7 Medical Battalion Group unveils Battle Colours
From the Editor’s desk

Letters to the Editor

The SANDF sends troops in high spirits to the Congo

Goodwill Parcel Project – from humble beginnings

Soldiers deployed on the borders receive goodwill gifts

Soldiers commemorate World AIDS Day in the Congo

DOD World AIDS Day Awareness March

SA Navy evening gala dinner

Adjudant General of the SANDF conferred medals on worthy recipients

First Military Police Division Promotional Parade

Fit and combat ready soldiers equate to a safe country

The SANDF Education Trust receives a generous donation from MICSSA

Defence Committee Meeting between the RSA and the USA

Military representatives of diplomacy accredited

Honorary Colonel’s Dinner

CONTRIBUTIONS:
Although all possible care is taken with articles, the editorial staff cannot accept any responsibility for lost articles and photographs.

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As we wind down the curtains for 2017, we count ourselves greatly privileged that we are about to celebrate the festive season with our loved ones. I would like to take this rare opportunity to profoundly thank our families for the support they gave us during this hectic year.

Let us pay homage in honour of our men and women who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of our beloved country in the current year. We respect and honour them; their contribution will always be remembered. “We will remember them”.

I, as the Chief of the SANDF, wish all those who will be on active duty during this festive season a resounding success during your duty over this period. Remain on high alert and exercise optimal discipline in order to safeguard SANDF installations and assets.

As soldiers, we have a duty to fulfil our mandate as stipulated in the Constitution; therefore, we must remain loyal and do our part to earn the respect of all South Africans. Millions of South Africans rely on us to defend and safeguard our borders.

Collectively we have a responsibility to root out rogue elements in our midst who are tarnishing the image of our organisation. We must expose them by all means. Let’s ensure that they do not have room to operate in our defence force. I would like to wish each and every one of you good heath, joy and a fulfilling rest period with your loved ones during this festive season.

General Solly Shoke
Chief of the South African National Defence Force

*Message as issued in the Department of Defence News Flash on 20 December 2017*
ARMEED FORCES DAY

21 February 2018
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defence

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
A SOLDIER’S CHRISTMAS POEM

It was the night before Christmas,
They lived all alone,
In a one bedroom house
Made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney
With presents to give,
And to see just who
In this home did live.

I looked all about,
a strange sight I did see,
No tinsel, no presents,
Not even a tree.

No stocking by Mantle,
Just boots filled with sand,
On the wall hung pictures
Of far distant lands.

With medals and badges,
Awards of all kinds,
A sober thought
Came through my mind.

For this house was different,
It was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier,
Once I could see clearly.

I found the home of a soldier,
It was dark and dreary,
For this house was different,
A sober thought
Came through my mind.

A bright Christmas Day.
And grown-ups would celebrate
The children would play,
Soon round the world,
Who were willing to fight.

The soldier lay sleeping,
Silent, alone,
Curled up on the floor
In this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle,
The room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured
A South African soldier.

Was this the hero
Of whom I'd read?
Curled up on a poncho,
The floor for a bed a bed?

I realised the families
That I saw the night,
Owed their lives to these soldiers
Who were willing to fight.

They all enjoyed freedom
Each month of the year,
Because of the soldiers,
Like the one lying here.

A soldiery's Christmas Poem

I couldn't help wonder
How many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas eve
In a land far from home.

The very thought
Brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees
And started to cry.

The soldier awakened
And I heard a rough voice,
“Santa don’t cry,
This life is my choice;
I fight for freedom,
I don’t ask for more,
My life is my God,
My country, my crops.”

The soldier rolled over
And drifted to sleep,
I couldn’t control it
And I heard a rough voice,
The soldier awakened
And started to cry.

I dropped to my knees
Brought a tear to my eye,
The very thought
Nothing, and reluctantly
Accepted the thought of eternal
Loneliness ... should I fail.
I have seen the face of terror; and enjoyed
The sweet taste of a moment’s love.
I have cried, pained and hoped ...
But most of all, I have lived times
Others would say were best forgotten.
At least someday I will be able to say
That I was proud of what I was ...

MY WISH FOR MARRIED COUPLES/FAMILIES

It is always beautiful to see happy stable families and it is possible to create and encourage more stable and happy families, yes, we are not perfect but our family is our shelter. My wish for married couples in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is to love each other unconditionally, create homes filled with love and God. Married couples must never forget that happy homes create a happy nation and a happy world. SANDF members have a duty to protect and serve their country, sometimes distance can be created by deployments, courses or placements but that must never create distance between your beautiful blessed unions. Therefore, may your love be renewed every day; may you hold hands in the malls and appreciate each other every day. May the communities see the difference in your union and be inspired. Remember two is better than one. My wish for you remains a wish but making it a reality is possible.

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.

A SOLDIER

I would like to quote a poem by George L. Syeck, as it describes my sentiments regarding my military career:
I was that which others did not want to be.
I went where others feared to go,
And did what others failed to do.
I asked nothing from those who gave
Nothing, and reluctantly
Accepted the thought of eternal loneliness ... should I fail.
I have seen the face of terror; and enjoyed
The sweet taste of a moment’s love.
I have cried, pained and hoped ...
But most of all, I have lived times
Others would say were best forgotten.
At least someday I will be able to say
That I was proud of what I was ...

A SOLDIER. CWO Tumelo Lwana,
Warrant Officer Human Resources
Divisional Staff

CWO Tumelo Lwana.
AIR FORCE BASE HOEDSPRUIT IS CROWNED 2017 CHESS CHAMPIONS

The first ever SA Air Force Inter Unit Chess Championship was recently held at Air Force Base Hoedspruit. This came after the inclusion of chess as an additional sporting code in the SA Air Force by the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, in March 2016.

As he presented the awards to the winners, the Officer Commanding SA Air Force Gymnasium, Col Riaan van Wyk, congratulated all the participants on their sterling performance during the championship, and in particular the host team, Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit, on winning the championship. AFB Makhado came second, and SA Air Force Gymnasium third.

The best overall female winner was Lindokuhle Makhanya (AFB Makhado) and the best overall player for 2017 was Cpl Pfarelo Moeti (AFB Makhado) who scored the full six points in all six games. He also received a chess board and a chess set.

The following teams participated in the championship, namely AFB Langebaanweg, AFB Makhado, AFB Waterkloof, SA Air Force Headquarters, 10 Air Depot, SA Air Force Gymnasium and AFB Hoedspruit.

According to WO2 Paulo Origa, Chess Chairperson and Coordinator of the sport in the SA Air Force, the history of chess goes back almost 1500 years. The game originated in Northern India in the 6th Century AD and spread to Persia. When the Arabs conquered Persia, chess was taken up by the Muslim World and subsequently, through the Moorish conquest of Spain, spread to Southern Europe. Many countries, including China, claim to have invented the chess game in some incipient form, he said.

WO2 Paulo Origa is a professional chess coach whose record speaks volumes of his calibre. He has for a number of years coached a team from Centurion (Thaba Tshwane), including teachers at Phalaborwa and Hoedspruit.

Chess provides a model environment for the study of basic cognitive processes, such as perception, memory and problem solving. It also offers a unique opportunity for the study of individual differences (chess expertise). Chess has also enjoyed a privileged position in artificial intelligence research as an ideal domain for exploring search and evaluation processes.

WO2 Origa said that he was happy with the attendance and performance of teams throughout the championship, though his expectation was to see all eight teams attending. Seven teams attended, and only one team could not attend because of exams or their having medical appointments. Among the 26 players, three were women: one from 10 Air Depot and two from AFB Waterkloof.

He urged Officers Commanding and Section Heads throughout the SA Air Force to support the initiative of the Chief of the SA Air Force and the vision of the Chairperson of the SA Air Force Ladies Forum, mama Africa Msimang, to have the chess clubs and teams representing the SA Air Force in the SANDF and CISM Chess Championships. Each Base and Unit of the SA Air Force is expected to start a chess club that will represent their Base or Unit. In order to enjoy the game, players must be disciplined, exercise regularly, eat healthy food, and remain focused, he said. Lt Thomas T. Mulaudzi, SA Air Force Gymnasium.

CAMOUFLAGE SUPER HERO

Every day, for a few minutes, soldiers in camouflage stand firm and ready to start their work. The day officially starts after roll-call or registration. This peaceful moment is opened and closed with a salute, the soldiers in camouflage stand firm and still, no matter the weather. There is no complaint about where they stand, who they stand next to or even the harshness of the weather.

A few years ago these camouflaged bees were respected and feared, today we talk about them behind their backs and tell them they are useless, until a crisis hits, then suddenly we know who to call. Before you judge and criticise them, ask yourself ... Could I walk in their boots? Chances are you cannot and that is why you don’t dress in the same uniform as these mighty bees. These bees are known as soldiers and they live to protect every single person in your country, including YOU!

SHOW SOME RESPECT the next time you see one. Notice the tiredness and frustration in producing honey (services) they will still produce and in the end you’ll take it and comment on how lovely it is, but you probably will not take the time to appreciate the efforts.

Every bee stands together from a small wingless (broken limb) to a dying bee whose lost his stinger (line of duty battle) each bee will protect those injured and continue to deliver honey to your door step (they continue to serve and protect even after a soldier becomes fallen). Fallen bees are always remembered and the other bees strive to never go down the same road twice. These bees often work late hours to protect the hive (Base) as well as it is by standers (Civilians) and even after all the name calling and un-appreciation they still try to deliver the best honey.

If you see one of these bees in their superhero cars or even in your flower bed (business) try not to squat them (bad mouth and degrade them) instead pass a smile and maybe a wave. Remember that no matter what we do and say about them if they need to sting for protection, even while risking their lives, they will. I am proud to be protected by these bees I have a camouflage hero, do you? - If not its time that you get or adopt one.

Ms Nikita Verhoeve, daughter of S Sgt M. Verhoeve, email.
MASTER WARRANT OFFICER TERBLANCHE SAYS GOODBYE

Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Martin Terblanche retired after 41 years of military service. A Change of Office Parade was recently conducted, where the post of Base Warrant Officer (BWO) of SA Army Support Base Mpumalanga was officially handed over to MWO Daniël Kgoebane.

