-West Province has gained momentum. Useful lessons have been learned which are now being used to extend the project to other provinces. Project Koba-Tlala, as named by Gen Solly Shoke, will involve all the services of the SANDF and not only the SA Army.

Contribution to the Nine-point Plan of Government as Guided by the National Development Plan

In terms of the overarching National Development Plan, Government’s initial goal is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. It hopes to achieve this by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy and promoting leadership and partnerships.
throughout society. The aim of Project Koba-Tlala is to contribute to the achievement of these goals by enhancing the capacity of the state in a number of innovative ways.

The following two graphics provide greater detail with Figures 1 and 2 explaining the macro overview. Accordingly, it can be seen that the focus of the SANDF is limited to those aspects of the Nine-point Plan where, utilising its collateral value, it can make a difference.

Figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 show in detail which aspects are addressed.
Significant SANDF success stories

Recent Achievements as Indicated in the 2015/16 Department of Defence Annual Report

Recent successes highlighting the current contribution of the SANDF as reported in the 2015/16 Department of Defence Annual Report are as follows:

- **Border Safeguarding:** The safeguarding of the borders of the Republic of South Africa remains a key function of the SANDF. This responsibility encompasses three environments, namely the land, air and maritime environments.
- **Search and Rescue:** SA Navy frigates are frequently deployed in search and rescue operations while other operations include, for example, the support of Mozambique in combating piracy. The SA Air Force is also deployed during floods to mount rescue operations as well as fighting fires.
- **Disaster Aid and Relief:** This includes the building of pedestrian bridges in the Eastern Cape as well as support to the Department of Agriculture in combating foot-and-mouth disease in KwaZulu-Natal.
- The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, referred to a number of successes in her recent budget speech where the SANDF is directly involved in peacetime activities which impact positively on the daily lives of South Africans.

SA Army short-term objectives achieved

Project Koba-Tlala has achieved the following:

- A steering committee has been set up between the SA Army, as the main executor of the pilot project in the SANDF and the Department of Rural Environment and Agricultural Development (READ) of the North-West Government. This committee is co-chaired by a project officer from the SA Army and a Chief Director from the North-West Province. This committee has met five times since the pilot project commenced in August 2015.
- In conjunction with the North-West Province, various projects have been identified in terms of the total spectrum of rural development, for example the linking up of agri parks in the province with decentralised procurement initiatives as well as positive negotiations with organised agriculture (Agri-NW) to enhance co-operation between commercial and small-scale or emerging farmers.
- The North-West University (NWU) has agreed to play
a supporting role through research into agriculture, monitoring and evaluating project progress, assisting in the drawing up of business plans as well as providing assistance in terms of education, training, development and empowerment at different levels.

- The establishment of a cooperative in the NW Province by Reserve Force members with a focus on reskilling Reserve Force members and finding employment for them where and when possible.
- Identifying projects in NW Province where Reserve Force members can be involved in supporting this initiative.
- The North-West Co-operative (NWK) in Lichtenburg has agreed to support the initiative by providing technical support on all aspects of farm management as well as livestock.
- Water Purification Course. The SA Army engaged the Department of Water and Sanitation and identified this requirement. A basic Water Purification Course was presented to 30 Reserve Force members in Potchefstroom in November 2016. This was to create an additional capacity to be utilised by the provincial government when these Reserve Force members are not called up for military duty. SANDF equipment was utilised to train the members. Similar equipment can, however, be purchased by the provincial government for their own use. A service-level agreement will be negotiated to give effect to this venture.
- Community Development and Liaison Course. The idea is to train Reserve Force members to be utilised in conjunction with provincial governments when not called up. They can assist other departments and municipalities to facilitate rural and other development initiatives in communities. A total of 67 Reserve Force members have been trained at seven units in five provinces.
- Youth Entrepreneurship Service Camps in the North-West Province. A total of 13 camps for 200 learners each (2 600 learners) in the NW have been presented based on the same SLA from March 2016 to November 2016. The SA Army provided the facilities and general support for these camps whilst the NW provincial government was responsible for the contents presented to the learners.
- Commercialising military messes to give effect to local procurement. A process was started on 1 April 2017 to commercialise military messes in the North-West Province (and other provinces) to give effect to local procurement. This will support the Government-led market initiative that was implemented by the North-West Provincial
Government. The basis of commercialisation is the decentralisation of the purchasing and control of rations to the end user (mess/club). This will be implemented aggressively over the medium term to be aligned with what was stated in the State of the Nation Address 2017: “Through such regulations and programmes government will be able to use the state buying power to empower small enterprises, rural and township enterprises, designated groups and to promote local industrial development”.

Chief of the SANDF Instruction

- The Chief of the SANDF instructed that the project must be expanded to other provinces over the medium term.
- As part of this project, the concept of (military) agri villages will be investigated, as well as how to best link up with agri villages. This concept resides in an integrated military co-operative system with a focus on social responsibility, economic sustainability, education, and training and development. In this concept, a village will be created and coupled to a commercial “hub” where military veterans can also be accommodated.

Personal engagement of the Chief of the SANDF

Gen Solly Shoke, Chief of the SANDF, personally engaged organised agriculture (AGRI SA) at two meetings in 2016 to seek their cooperation for this project. There was a positive response from AGRI SA and individual farmers and follow-up meetings with the SA Army project team have already taken place.