MWO Terblanche was born at Middelburg (Cape) on 7 November 1957. The first few years he spent in the Eastern Cape, whereafter his family moved to Okahandja, Namibia. He matriculated at Paarl Boys High School in 1975. In 1976 he started his military career as a National Serviceman at the School of Engineers. In 1977 he was promoted to the rank of Corporal and then utilised as an instructor. He went through the ranks at 1 Construction Regiment until 1989. From 1989 to 1992 he was Chief Instructor at the School of Engineers. He was promoted as Regimental Sergeant Major in 1993 at 14 Engineer Regiment, which was later changed to Eastern Transvaal Command Engineer Regiment. In 1999 he was appointed as Base Warrant Officer at Army Support Base Mpumalanga. He is married to Marietjie and they have three children. During his career he was awarded the Military Merit Medal and the Good Service Medals for 30, 20 and 10 years, as well as the General Service Medal and the Unitas Medal.

Addressing the members on parade, MWO Terblanche thanked the Officer Commanding, the Command Group and especially the Warrant Officers and his family for their support. He concluded by saying: “After 41 years of service with the grace of the Almighty and still blessed with good health it is now time for me to greet my colleagues and friends. There is an old saying: 'Sergeant Majors don’t die, they just fade away’.”

The Officer Commanding, Lt Col Coen van Heerden, extended his appreciation for the service rendered by MWO Terblanche and he welcomed MWO Kgoebane in the unit. He urged unit members to support the newly appointed BWO in the same way they supported MWO Terblanche’s contribution in support of Army Support Base Mpumalanga as the best Army Support Base in the SA Army Support Formation.

**GOING ON PENSION**

Years go by quicker than we perceive, you can start working when you are 18 years old and only to realise later that you are actually left with a year to pension. It is a given that we cannot work forever and at some stage one must go on pension or retire. While still employed it is difficult to wake up when the alarm rings, but when on pension you wake the alarm up. According to my experience I have noticed that most pensioners want to start businesses with their pension money only to fail at the end. One must pursue business interests and investments while still employed if possible, business is complicated sometimes. We sometimes have the patience to plan for our pension that is going to happen when we are 65 years old, but we do not have patience to plan for five years to come while we are still in our 20s, anything can happen and anything can sometimes force us to retire early. To those veterans who are almost at their last years of serving I can say it is never too late to start planning for your pension and the best way to start is by settling debts. We have the mandate to educate the young recruits about investing for the future especially in products like retirement annuity policies, buying property, saving and good spending of their hard earned salary. Observation can become a lesson, most people who are going on pension miss that moment of being at work, so enjoy while you are still employed, one day you will be GOING ON PENSION!

Cpl David Mabusha Tshivhula, 1 Parachute Battalion
INSPIRING OUR SOLDIERS TO ACHIEVE

The graduation ceremony recently held at the Central University of Technology (CUT) Free State in Bloemfontein serves as an inspiration to all our soldiers. It inspires them to improve their lives and career prospects by making use of the educational opportunities offered by the Department of Defence, in particular the SA Army. Senior members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) were among the 59 proud recipients of a Bachelor of Technology Degree in Human Resource Management (B–Tech in HRM). All this after a demanding three years of hard work and dedication, apart from their responsibilities as senior officers and warrant officers in their respective formations and units.

This degree, an external three-year correspondence course, was achieved owing to the members’ dedication and discipline in managing their free time, together with their responsibilities in the SA Army. This is an achievement that our younger members should strive for, particularly in view of Vision 2020, which states that in order to qualify as an officer a member must have obtained a degree.

The senior SA Army members started with a national certificate in Occupational Directed Education Training and Development Practitioner (ODETDP), and then proceeded to obtain a national diploma in ODETDP, using various registered service providers for both qualifications. The period of study for the two qualifications was two years on a contact basis, by service providers who are accredited by the Education Training and Development Practitioner Sector Education and Training Authority to offer these qualifications.

The members then applied for Recognition of Prior Learning to CUT via Maccauvlei Learning Academy. These two institutions have a Service Level Agreement to recognise the ODETDP qualification as the content is in line with the requirements of a B-tech degree in HRM.

Maccauvlei Learning Academy and CUT have embarked on a joint venture to offer the B-Tech (HRM) comprising six subjects: Research Methodology I, Advanced Strategic Management IV, Advanced Personnel Management IV, Advanced Management of Training IV, Advanced Industrial Relations IV and Organisational Behaviour IV, which are presented as six study schools over 12 months.

Funds are available for further study from numerous sources within the SANDF, including the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training (SASSETA). Enquiries can also be made via the Personnel Section and ETD at unit level.

It is also important to acknowledge the sacrifice that the members’ families make in assisting, motivating and supporting the learners, particularly when both parents work and have young children.

It is therefore incumbent on our younger soldiers to use the opportunities available to further their studies to ensure that the future leaders of the SANDF are educated and professional soldiers ready to lead by example.

Sgt Kevin Fenton, email
SA Soldier

news from abroad

The SANDF sends troops in high spirits to the Congo

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

Members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) deploying to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were in high spirits during a farewell function held at the Department of Defence (DOD) Mobilisation Centre at De Brug near Bloemfontein. This annual courtesy is conducted in the form of a parade, and provides a platform for the SANDF senior cadre to deliver a goodwill message to all members awaiting deployment in Africa.

The SANDF will be deployed to the DRC as part of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) with the responsibility of ensuring peace and stability in the DRC and to help restore peace and economic development to this African country. This is done to support democracy, facilitate economic and social stability and to create a better life for all. Since taking part in peace missions the SANDF has helped to bring peace and stability to war-torn communities on the African continent.

A farewell parade is always held for members of the SANDF prior their departure on peace support missions throughout Africa. Sending off members in high spirits epitomises the significance of their contribution to creating a better Africa and affords their families and loved ones an opportunity to bid them farewell. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the valued contributions made by the SANDF members in pursuit of peace and stability on the continent.

The parade coincided with the Goodwill Parcel Project (GWPP) function that afforded sponsors the opportunity to hand over goodwill parcels and to show their appreciation and support to the deployed members and families over the festive season. The aim of the project is therefore not to reimburse soldiers for their efforts, but to show them appreciation and support.
Addressing members on parade, Brig Gen Phillip Mavhungu, Chief of Staff Joint Operational Headquarters, expressed his greatest appreciation to the men and women of the SANDF who continue to put their lives at risk for the sake of peace on the continent. Brig Gen Mavhungu said: “Your sacrifices have strengthened the commitment of the United Nations to protecting civilians in harm’s way, promoting human rights and the rule of law, advancing negotiations and securing a better future for the Congolese people.”

He also stressed the importance of discipline, saying that he would not tolerate ill-discipline from SANDF members deployed abroad. The Chief of Staff said: “You have the names of your predecessors to live up to, many of whom gave their lives trying to bring security to vulnerable people. This is a UN mission with regulations to obey, the most important being the rule against sexual exploitation and abuse. These people are vulnerable and look up to you as their protectors.”

Brig Gen Mavhungu remarked that he was touched by the generosity of the sponsors of GWPP towards the deployed members. Brig Gen Mavhungu said: “Our defence force is eternally grateful to the sponsors and we appreciate your efforts in bringing happiness to our deployed members who also cannot be with their respective families over the festive season due to their international commitments.”

A member of the SA National Defence Force received his goodwill parcel from Ms Rosie Wilson of Old Mutual.

Ms Lerato Mtabanengwe, Communications Manager SA Army Foundation, handing over a token of appreciation.

When addressing the sponsors and soldiers, Brig Gen Phillip Mavhungu, Chief of Staff Joint Operational Headquarters, said that he was touched by the generosity of the sponsors of GWPP towards the deployed members.
The Goodwill Parcel Project (GWPP) had humble beginnings. It all started back in 2001 with a mere R25 000 when the Warrant Officer of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the Warrant Officer of the Joint Operations Division established the project. At that stage there was no funding for the project, so the Warrant Officer of the SANDF then requested that all Warrant Officers in the SANDF donate R1 towards the project.

Since its inception, the GWPP has raised a total of R65.4 million. The project is today a national effort and has become a significant event on the Department of Defence calendar, one which brings festive cheer to men and women in uniform who cannot be with their families during Christmas. The 2017

Master Chief Warrant Officer Mothusi Kgaladi, Warrant Officer of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and Chairperson of the Goodwill Parcel Project, handing over a gift to a deployed member of the SANDF.

Maj Gen Thabiso Mokhosi, General Officer Commanding Joint Operational Headquarters, saluting the guard of honour on his arrival at the SA National Defence Force Specialised Contingent base in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
The edition of the project was launched on 1 September with a gala dinner in Pretoria, which saw R2.4 million pledged. This was possible due to the generosity of fourteen corporate sponsors and four Service sponsors.

Despite limited resources, the South African business community has big hearts, which allows them to contribute generously to the GWPP. This is greatly welcomed as an acknowledgement and an appreciation of the tireless work that our soldiers constantly undertake on the continent. The project recognises the important role of the SANDF in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in all efforts at the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The GWPP is a project that seeks to give soldiers a reason to smile and all its activities carry the good wishes and appreciation of the entire SANDF and the South African community as a whole, and it has an important impact on the morale of deployed members and their families over the festive season.

Representatives of the various sponsors of the GWPP, accompanied by senior generals and officials of the SANDF, embarked on the 16th year of the GWPP and visited externally deployed members of the SANDF in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to hand over a token of appreciation. The visit also afforded the team the time to honour, acknowledge and thank the deployed members for their important efforts to promote security, peace and stability in the DRC.

During the visit to Kinshasa, goodwill gifts to the soldiers were handed over, while various sponsors handed over soccer and netball kits to the SANDF Specialised Contingent deployed as part of the United Nations Stabilization Organization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO).

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, Mr Julian Auben, Divisional Director Liberty Life, said that the companies’ involvement was one way of saying thank you to the soldiers.
news from abroad

you to the country’s men and women in uniform. He said that the SANDF has a leading role to play on the continent to ensure peace and he thanked them for their efforts.

Mr Auben said: "As corporate South Africa we are very proud to be part of this initiative. We are fortunate that our government and the SANDF have roped us in to support our troops. Business can only thrive where there is peace and stability and therefore peacekeeping has a direct impact on the country’s economic growth. We will continue to do what needs to be done to ensure that this initiative continues. This project has come a long way and credit

Ms Londiwe Mavudla, Old Mutual Head of Stakeholder Relations, addressing soldiers at Beni on behalf of the sponsors.

LEFT: Lt Col Emily Molusi, Officer Commanding SA National Defence Force Specialised Contingent, receiving a netball kit from Liberty Life.

A Mamba in action in real-time fast paced mechanised demonstration of patrolling.
Mr Angel Rampele, General Manager of SA Army Foundation, with the Beni reconnaissance team.

must be given to all the Warrant Officers of the SANDF.”

He said: “We have been part of the SANDF Goodwill Parcel Project for a number of years. The GWPP supports our men and women in uniform who serve our nation selflessly. Through the SANDF, the business community has the environment necessary to conduct business. Stability, soundness and order are some of the critical aspects in building a sustainable economy. The entire nation is in safe hands and at peace due to the men and women in uniform who’ve put in and sacrificed their lives to protect the sovereignty of this country on the continent and beyond.” He also thanked the deployed members for their selfless service to our country and hoped that this little gesture will go a long way to ease the loneliness and longing for their loved ones.

Addressing guests and deployed members, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Joint Operational Headquarters, Maj Gen Thabiso Mokhosi, said that the SANDF was proud to be part of the United Nations contingent in the DRC which is seeking peace, stability and full economic emancipation for the Congolese people.

The GOC also commended the good deeds of the business community who continue to support the noble GWPP despite the tremendous challenges the local economy is facing. Maj Gen Mokhosi said: “Today we are witnessing the South African business community as part of all people in South Africa. They support your effort to bring peace to the DRC. It is an effort to ensure that our soldiers here do feel appreciated. The goodwill gesture by the business community is in support of your endeavours to promote peace in the DRC.”

Speaker after speaker representing the sponsors appreciated the efforts of SANDF members in performing their duties. Ms Londiwe Mavudla, Old Mutual Head of Stakeholder Relations, said: “We simply take our safety and peace of mind for granted without truly appreciating what it takes for us to enjoy safety and freedom from the unpredictable possibility of unprecedented attacks on our sovereignty. It is only when one sees you [soldiers] doing your duty on deployment in a foreign country far from your loved ones that we as sponsors feel it was all worth it. Today we see and have a full idea of what you deal with every day during your deployment. It is indeed humbling and encouraging to see you at work bringing peace and stability to our continent. Please do not run out of energy, keep up the good work and we, the sponsors, will do what needs to be done to show our appreciation.”

In Beni the GWPP delegation and sponsors were treated to a real-time fast paced mechanised demonstration of patrolling.
Soldiers deployed on the borders receive goodwill gifts

Article and photos by S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

The Goodwill Parcel Project continues to extend a helping hand in supporting the morale of SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members deployed on internal and external operations. The Ladybrand Operational Base in the Free State Province was among the units that were visited by the sponsors to present the goodwill.

The sponsors presented goodwill gifts to SANDF members who are currently deployed along the South African borders, e.g. the border along the Kingdom of Lesotho. The SANDF is conducting borderline control through Operation CORONA and have recently included the Lesotho borders. Part of its operational responsibilities are conducting roadblocks, preventing livestock theft, seizing contraband and dealing with other cross-border crimes.

Mr Mvuyo Gomba from Liberty in Bloemfontein presenting goodwill gift bags to SA National Defence Force members at the Ladybrand Operational Base in the Free State.

The Regimental Sergeant Major of the Joint Tactical Headquarters in the Free State, WO1 David Maqashalala.
The Officer Commanding Joint Tactical Headquarters in the Free State, Col Mabotja, said he commended the spirit in which the sponsors gave recognition to the work the SANDF members were doing along the border. He added by saying: “It is indeed a very special honour, privilege and pleasure to welcome you all as private sector members together with the SANDF members. Thank you for taking the time and making use of the opportunity to join us through this esteemed initiative called the Goodwill Parcel Project of distributing gift bags to all internally deployed SANDF members over the festive season.”

Col Mabotja added: “I also like to recognise the deployed SANDF members who made a promise to the border farming community and the Free State population at large when they committed themselves to border safeguarding. The time you left your families in September was the time you committed to keeping the promise of serving the nation.”

As the SANDF carries out its Constitutional mandate of defending and protecting the country, the control of borders have become imperative as more members are deployed to cover more areas in an attempt to curb illegal activities along the borders. Organised crimes undermine the development of social cohesion. The SANDF needed to be proactive because the longer criminal activities are left to prevail the more it is embedded in communities around the border which will be difficult to dislodge and neutralise.

The sponsors got to learn of the difficult task the SANDF members were experiencing and their achievements over the last four months while on deployment. 1 SA Infantry Battalion has been deployed at the Joint Tactical Headquarters Free State that commenced on 4 September 2017. Since then a number of undocumented persons have been apprehended. Cases of farm attacks and stock theft have been reported as well as the proliferation of small arms. Apart from border safeguarding, the SANDF have supported other government departments in order to maintain law and order. Successful cases of confiscated illicit goods included dagga to the value of over R500 000, vehicles recovered of over R1.4M and cash and weapons recovered to the value of R75 000, among other.
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) on 1 December 2017, joined the world in commemorating World AIDS Day. On this day people worldwide unite in the fight against HIV and AIDS, to show solidarity with people living with HIV and AIDS.

It is on this day annually that HIV and AIDS awareness is heightened to encourage people not to discriminate, show respect and not stigmatise those living with HIV and AIDS or those who died from an AIDS-related illness. The event was held at Goma Aviation Unit where members from Sake Unit, Goma, joined in the commemoration.

The members adorned with a red ribbon began the commemoration with a short march outside the unit to demonstrate the importance of this day to the local communities of Goma. The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV and AIDS.

The Sake Base and Aviation Unit members marching in showing solidarity for people living with HIV and AIDS.

After the welcome and introductory speech by Lt Col Tiro Blie, the Officer Commanding of the Aviation Unit, other speakers noted that HIV and AIDS were a reality that we all were either affected or infected by.

RIGHT: Aviation Unit members performed an industrial theatre drama of how HIV and AIDS can spread among soldiers on deployment.
The invited guest from the Tanzanian Battalion, based at Sake Headquarters, Capt (Dr) Daudi Nyahurya, spoke at length about the effects of HIV and AIDS. He did not mince his words when explaining the medical facts on how one could get infected and debunked the myths that perpetuate disrespect and stigma for the people living with HIV and AIDS. “The lack of good HIV and AIDS education and understanding in many places in the world is fuelling the epidemic. Stigma and discrimination also play a part in stagnating progress and preventing people from getting tested,” said Capt (Dr) Nyahurya.

Capt (Dr) Nyahurya continued by saying that one could help fight HIV and AIDS by practising safe sex, reducing one’s sexual partners, challenging stigmatising behaviour when one encounters it, by obtaining the facts and ensuring those around us are informed, supporting HIV and AIDS charities that educate the public about HIV and AIDS, campaigning for the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS, as well as challenging discrimination.

The Aviation Unit performed an industrial theatre drama of how HIV and AIDS can spread among soldiers on deployment.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Of the 34 million HIV-positive people worldwide, 69% live in sub-Saharan Africa. There are roughly 23.8 million infected persons in Africa.
- 91% of the world’s HIV-positive children live in Africa.
- More than one million adults and children die every year from HIV and AIDS in Africa alone. In 2011, 1.7 million people worldwide died from AIDS.
- Since the epidemic of HIV and AIDS, more than 75 million people have contracted the illness, and over 36 million have died of an HIV-related condition.
- 71% of the HIV and AIDS-related deaths in 2011 were people living in Africa.

Celebrating life on World AIDS Day

The 1st of December is a special day for Capt Mmamonang Kganyago, Intelligence Officer at RSA Aviation, DRC, Goma. While this day worldwide is a day to commemorate those who passed on due to HIV and AIDS for Capt Kganyago it is a day to celebrate the day she was born back in 1987.

“The fact that I was born on 1 December might not be special per se but what does make it special is that it is associated with life that perished due to HIV and AIDS pandemic, it was on this day that I took my first breath. It signals the circle of life and death, while commemorate those who passed on due to HIV and AIDS I celebrate my birth,” said Capt Kganyago.

Capt Kganyago joined the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in August 2006. Asked why the SANDF her career of choice Capt Kganyago’s face enthusiastically brightens in a way that only a genuinely happy person can master, “I love my country. I came to realise that there was no better way of showing my patriotism than giving my life to the country; yes I am ready to die for my country if it comes to that. Secondly I wanted my family to be proud of me, I am the only soldier in the family. This was a first deployment and so far she is enjoying the experience,” said exuberant Capt Kganyago.

Capt Mmamonang Kganyago was not naïve or oblivious to the challenges and risks of deployment, she unequivocally indicated that deployment was not for everyone and those who deploy must have a survival strategy and be both physically and mental ready. “I brought lots of books to read and intend exercising thoroughly to keep my mind from idling and keep nostalgia at bay”, the Captain said.
This year the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) hosted the Department of Defence (DOD) World AIDS Day Awareness March in Thaba Tshwane, Pretoria.

Members of the DOD came out in their numbers in support of the DOD HIV and AIDS campaign. For more than 45 minutes, the streets of Thaba Tshwane were flocked with people, marching against the epidemic. This year’s campaign was guided by the National Department of Health with the theme: “I have the right to know my status, prevention is my responsibility”.

Despite the scientific advances made in HIV and AIDS treatment, World AIDS Day still remain vital. The day reminds the public that HIV and AIDS are not gone. There is still a critical role to play in raising funds to increase awareness in fighting prejudices and in educating the public about HIV and AIDS.