* Brig Gen (Dr) Gerhard Kamffer (Director Army Reserves) is the project leader of this initiative.

Figure 6: Aspect nine of the 9-Point Plan
Stay focused

By Chaplain (Dr) Alidzulwi Simon Munyai, Chaplain at 5 Special Forces Regiment

Focus: A point upon which attention or activity is concentrated. The poorest man in the world is not the one without money; he is the one without a vision for his life. But vision requires focus. When you are spread too thin you become average at everything and excellent at nothing. Failure always results from saying: “Yes” to too many things. Because something is good does not mean it is right for you.

To say “No” does not mean never, it just means “Not now”. If you try to fight on every front you will wear yourself out and fail to win where it counts. You always lose when you fight the wrong battle, fight at the wrong time or fight when you should not be involved. You always lose when you fight because you need to win in order to feel good about yourself. You always lose when you fight though the battle has been lost but your pride would not let you swallow it.

Stay focused on your goals; keep your eyes on the prize that God has set before you. You become effective by being selective. It’s human nature to become distracted. We are like gyroscopes, spinning around at a frantic pace but not getting anywhere. Without a clear purpose you keep on changing direction, jobs, churches and relationships, hoping such change will settle the confusion or fill the emptiness in your heart. You think this time it will be different, but it does not solve your real problem – a lack of focus.

Nothing is as potent as a focused life. The men and women who make the greatest difference in life are the most focused. For instance, the Apostle Paul said: “Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do is forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead. I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:13-14) - Paul’s obsession was to make Christ known.

Do not be delayed by good things in such a way that you miss the best. Never confuse activity with productivity. Does focus come easily or naturally? No, it is a discipline that must be practised every day. The Bible states: “Let your eyes look straight ahead … Do not make a mistake by turning to the right or to the left.”

Staying focused lifts you: it is been said that the world stands aside to let anyone pass who knows where he or she is going. In a sea of mediocrity, just knowing what you want to do and making an effort to pursue it distinguishes you from almost everybody else.

World Champion boxer Mohammed Ali said: “Champions are not made in the gyms; they are made from something they have deep inside them - a desire, a dream, a vision. They have last minute stamina. They have to be a little faster, and they have to have the skill and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill.”

When it comes to staying focused, keep in mind that focused people always look for a better way. What got you where you are will not necessarily get you where you need to be. Focused people concentrate a little harder and a little longer. Focused people make commitments, not excuses, because an excuse causes the blame to be put on something other than you, which means the solution is beyond your reach. Excuses are like exit signs on the road of progress; they take us off track. It is easier to move from failure to success than from excuses to success; so examine your excuses and eliminate them.

Focused people do not live in the past. Too many of us yearn for the past and get stuck in it. Instead we should learn from the past and let go of it. Elbert Hubbard wrote: “Having the capacity to remember may be a good thing, but the ability to forget is the true token of greatness. Successful people forget.” They are running a race; they cannot afford to look behind. Their eyes are on the finish line. They are too big to let little things disturb them.

Focused people do not think about the difficulties, but rather the rewards. If you dwell on the difficulties too long, you will start developing self-pity instead of self-discipline. As a result, you will accomplish less and less. By focusing on the results you will stay encouraged. Make Christ your example. Scripture says: “He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His afterwards.” Focus on the Greek word Proton: put first things first then everything else is more likely to fall into place. Stay focused on God’s given strength. Amen.
Battle of voices

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photo by Mr Katiso Mabuza

The SA Air Force Headquarters Choir beat the other Services’ Choirs during the annual SA National Defence Force National Choir Competition recently held at the Thaba Tshwane City Hall.

This competition is an SA National Defence Force (SANDF) recreational event approved under the SANDF Recreation Policy 2004. This year marked the fifth year of its existence.

This year the competition was composed of fourteen choirs from various provinces. These choral ensembles performed an African piece, a Choice piece and a Western piece. This was done in a manner of contesting for prizes where the top three winners received prizes in the form of trophies.

The overall winners of the SANDF annual National Choral Competition was the SA Air Force Headquarters Choir with 293 points. The Army Support Base Western Cape Choir was in the second place with 289 points and the SA Army Gymnasium Choir in third place with 267 points.

The Conductor of the SA Air Force Choir, Sgt Edwin Mitas, said their victory was owing to the time they maximised towards their practice as well as allowing members to give suggestions on how they could improve their creativity on stage and the quality of their voices. He added that not only practice and creativity on stage afforded them victory, but also the do’s and don’ts of choral discipline.

Sgt Mitas commended the commitment and discipline that his choir showed. He pointed out that the SA Air Force Headquarters Choir was established only five years ago but had already achieved third and second places and this year they are the winners.

When asked where his passion for music came from, Sgt Mitas said he developed his passion when he was 13 years old. He pursued his love for music, which also included the playing of instruments and conducting choirs during his teenage years. He then joined the SA Air Force and anchored his career in music.

This year Avbob was the only sponsor together with the SANDF to ensure the success of this choral competition and elevated choral music to a more coordinated and professional musical genre. One could tell that this art form can play an important role to promote moral regeneration and be a vehicle to drive our anti-crime campaigns in South Africa.
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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.