Addressing the participants, the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, said: “It is only when everyone is involved that we as a nation will grow. HIV and AIDS are not limited to some people. It affects everyone in South Africa and the world - men and women. It impacts negatively on our economy, families, organisations and our health services. We all have a role to play to fight it. Let us stand together and win this war”.

Outlining the global HIV statistics according to the United Nations, Lt Gen Sedibe said: “19.5 million people were accessing antitroviral therapy in 2016. Between 36.7 and 42.9 million people globally were living with HIV in 2016, while 1.8 to 2.1 million became newly infected with HIV in the same year. 1 million people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2016.”

The Surgeon General said more needs to be done to promote male circumcision, including the use of male and female condoms. He said circumcision is a scientifically proven and cost-effective HIV prevention method. He explained: “Medical male circumcision, in combination with other prevention strategies, such as the use of condoms plays a vital role in reducing the number of new infections.” Lt Gen Sedibe said one of our preventative actions as Department of Defence is the distribution of camouflaged condoms. He added that these condoms have been proven to be very popular among our members and communities we interact with during shows and exhibitions.

Lt Gen Sedibe urged members to get more information from the healthcare practitioners that form part of the outreach programme. Knowledgeable defence practitioners were present to ensure that people make informed and educated decisions. He believes that being knowledgeable regarding HIV and AIDS is the right way to tackle the epidemic. Lt Gen Sedibe encouraged all members to undergo medical screening, HIV testing and counseling.

The event ended with the cutting and releasing of balloons followed by participating in different sporting codes.

When addressing residents on World AIDS Day at Welkom, Free State, the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said Government was concerned about the number of people who did not know their HIV status. Referring to a recent survey, there is still many people living with HIV and AIDS who do not know their HIV status. Hence the National Department of Health released the guidance to celebrate World AIDS Day this year with the theme: “I have the right to know my status, and prevention is my responsibility”.

World AIDS Day, designated on 1 December every year since 1988 in a bid to highlight awareness of the AIDS pandemic. It’s a worldwide opportunity for people to unite in the fight against HIV, to support the infected, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness.

In South Africa, this day was first commemorated in 1996 when the Department of Health organised a special event called the National World AIDS Day in Bloemfontein and Pretoria.
The annual Chief of the SA Navy Gala evening was recently held at Unisa in Pretoria. Guests arrived in their numbers in response to invitations to be part of an event hosted by the Chief of the SA Navy, V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane. Since its inception it has grown from strength to strength as one of the important events on the SA Navy calendar.

Addressing the guests, V Adm Hlongwane remarked: “It is always a privilege for the SA Navy and its leadership to have the opportunity to engage with its communities on an occasion such as this.”

The evening commenced with a theme commemorating the sinking of the SS Mendi a century ago. The performance unpacked the sequence of events in a personified manner by a combination of music, sound effects and dramatisation.

Delivered in the form of a stage play recital, the crowd got an insight into the events of the heart-wrenching incident that transpired 100 years ago, when the SS Darro, sailing at full speed and with no warning signals, rammed the SS Mendi.

The Chief of the SA Navy said: “The sinking of the SS Mendi reminds us of the heart-wrenching and brave words uttered by the Chaplain on board the SS Mendi, the Rev Isaac Dyobha, exactly 100 years ago. The troop ship, the SS Mendi, floundered and rapidly sank to its final resting place, cutting short the lives of more than 600 of our countrymen.

“In February, we commemorated these brave men, the majority of whom were from the SA Native Labour Corps. It is often said that these brave souls gave their lives for a war not their own, without a single shot being fired or bayonet drawn. They, along with their fellow white countrymen, nevertheless gave their lives with unwavering courage, bravery and heroism.”

The packed-to-capacity venue had the audience delighting in the music of the internationally acclaimed SA Navy Band, in conjunction with the SA Navy Choir.

Musical Director, Lt Lindela Madikizela, as it was the first time he had directed the Band at an SA Navy Gala. He thanked the Chief of the SA Navy for entrusting him with this position and he expressed gratitude to the guests in attendance, as well as the band and the choir for making the evening a success.

Performances of the night entailed a combination of different genres, which appealed to the audience. AB Tieho Mpeisa and Sea Nokulunga Madlala sealed the night’s performance with a duet composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, “Amigos Para Siempre”, which in Spanish means “friends for life”.

The Programme Director, Lt Cdr Paulos Kuhlase, presented the Chief of the SA Navy’s wife, Ms Thandi Hlongwane, with a gift on behalf of the SA Navy as a token of appreciation for her continuous support.
The Adjudant General of the SA National Defence Force, Maj Gen (Dr) Eric Mnisi, addressing members on parade.

Maj Gen (Dr) Mnisi said: “Only disciplined soldiers must be considered for medals in order to avoid mockery of this noble tradition and honour. In compliance with the Constitutional mandate, the SANDF must be structured and managed as a disciplined military force.”

He urged and challenged all members to redouble their efforts to ensure that they promote good discipline in the SANDF. In this way they would be a good example to those who appeared before them in military courts. They should strive to realise the SANDF vision: “An SANDF that is ready and capable of effectively and professionally executing successful missions and operations, as directed by Government”.

Later during the day, Maj Gen (Dr) Mnisi introduced the Battle Handling Course which will be attended by all military law junior officers in the near future. The course will lay the foundation to equip junior officers with basic combat skills needed on the modern battlefield. After successful completion of the course they will be au fait with the theoretical battle handling of each corps and be able to apply this during the planning process at the lower tactical level. ☛

Adjudant General of the SANDF conferred medals on worthy recipients

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The Adjudant General of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Maj Gen (Dr) Eric Mnisi, presented his first medal parade recently with the assistance of 44 Parachute Regiment in Bloemfontein. The medal parade was held to confer medals on members of the Defence Legal Services Division and acknowledge their selfless dedication, loyalty and meritorious service.

Equally important, a medal parade gives us all an opportunity to celebrate as we reflect on the contributions made by our fellow soldiers to the security of our country. The parade was in line with the military culture of recognising all those who have provided extraordinary service to the SANDF.

During the parade the newly appointed Adjudant General outlined his vision for the Division and all military law practitioners. Maj Gen (Dr) Mnisi said that he intended to make the Defence Legal Services Division a highly professional and deployable provider of Defence Legal services and support to the Department of Defence. Speaking to the recipients, Maj Gen (Dr) Mnisi said the parade was organised to thank and award members for their commendable contribution to the SANDF. He added that the medals, decorations and citations received reflected the excellent service provided by members of the Defence Legal Services Division to the public at large.
First Military Police Promotional Parade

The Military Police Division held its first promotional parade at the Military Police School, the first of its kind since the inception of the Military Police Division. The parade was the brainchild of the Provost Marshal General (PMG), R Adm (JG) Alpheus Maphoto to keep the Military Police Division members on their toes. Among those promoted that day was Maj Kehloilwe Mahlangu who was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. She had a colourful military career so far.

**ABOVE:** Lt Col Kehloilwe Mahlangu.

Lt Col Mahlangu (her maiden surname: Mabula) was born in Modimolle in Limpopo. Most of her friends and colleagues call her “AK”. She joined the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) in 1996 as a Voluntary Military Service (VMS) member and completed her basic military training, weapon training and leadership (method of instruction) at the SA Army Women’s College (SAAWCOL) in George. She also completed Military Police Individual Training at the Military Police School the same year. She was appointed a Corporal and due to her good drill skills at SAAWCOL she was promoted to Platoon Sergeant at the National Ceremonial Guard after completing her VMS training.

She was later detached to 5 Signal Regiment as a Basic Military Training instructor. Thereafter she was transferred to Bloemfontein Military Police Area Office where she was utilised at the Client Service Centre Traffic Section to deal with investigation into traffic offences, and in 1999 her potential was utilised by her superiors and she was transferred to the Investigation Section and promoted to the rank of Sergeant. She was transferred to the Special Investigating Branch at Central Military Police Region (SIB CMPR) in 2001 where she was utilised as a Sexual Offences Investigator. The same year she was detached to the Bethlehem Military Police as an Acting Detachment Commander.

Later in the year an opportunity surfaced for the training of junior officers for middle management. Since her commanders knew her potential, she was offered an opportunity which she grabbed with both hands. After her appointment as an Officer (Lieutenant), she was also utilised at SIB. As there was no funded post of SO2 Crime Prevention/Investigation at CMPR HQ, the member was also utilised in that environment.

In 2004 she was transferred to the Ladysmith Military Police as an Area Provost Marshal (APM) and promoted to the rank of a Captain. She excelled as an APM and was one of the best Area Provost Marshals in the Central Region. The member was transferred to the Dequar Road Military Police in 2007 as an APM and promoted to the rank of Major. Owing to her investigative experience she was transferred to the Thaba Tshwane Military Police as SO2 Investigations. Here she continued to render excellent work. Lt Col Mahlangu completed all her Military Police courses during 2003 and the SA Army Junior Command and Staff Duties Course in 2009.

In 2012 she attended a Civil, Military and Police Relations course at the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza, Italy, where she was trained in United Nations (UN) Missions techniques. In 2017 she attended the Legal Aspects of Peacekeeping Operations at the Defence Institute of International Legal Studies in Rhode Island, USA where SEA investigations and the collection of DNA and Claims Procedure were presented. During the course she presented Crowd Management Control. In November 2013 she was appointed as the officer in charge of access control at 1 Military Hospital and completed the task successfully. She obtained a Bachelor of Laws Degree (LLB) from Unisa in 2013.

After 10 years as a Major, she remained disciplined, hardworking, motivated, positive, dedicated and loyal to the SANDF, in particular the Military Police Division. She was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in November 2017.

Lt Col Mahlangu is a Christian and a God fearing woman. Her favourite verse in the Bible is Psalm 37 verse 4: “Delight yourself in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart”. 🕊️
It was almost impossible to believe the robust level of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members at the 8th annual SANDF Fittest Soldier Competition. Approximately 300 soldiers from across the country gathered at Army Support Base KwaZulu-Natal at the Bluff in Durban to battle it out against obstacles and take part in surprise exercises that tested their physical strength and endurance for a week.

At the end of a long and strenuous week, the overall male and female winners of the competition were Tpr Mohammed Nhleko and Capt Virginia Mohlala.

Women competitors in action during the sandbag run.

Tyre flipping giving soldiers something to think about as they make their way to other obstacles.

“The competition was designed with different obstacles and surprise exercises to measure the combat readiness and physical fitness levels of members,” explained Lt Col Gae Lephalo from the Directorate for Physical Training, Sport and Recreation (DPTSR). Lt Col Lephalo added that the competition focused on challenging soldiers to perform at their optimal level. She mentioned that the week exposed participants to severe weather conditions that tested their mettle to the fullest.

A prerequisite to enter for this competition was to pass a normal fitness test. This included push-ups and sit-ups, a 2.4km run as well as a battlefield readiness test. The intelligence surprise tests took soldiers through various obstacles such as tyre flipping, leopard crawling, sandbag run, tyre shoulder run, beach run and wall jumping. Pulling a tyre out of water, a bleep test, an agility test, a running and endurance walk on uneven terrain with a backpack of approximately 15kg tested their combat readiness. Lt Col Lephalo said: “The main idea was to mix different challenges to break up the rhythm. You cannot specifically prepare for the event.”

The competition included various age group categories between 20 and 59 years for both men and women - even more interesting were the seniors who demonstrated their resilience even against much younger and fitter soldiers. 59-year-old Lt Col Gidion Sedumedi was among the participants. He said that when he heard about the competition he did not allow his age to deter him from participating. Lt Col Sedumedi explained: “I have been training continuously in
preparation for this event. I know this exercise is mentally challenging, but I told myself that even though it was the first time I participated, I would finish it.”

Lt Col Sedumedi was true to his word and battled it out until the finishing line. It was indeed encouraging to see someone of his age not put off by the severe weather and physical conditions. Lt Col Sedumedi encouraged all soldiers, both young and old, to participate in the forthcoming competitions to prepare soldiers for combat readiness.

Brig Gen Andries Mauyoma, Director Physical Training, Sport and Recreation, mentioned that the SANDF Fittest Soldier Competition had been initiated by the Chief of the SANDF. The intention was to provide the Services and Divisions with an opportunity to test their overall fitness as soldiers against each other. The mission was for soldiers to display their physical and psychological preparedness for any combat situation in the country.

He said that hosting this event was an attempt to achieve the main objective of physical training. He added saying that physical training in the SANDF was part and parcel of force preparation as mandated by the Chief of the SANDF. According to Brig Gen Mauyoma combat readiness requires that each and every uniformed member of the SANDF must be physically and psychologically fit.
The SANDF Education Trust receives a generous donation from MICSSA

By Col Elsa van Wyk, Secretary SANDF Education Trust
Photo by L Cpl Jonathan Mogano

“The youth is the hope of our future” - Jose Rizal. “Education is the foundation upon which we build the future” - Christine Gregoire.

With these words in mind the Command Management Information Systems Division (CMIS Div) donated a generous amount of R75 000 from the proceeds of the 7th biennial Military Information Communication Symposium of South Africa (MICSSA) to the SANDF Education Trust.

The Trust was established to support the dependants of soldiers who died or were severely injured while on active duty. The MICSSA management team is focusing on involving people from various walks of life, including Department of Defence members, Industry, Academic and Scientific Institutions and identified Foreign Defence Forces. They also focus on learners, specifically matriculants.

The youth is the hope of our future” - Jose Rizal. “Education is the foundation upon which we build the future” - Christine Gregoire.

The CMIS Div hosted the 7th biennial MICSSA over the period 9 to 13 May 2016 with its partners, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and the Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd (ARMSCOR). They are already in the planning phase for MICSSA 2018.

MICSSA is a biennial symposium to promote information and communications related developments among stakeholders in the Southern African defence environment, including both military and civilian components. This symposium also provides a platform to share and discuss ideas, strategy, requirements and potential solutions and to exhibit military equipment at the forefront of technology involving the Defence community, Government and industry, both local and international.

The 8th biennial MICSSA is planned to take place from 14 to 18 May 2018 at the CSIR International Convention Centre with the theme: “Information Communication Technology as a Military Capability”. More detailed information regarding the symposium will be available on the website www.micssa.co.za in the near future.

Director Information and Communication Technology, Brig Gen Heidie Gunter, presented proof of a R75 000 donation to the Chairperson Board of Trustees of the SANDF Education Trust, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, the Chief of Defence Reserves.
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) believes in maintaining healthy relationships with its counterparts. This was evident at a successful 16th Defence Committee Meeting (DEFCOM) between the South African and the United States of America (USA) delegations which was recently hosted by Defence Policy, Strategy and Planning Division in Pretoria.

The Co-Chairperson, Dr Thobekile Gamede, Chief Defence Policy, Strategy and Planning, led the South African delegation. The Co-Chairperson, Ms Michelle Lenihan, led the USA delegation. In their opening remarks, Dr Gamede and Ms Lenihan expressed their appreciation of the traditionally friendly relations between South Africa and the USA. They also commended the defence cooperation between the two countries. The opening plenary session commenced with presentations which covered South African defence policy and developing trends in Africa, an overview of the US Africa Command and SANDF partnership, which included the Chaplaincy engagements of 2016-2017, senior leadership engagements, Exercise SHARED ACCORD, rule of law events, the state partnership programme, and the US Department of Defence state partnership programme, among others.

The opening plenary session was concluded with lunch, whereafter the respective working groups commenced with breakaway sessions. The groups deliberated on acquisition and technology, operations, human resources development, training, policy and strategy and the challenges that they were facing.

The deliberations were then followed by a closing plenary session with reports from the respective working groups’ co-chairpersons. The reports showed that the two countries had agreed on determination, commitment and efforts to see progress in almost all of the aforementioned six areas. According to the reports, DEFCOM achieved all of its mutually agreed upon objectives in accordance with the agenda of the Defence Committee.

The leaders of the South African and the USA delegations were pleased with the results achieved in the six accepted areas since the last meeting. They also urged the co-chairpersons of the working groups to engage in regular dialogue to ensure the successful implementation of the various actions required.
 Incoming Defence Attachés and Advisors sworn in

Twelve newly appointed Military Attachés and Defence Advisors to South Africa were accredited during a ceremony recently held at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane. They are in no particular order: Col Abdellatif Tamelghaghet from the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, Col Isaias Martins Junior from the Federative Republic of Brazil, Col Solomon Bogale Mekonnen from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Col Olivier Ducret from France, Lt Col Kazunori Yanagawa from Japan, Brig Gen Muhammad Farhan Yousaf from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Lt Col Li Tao from the People’s Republic of China, Col Vyacheslav Osipov and Capt Anton Dumchev, both from the Russian Federation, Lt Col Moses Momo Marle Gore from the Republic of South Sudan, Lt Col Sjoberg Hakan from Sweden and Col Almeqdad Salem Alkaabi from the United Arab Emirates.

The ceremony was officiated by the Chief of Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, and consisted of a short outdoor ceremony where the incoming attachés and advisors were greeted by a general salute given by the National Ceremonial Guard. Thereafter an indoor ceremony was held where the Director Defence Foreign Relations, Brig Gen Thalitha Mxakato, present the epaulettes to all the attachés and advisors while Lt Gen Nyembe handed over the accreditation certificates.

During the ceremony the attachés and advisors took an oath and pledged to be good ambassadors for their respective countries and to set a good example. They also undertook to respect the laws governing South Africa, especially the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and to discharge their duties in a professional way with zeal and diligence. They all concurred that it was an honour for them to be advocates for their respective defence forces.

The SANDF supports the cause of Defence Diplomacy as an instrument used to deepen international relations for a better world. Through Defence Foreign Relations, the SANDF continues to diversify and consolidate international relations. The SANDF uses this platform to strengthen and consolidate the strategic and historical bilateral relations our defence force has established with foreign defence forces. This also serves to reaffirm the warm and cordial ties of friendship and solidarity the Department of Defence has built up and maintained over the years.

Addressing the attachés, advisors and guests at the ceremony, Lt Gen Nyembe said he considered the event important for the military diplomats and for the relations South Africa enjoys with other countries. He said the important role that militaries have to play in diplomacy cannot be over emphasised.

Lt Gen Nyembe said: “We are mandated with a highly important task as defence practitioners. Beyond catering for the protection and diplomacy of our citizenry, we as military representatives of diplomacy have the monumental task of contributing to the stability and security of the world at large. This sets the tone for your deployment as Defence Attachés. As attachés, you have been sent to our country in continuance of our already existing bilateral and multilateral relations that we have concluded over the years. Your tour of duty must symbolise the spirit of friendship, trust and deep understanding of defence diplomacy as a vehicle that makes a better life for our continent and better world for all.”

The Chief of Defence Intelligence urged the attachés to use the office of Defence Foreign Relations to receive guidelines on how to engage the entire defence force at different levels to achieve their objectives. The office will at all times provide leadership and assistance towards fulfillment of their tour of duty. He assured them all of the institutional support for the success of their mission in South Africa.
The Chief of Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, recently hosted a formal dinner as the Honorary Colonel of the Transvaal Horse Artillery at the Transvaal Scottish Regimental Association Headquarters, the View, in Parktown.

The formal dinner was following the regimental memorial service that commemorated the Battle of Sandfontain. This was the first battle of the then Union Defence Force at the beginning of World War I.

Maj Gen Andersen hosted the dinner for all Transvaal Horse Artillery officers, Non-commissioned officers, Gunners, including the Regimental Council as well as the General Officer Commanding of the SA Army Artillery Formation and some of his staff. Maj Gen Andersen commented that the event was something he was willing to privately fund. He believes that it is important for the SANDF regimental families to have a formal dinner together occasionally.

He added that the event was aimed at affording the youngsters an opportunity to hear the story of old Thomas Cullinan, the first Honorary Colonel and the founder of the Cullinan Mine, as they were bringing back the history of the heritage and Transvaal Horse Artillery history.

Concluding his overview of the event, Maj Gen Andersen said the next event they were looking forward to is to take young officers to the battlefield of Sandfontein so that they can “feel” the battle. He added that the name of the Regiment would be going to change to link up with the Battle of Sandfontain.

As the event was aimed at enjoying a dinner with narrations on the history of the regiment, Lt Col Ron Ludeman (Ret), regaled the guests with a brief eye-opening history of the Regiment since its inception on 17 March 1904 to today.
New cadre of Airmen rejuvenates the SA Air Force

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

A total of 158 SA Air Force recruits successfully completed their 22-week long Basic Military Training presented at the Air Force Gymnasium in Hoedspruit (Limpopo). The community of Hoedspruit and surrounding areas, family and friends from all across our country recently came to witness the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) Basic Military Training intake passing-out parade at Air Force Base Hoedspruit.

A milestone achieved, another phase in their lives has ended and a new chapter begins in their military careers. During their training they were introduced to general military aspects, military culture, Regimental training, fieldcraft, musketry, weapon phase (theory and practical), buddy aid, neatness and hygiene, military discipline, regular drill sessions, physical training, teamwork and life skills they can use after completing their military service.

As is the tradition of every training institution of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) awards were presented to individuals who excelled during their period of training. The
Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, presented the trophies to the recruits who have excelled.

The awards presented were as follows:

- **Best Overall Learner Top Gun Award**: Amn Chrystabell Dixon (obtained 86%)
- **Best Academic Learner Award**: Amn Lwamkelo Gqabanishi (obtained 97%)
- **Fittest Male Learner**: Amn Odwa Mbango (obtained 90%)
- **Fittest Female Learner**: Amn Chrystabell Dixon (obtained 92%)
- **Best Male Shottist**: Amn Thamsanqa Masombuka (obtained 85%)
- **Best Female Shottist**: Amn Thandeka Msimang (obtained 82%)
- **Confidence Builder Award for Best Instructor**: Cpl Thabo Malisha

Welcoming the new cadre of Airmen into the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Msimang said: “You are now members of the SANDF. You are now soldiers. Do not ever forget that we as men and women in uniform symbolise South Africa’s strength, dignity, selfless and patriotic service to our nation and motherland.” He added that the recruits came in as civilians, and now leave as Airmen, with new skills, experiences, discipline and a passion to serve. Lt Gen Msimang added: “This is only your first step into this unique profession. A soldier’s goal is to serve with dignity and pride, beyond the call of duty.”

Shortly after the parade SA Soldier interviewed some of the recruits. They admitted that they were sceptical about Basic Military Training at first upon their arrival at the Air Force Gymnasium. They mentioned that they had mixed feelings, including fear of the unknown as they did not know what to expect, but that has changed, including the traditional pessimism with which soldiering has been regarded.

Also speaking to SA Soldier was Mr Mothwa who said that young people needed to be nurtured and be inculcated with social and moral conscience. He expressed gratitude to the SA Air Force for empowering their sons and daughters who had just completed their training as model citizens. Mr Mothwa added: “Our children are going to form part of the heart of the SANDF. As parents we wish them well and encourage them to stride forth boldly on their new journey through life as defenders of our nation.”

Amn Chrystabell Dixon, who scooped two awards, said that young people needed to be nurtured and be inculcated with social and moral conscience. He expressed gratitude to the SA Air Force for empowering their sons and daughters who had just completed their training as model citizens. Mr Mothwa added: “Our children are going to form part of the heart of the SANDF. As parents we wish them well and encourage them to stride forth boldly on their new journey through life as defenders of our nation.”

Amn Chrystabell Dixon, who scooped the best overall learner and fittest female awards, said that she was overjoyed and is going to further her flying training as a pupil pilot in the SA Air Force. She acknowledges the SA Air Force’s contributions to helping them to realise their military aviation ambitions.
The Chief of Staff of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Lt Gen Vusi Masondo, accompanied by the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, and other senior officers of the SANDF unveiled Battle Colours bestowed upon 7 and 8 Medical Battalion Groups during a parade recently held at the Military Health Training Formation in Thaba Tshwane.

Battle Colours are bestowed by the President of the Republic on military units and formations that have gallantly fought in wars, battles and skirmishes in the execution of the mandate given by the Commander-in-Chief to the SANDF. Battle Colours were bestowed on 7 Medical Battalion Group for their valiant performance during Operation VIMBEZELA in the Central African Republic. The battalion supported the frontline forces during the Battle of BANGUI in March 2013.

For their actions during this battle three members of the Battalion, Sgt Colman Serole, Cpl Mandla Ngobese and Cpl Alphina Nkoana were awarded the Nkwe ya Boronse decoration for valour on 21 February 2014. These soldiers share in the proud tradition of valour that this battalion is known for.

The Chief of Staff said that the colours were a symbol of pride and well worth celebrating. Lt Gen Masondo said: “It is a very proud moment for the unit. This is a tradition that was inherited from the British
Battle Colours are actually utilised initially to distinguish between friendly forces and enemy forces. It is a tradition that goes back many years in the military, and when units receive their Battle Colours it is a very proud moment.” He added that such a ceremony did not happen often and it was therefore a special occasion. The last time Battle Colours were bestowed on the unit was more than 20 years ago.

7 Medical Battalion Group is the specialist Airborne Medical Unit of the SA Military Health Service. The Battalion’s main task is to render medical support to the SA Special and Airborne Forces. Other specialities of the battalion include Combat Search and Rescue, Defensive Chemical Biological Warfare capability detection, verification and decontamination, diving and aviation medicine and numerous other skills in support of the Special Forces. Other tasks include, but are not limited to, medical support to the SA Police Service Special Task Force and other elite units, the SA Air Force’s search and rescue units and the Presidential Protection Unit.

The unit made history in March 2017 when it inducted its youngest Officer Commanding, 39-year-old Col Mcebisi Mdutywa, as its leader. Col Mdutywa is a qualified medical doctor, Special Forces Operator and paratrooper who joined the SANDF in 2005. Speaking to SA Soldier, Col Mdutywa said that for him personally it was important to be part of something where you know you are making a difference. Col Mdutywa said: “I never thought I would be part of this, but I have worked hard and I will enable my unit to be the best that they can be at all times.”

His story is inspirational as much as it is daring. Col Mdutywa said: “I was a herd boy in the Eastern Cape and I was inspired to become a doctor after I saw photos of my friend’s sister, who was a doctor. Owing to financial constraints, I was unable to start my tertiary studies immediately after matriculating. I had applied to Medunsa and they accepted me, but I did not have any funds. So I waited a year and managed to get a job as a census counter in 1996 when the country underwent its very first census.” Col Mdutywa added that the money he made was used to pay for his registration the following year, but there were no funds to pay his other fees. The colonel was left stranded. He was lucky enough to be granted a bursary from the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape. They funded the entirety of his studies while he was at Medunsa. Col Mdutywa has been with the battalion since 2005 and is seen as an expert in the operations environment.

He said that before 1994 the battalion had Battle Colours, but those were buried with the old national flag. Since then they have never had new colours. He said he was proud of the unit and to lead the parade. Col Mdutywa said: “It is always a great honour to be the one that unveils and troops the colours. They are a symbol of pride, especially when everyone can see their colours flying. It boosts the morale of the troops and, now whenever we have a parade, we will always have our colours flying ahead of us.”
Project PANTILE handing and taking over

What is Project PANTILE (also known as the MOEMS project)? In 2001 the SA Army Engineer Formation (SA Army Engr Fmn) realised that its current fleet of construction vehicles had become obsolete as it had become almost impossible to maintain them. Some equipment could not be replaced and spare parts could not be obtained.

A Required Operational Capability (ROC) was written for a sustainable, operationally available Militarised Operational Earth-moving Capability (MOEMS) for the replacement of the existing earth-moving equipment to ensure the effective execution of operational construction missions in support of the survivability of Own Forces, whether deployed within or outside the borders of the Republic of South Arica (RSA).

The following were typical tasks identified for the earth-moving capability: construction of high quality gravel roads on any terrain, construction and maintenance of gravel runways, opening and maintenance of advance routes, preparation of defensive positions during battlefield preparations, preparation of construction sites, preparation of bridge abutments for river crossing operations, land rehabilitation, earthworks support during disaster relief operations and support to Operations Other Than War. The full requirement was for five modules of MOEMS vehicles, but due to financial constraints the minimum requirement of three modules was approved during the acquisition process.

History of Project PANTILE

The project followed the Department of Defence Acquisition process, which included presenting the different milestones to the different approval forums from 2001 to 2015 when the first order was placed with the industry. The ROC was approved in October 2001, the Staff Target was approved in December 2003, and the Staff Requirement was approved in January 2006. The Logistical Strategy part 1 was approved in May 2008, the Project Study Report was approved in July 2008, in August 2008...
the project was deferred by the Army Command Council, but in November 2009 this deferment was lifted. In January 2014 the Partial Acquisition Plan (PAP) for Cat (Category) 1 & 2 was approved, in Oct 2015 the PAP for Cat 3, 4 & 6 was approved, with the PAP for Cat 7 approved in May 2017.

The requirement was divided into seven different categories, namely Cat 1 Heavy Earth-moving Equipment, Cat 2 Light Earth-moving Equipment, Cat 3 Articulated Trucks, Cat 4 Compacting Equipment, Cat 5 Truck Tractor with semi-trailer for transport, Cat 6, lifting equipment and Cat 7 All Terrain Crane. The different orders were placed by Armscor with the industry, for Cat 1 & 2 it was Barloworld SA, Cat 3 & 4 with Bell SA and Cat 6 with Dezzo SA with Manitou as sub-contractor. As part of the deliverables by industry, state of the art simulators were also required to enhance the training capability of the SA Army Engrs and to keep the Construction Machine Operators (CMOs) combat ready.

In 2016 Directorate Army Acquisition (DAA) approved, after it was recommended by Armscor, that the SA Army Engr Fmn could start utilising the delivered equipment as part of the Operational Test and Evaluation Phase of the Acquisition Phase for the new equipment. The new equipment was used at De Brug training area (fire-breaks), School of Engrs training area (new driving and maintenance range), and Combat Training Centre (CTC) wrt fire-breaks and rehabilitation of gravel roads, at the SA Military Health Service Training Facility with the Cat 6 equipment and various other smaller projects of the SA Army Engr Fmn. As with all new equipment there are always challenges and in the above scenarios it happened as such, but with the close cooperation of Armscor, DPSM and the various industry partners all challenges were resolved with the necessary speed and efficiency. In this regard the user, SA Army Engr Fmn, is grateful to the industry.

On 1 September 2017, after the necessary planning and preparation, the day arrived for DAA to hand over the delivered equipment of Cat 1,2,3,4 & 6 to the SA Army Engr Fmn. The event was planned with the necessary efficiency and dedication as expected of the SA Army Engrs, with a full dress rehearsal on 31 August 2017.

The event unfolded in three stages, the first being the arrival of all guests at the Hive of 35 Engineer Support Regiment. During this stage networking took place between the military and the industry.

Stage two entailed the inspection of the new equipment. The purpose of the equipment and its specifications were explained by trained CMOs, including two female CMOs who also described their experience of the machines during their deployment. The following items of machinery were on display: CAT 323D Excavator, CAT D8R Track Dozer, CAT 824K Wheel Dozer, CAT 140M All Wheel Drive Grader, CAT 950H Front End Loader, CAT 428 Tractor Loader Back-hoe, Mini Multi-Purpose Machine with its nine attachments and trailer, Articulator Dump Truck (25T), Articulator Water Truck (23 000L), Articulator Diesel Truck (23 000L), Industrial Tractor with rollers, Sheep Foot and Smooth Rollers and the All-terrain Fork lift (18T).
Also during this stage, state of the art simulators were displayed and members had the opportunity to operate the simulators to get the feel of what it was all about. These simulators can be used by all the CMOs to ensure their combat readiness and it will also be used during the training of new CMOs to prepare them for the real machines, as they will spend almost 40 hours on the simulators working and learning the different technologies and the functioning of the machines.

Stage three entailed the formal handing over of the equipment to the SA Army Engr Fmn. It culminated in the signing of the release certificates by DAA, DPSM and the SA Army Engr Fmn. During this stage each member of the industry had the opportunity to explain his or her role in the project, their industry role in the RSA and how they learned the military way of doing business when new equipment is acquired. Speeches where delivered by Mr Dumisa (Bell Equipment), Mr Roos (Dezzo Equipment), Mr Olckers (5DT), Mr Mahange (Barloworld Equipment). Mr Magagula, Divisional Manager of Armscor, emphasised the role of Armscor in the acquisition process and he expressed Armscor's gratitude to the industry during this project.

Brig Gen Sydwell Mketo, Director Army Acquisition, gave an overview of the history of the project and he also thanked the industry for their role. The General Officer Commanding SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen Willys Nkosi, thanked everyone present for their respective roles in the acquisition process and he emphasised the fact that the ball was now in the hands of the SA Army Engr Fmn to execute their functions with the new equipment and ensure that the SA Army Engr Fmn looked after the equipment and maintained it to the highest standards.
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New era for Military Police School

As seasons change to make way for others, the Military Police School (MP School) saw the dawn of a new era when the new Officer Commanding (OC) took over the reins. I cannot say I have a memory of a change of command parade taking place at the MP School; it was history in the making as this was the first change of command parade at the MP School in many years.

The outgoing OC MP School, Col Belton Jaji, handed over the baton to the incoming OC, Col John Olivier. Col Jaji was the first black OC of the MP School and under his command the MP School trained foreign students from Mozambique, Namibia and two groups from Nigeria. Under his command the MP School assisted in training recruits of the Tshwane Metro Police Department. Another achievement of Col Jaji was to attain Fire Arms Control Act (FACA) accreditation in Handgun Training at the MP School, and Basic Military Police Official Training will be a SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) accredited qualification in future. He also revived the museum and the shooting simulator at the MP School and established a gymnasium at the School.

Addressing the members, Col Jaji said: “My appointment to the School came while the MP School was facing difficulties; my deployment to the School was not for the purpose of rotating personnel but to assume the post of Officer Commanding of the only MP School in Africa. The School also accommodates foreign learners from the continent.” He said that he was proud of the team he worked with during his tenure at the MP School - adding that they are a winning team.

He said: “This team supported my vision as an OC.”

The new OC of the School, Col Olivier, thanked the Provost Marshal General, R Adm (JG) Alpheus Maphoto, for entrusting him with the command of the School. He acknowledged and thanked Col Jaji for handing over to him such an “elite” unit. He added that it was not just another job, but a noble calling and that to command a unit was not the easiest of tasks.

Col Olivier said: “A commander forgets about himself and empowers those under his command. To those entrusted to my command, I want to assure you that you are in capable hands. You may be from different religious beliefs, ethnic and traditional backgrounds, social upbringing, former Force backgrounds and political affiliations, but to me you are all soldiers of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP) of the Department of Defence (DOD) and I will do my best for you all.

He continued: “My command will be strict but fair and just, without prejudice and favouritism. Whether you clean the floor, cut the grass or occupy a desk in an office, you are equally important to me.”

The MP School is the cornerstone of the MP Division and the nucleus of discipline, not only in the MP Division, but also in the SANDF.
Members who completed the Junior Command and Staff Duties Course were recently awarded certificates during a certificate ceremony held at Thaba Tshwane. The top three students on the course were Maj Lucily Leibrandt with 94.16%, Maj Lebohang Dithepe with 94.10% and Maj Stephanus Otte with 93.56%.

An ecstatic Maj Leibrandt said she did not receive the prize for idling; she worked very hard during the year. She said the course was tough to the point that she still cannot believe that she achieved first position. Receiving first prize was a surprise, but she said she always believed that she gave her best. Maj Leibrandt added that the course was very challenging; the only way to make it was to stay focused.

Adding to her words, Maj Dithepe mentioned that to pass this course, sacrifices and dedication were required. She believes that the intensity of this course brought attributes of hard work and determination within her. Moreover she said the course enforced time management skills to many who showed devotion to their work. She said the entire course was all about respecting time, listening in class, practicing and submission of assessments. Maj Dithepe explained: “I am convinced that 90% of hard work and 10% of loving your work are the pre-requirements towards successfully passing this course.”

The Junior Command and Staff Duties Course is about training Unit Commanders and Staff Officers at the tactical level of war, as training is an essential core activity of the SA Army. The course therefore commences after the selection in January until November each year.

When addressing the students and guests, SA Army Chief Director Corporate Services, Maj Gen Stephen Marumo, said that the development of officers does not come to an end at the completion of the course. He said the international demands placed on the South African government, in particular the military, is increasing daily. According to him it is imperative that tactical level commanders and staff officers develop themselves to meet the standard regionally, nationally and internationally.

Maj Gen Marumo explained: “A spirit of willingness to serve in the life long development of the SA Army will have to be fostered by members who have just successfully completed this course. Completion of this course is not a means to an end but is part of a developmental journey for all learners and directing staff concerned.”

He said this course exposed learners to general military studies, conventional operations, the military problem solving model for conventional operations and military operations, including peace support operations. The learners also completed a practical phase of mobile warfare at the SA Army Combat Training Centre.

Maj Gen Marumo said although the learners are academically qualified, they will now have to operationalise their insight and skills. He encouraged them that they can only succeed if they continuously challenge themselves to learn more about their profession.
Military exhibitions enticing youth to the Mitchell’s Plain Festival

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The annual Mitchell’s Plain Festival draws the attention of thousands of residents and through it a potential soldier was created who once was a part-time worker at the Festival – Romano Cleenwerck. Today Recruit Cleenwerck is a Military Skills Development System (MSDS) member at 15 SA Infantry Battalion!

Since 2014 he was enticed by the military exhibitions when attending the annual Mitchell’s Plain Festival as he has always wanted to join the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) because he believes in the greater good. There he met the SANDF Coordinator for the Mitchell’s Plain Festival, Col Monica Mogotsi, who advised him to apply to join the MSDS.

Recruit Cleenwerck passionately told SA Soldier: “I wanted to be part of defending the country because I love what the Defence Force is all about. I always wanted to join and had applied as soon as I completed matric. I spoke to a few people during the Festival about career opportunities and they advised me to apply.”

In January 2017 he told Col Mogotsi that he was leaving for Basic Military Training. He said the experience during Basic Military Training has been a learning curve for him although it was difficult at times. He added that the instructors break you down during training and then build you up again to become a perfect soldier.

Recruit Cleenwerck said: “I would say to someone who wants to join the military they should do it for the right reasons. The SANDF is not merely a work, but a career you set your life on. I believe that if you love what you do, you will give it your best.”

The tanks and artillery weaponry seem to be what has captured his interest during his first encounter with the SANDF when he started to learn about the military. He has been eager to join the military and now hopes to get an opportunity to join the Special Forces.

When SA Soldier spoke to Col Mogotsi she said the special thing about Recruit Cleenwerck is that he was persistent and

Recruit Romano Cleenwerck is a Military Skills Development System member who was enticed to join the SANDF through its exhibitions at the Mitchell’s Plain Festival in 2014 when he was still a learner. (Photo by L Cpl Paul Mpangala)
learned about the SANDF before he joined and was knowledgeable about the military through attending the Mitchell’s Plain Festival every year. Col Mogotsi said she could recall a young man working at the Festival who came to their stall aspiring to become a SANDF member and she advised him to apply as he was young.

Col Mogotsi said: “As the SANDF, I still think there is more we can do in terms of marketing the Festival. We can be able to recruit more of the likes such as Romano Cleenwerck. We should develop supporting programmes that will allow us to visit schools and other public places to advertise the SANDF through the Festival.”

She added that the SANDF support the Festival as it aims to bring the community together where they could find ways to solve problems they have in the community. The area is known as a haven for crimes, such as drug abuse and gangsters. Col Mogotsi added: “We have different departments within the SANDF that can assist the youth with information and counselling. We try to show them that there are other options in terms of careers they could follow besides being gang members. Most of the exhibitions at the Festival are from Reserve Force Units in the vicinity who are also residents of Mitchell’s Plain. The Festival is very close to their heart as they want to make a change in their community.”

The annual Mitchell’s Plain Festival takes place over the last weekend of November. It is a signature event on the Cape Flats and always happens at the Westridge Gardens in Mitchell’s Plain. The Festival brings together people from diverse backgrounds in an effort to promote social cohesion.

It is worth mentioning that the event creates hundreds of part-time job opportunities for local residents. It is also one of the most important gatherings in the Western Cape for young people to meet and focus on positive things on offer by various sectors of society.
Male and female athletes from nine regions recently participated in the annual SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Volleyball Association Championships at Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria. Athletes from Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Western Province and South Eastern Cape competed under the theme: “Volleyball for All”.

It was all systems go as the volleyball games kicked off in high competitive spirit. Each region had three team categories, namely senior men, women and masters.

The competition reflected the growth of volleyball as a sport in the SANDF. There were tough clashes in the knockout stages, semi-finals and finals. After the finals were played the closing ceremony took place, followed by a gala evening at the Thaba Tshwane City Hall where awards and medals were presented and the champions crowned.

Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships. Gauteng were the winners in all three categories: the Senior men’s Division, Women’s and Masters Division.

In keeping with the tradition of caring and giving back to the community, the SANDF Volleyball Association, under the leadership and guidance of Lt Col Malesela Kwakwa, came up with a community outreach initiative and made a financial contribution of R4 500 to the Down’s Syndrome Association of Pretoria/Tshwane. Every player and official contributed R20 from their own pocket for this good cause.

In an interview with SA Soldier Lt Col Marlene Myburgh, Deputy President of the SANDF Volleyball, said every province identified an orphanage, school for needy children, those abused and abandoned, the homeless, the elderly were given something that they could...
cherish. Lt Col Myburgh said: “It’s very touching. As soldiers we have roots in our communities, so this is a particularly gratifying initiative to take care of those who are at the dawn of life, those in the twilight of life and those in the shadows of life: the sick and the needy.”

L Cpl Tisetso Kekana said she wished the initiative could expand and continue forever, adding: “As SANDF volleyball athletes we are thrilled to bring joy to those in need and who live in challenging situations. Our donations will go a long way to ensuring the children’s growth and sustainability. We are happy to be involved and sometimes in life the things we cannot change end up changing us”.

Ms Elaine Passmoor, Education Officer at the Down’s Syndrome Association Pretoria/Tshwane, said that the Association was established in 1989 and is affiliated to Down’s Syndrome South Africa. She said: “We offer parental support and an early intervention outreach and strive for the inclusion of persons with Down’s Syndrome in all aspects of life. It is very important to realise that children with Down’s Syndrome are born with many qualities and abilities. Let us help them realise their hidden potential: they might be different but are no less worthy.”

The President of the SANDF Volleyball Association explained to SA Soldier that the community outreach initiative seeks to bring joy to the less fortunate. He added that the success of the initiative is largely based on the generous support of the SANDF volleyball athletes who step up to help by providing donations. Lt Col Kwakwa said: “Though it is a small gesture, it is a way that we can show we care about the underprivileged.” He added that there was no greater weakness in society than the inability to see a person as worthy of respect. Never ignore somebody who is different from you; you do not realise how much they can inspire you.
participating in sport makes us healthy, physically and mentally fit, and is at the same time enjoyable. Sport is part and parcel of the wellness of a soldier and encourages cohesion. “It helps people work as a team and requires discipline” said the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, at his Prestige Week in 2016.

Soldiering demands a lot of discipline and teamwork, which is similar for sport. For a team to be outstanding it needs communication, love for the sport and understanding of the weak and strong points of your teammates. Basketball is a sport that demands a high level of fitness and good decision-making skills. Focusing one’s attention on the appropriate task and decision-making enhances one’s performance in basketball.

Potchefstroom was the place where all the provinces met to see who would take the SANDF Basketball Championship title home. Every game was hectic, but fun. Every member was giving their all for the sake of winning. It was not an easy task to keep the fitness levels up but the morale was always high.

All provinces did their best, but two provinces progressed to the finals to play for the championship title, viz Gauteng and Northwest. Gauteng province has held the championship title since 2006, and in 2017 they played hard to keep the Gold on their side.

The Gauteng province team of the Pretoria Military Basketball Club triumphed again in the 2017 Basketball Championship. This showed the hard work of the team as they say: “hard work pays”. It also motivates the other provinces to work hard so they can reach their goal of being the champions.
Golfers play for charity

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

Golf is a game with wide fairways. Legendary South African golfer, Gary Player, once said: “In the game of golf, the harder you work, the luckier you get.”

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, recently hosted his Charity Golf Day at the Zwartkop Country Club in Centurion and the Services Golf Club in Thaba Tshwane simultaneously. The event commenced with a shotgun start whereafter the teams played 18 holes.

This prestigious event is a charity fund raising project where the proceeds are ploughed back into the defence community. These funds help towards alleviating the plight of the children of our deceased soldiers through the SANDF Education Trust. Gen Shoke launched the SANDF Education Trust on 11 October 2013, following the tragic loss of our soldiers in the Central African Republic (CAR) and other soldiers who lost their lives in a fatal helicopter crash in the Kruger National Park.

During an interview, Gen Shoke explained the objectives and purpose of hosting his annual Charity Golf Day. He said that the golf day was meant to fund the SANDF Education Trust to provide financial aid in the form of bursaries and scholarships to children of SANDF members who perished while executing their duties.

SA Soldier spoke to one of the notable sponsors who played a significant role in supporting the Chief of the SANDF Charity Golf Day, Mr Lungisa Mbuli, Executive Head Group Business Development of Sanlam, who said that he was touched to see a dream realised and Sanlam Group was happy to be part of it. He added that in the more than 25 years the SANDF had been an invaluable client of Sanlam in supporting the Chief of the SANDF Charity Golf Day to show appreciation to the men and women in uniform whose main obligation is the country’s national security and defence. Mr Mbuli said: “The sacrifice that these men and women make is immense in safeguarding our country and they are playing a prominent role towards peace on the continent.”

The day ended with a gala dinner during which the winners of the various categories were announced. A symbolic testimony of UBUNTU was shown during the gala dinner as sponsors and esteemed guests made pledges worth R1 264 050.

When addressing the guests, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, said that the SA National Defence Force Education Trust ensured that the dependants of the fallen soldiers are not left in despair.
The year 2017 has moved with great pace, we had to keep up with it and adjust accordingly. I realise that as a man of the cloth, it is only by the grace of God that we have accomplished our objectives as the Defence of the country. This year was full of challenges from the very beginning.

We started the year with the most amazing Armed Forces Day celebrations in Durban. The unfortunate accidents we endured and the lives we lost signalled a realisation that life is not our own but God’s. We will never know what tomorrow holds, it will come with many uncertainties, however, our one constant must be our faith in God.

As we enter a time of reflections on our overall work achievements, accomplishments, sorrow and joys, I remind everyone working in the Department of Defence, uniformed members and Public Service Act Personnel of a promise from God found in:

Deuteronomy 31:6 (KJV) – “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”. A promise to us to not fear, but rather know that our God is with us.

Throughout this year, it was seen that God was leading us with the fire at night and the cloud during the day just as he had done with the Israelites.

A New Year always brings new resolutions. Considerations to change your old ways so that it is better than the year gone by. May this mind set be genuine and be activated in achieving more than what we have this year.

Indeed, Christmas is a time for giving, a time for family gatherings, a time for fellowship around the dining table and a time to acknowledge that Christ came as our “Emmanuel” meaning that God is with us.

My fellow soldiers, those deployed externally and internally, and those who are holding the fort here in South Africa, I salute you and your service to our country. May you be bold and strong and know that the Lord your God is with you and your families.

I quote part of a poem written by an unknown soldier in deployment: “I can live through the cold and the being alone, Away from my family, my house and my home, I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet, I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat, I can carry the weight of killing another or lay down my life with my sisters and brothers who stand at the front against any and all, to insure for all time that this flag will not fall”.

Amidst this year we call “a Fly Past”. We have come through with a sense of a deep survival mentality. We can do all things through our God who strengthens us.

My prayer for you, this festive season is that our God will bring blessings in abundance to you and your loved ones.

Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile
Chaplain General.
The Chief of the SA Army annual Thanksgiving Service

Towards the end of the year most organisations hold events to thank their employees for their support and to wish them a pleasant festive season and to show appreciation for their hard work.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, hosts a Thanksgiving Service for the SA Army members every December. This affords the Chief of the SA Army an opportunity to express his appreciation to the members of the SA Army before they leave for the festive season.

This year’s service was held in conjunction with the celebration of World AIDS Day. It took place at SA Army Headquarters Hall on 1 December 2017. World AIDS Day is commemorated on 1 December every year since 1988. It is dedicated to raising awareness of HIV and AIDS and to mourn those who have died from the disease.

In honour of World AIDS Day, a moment of silence was observed during the service as a sign to remember Department of Defence members who passed away. The silence ended when all present said: “We will remember them, we will remember them” as their names appeared on the screen. A candle lighting ceremony was performed as a sign to remember the deceased and to celebrate those living with the disease.

Addressing the SA Army members, the Chief of the SA Army said: “We commemorate World AIDS Day as we realise what this disease can do to our lives”. He added: “May we live life to the fullest and die when God wants us to die.” He encouraged members to take care during the festive season. He said that World AIDS Day was an eye-opener to the reality of AIDS.

Lt Gen Yam said: “Take care of yourselves. I do not want to forget God because he carried us through the whole year, so we thank the Almighty. Thank you again SA Army for helping me steer the boat, your hard work has not gone unnoticed. Merry Christmas.”

Col (Rev) Kingsley Masemola provided some spiritual food for thought by quoting from John 15:5: “For apart from Me (God) you can do nothing”. He encouraged the members to put God first in their lives if they wanted to prosper. Most importantly, he said we must never take it for granted that we can do nothing by ourselves, but only through God.
The South African National Defence Force is a pillar in the reactive physical campaign being fought against poaching on the ground and in the skies. We also engage in proactive educational campaigns to spread awareness about the intrinsic value of this magnificent animal.

www.dod.mil.za

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