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SANDF boasts a professional boxing trainer

SA Soldier

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Cpl Rampolokeng Mkutshane, commonly known as “Boxer” from 44 Parachute Regiment with Ms Matshidiso Mokebisi (SA Champion, WBF International Champion Featherweight).
(Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole)
Military medical personnel, including nurses of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) recently deployed to the North West province at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital to reinforce medical care and to render much needed medical services to the ill and vulnerable patients during the recent labour action.

The SANDF stepped in and responded by providing the necessary health care service. Altogether 104 SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) members were deployed to the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital. The medical contingent included 19 Medical Officials according to their specialist fields, a Pharmacist, five Pharmacy Assistants, 64 Nurses, eleven Operational Emergency Care Practitioners, a Human Resource official, as well as two bus drivers and the Commander of the medical task group. In addition, 114 members from 10 SA Infantry Battalion were deployed to safeguard the area.

Military medical personnel, including nurses are absolutely central in maintaining force morale. The services they provide allow our fighting men and women in uniform to perform their dangerous calling with confidence that they and their loved ones will receive the necessary medical attention, when required, at all times.

Just recently, on 12 May, the global community celebrated International Nurses’ Day. To this day, Florence Nightingale is broadly acknowledged and revered as the pioneer of modern nursing. Florence Nightingale’s legacy is not only the science of nursing, but also the art and value of nursing as an independent and recognised profession.

Modern nursing traces its origins back to the Crimean War, fought more than 160 years ago, when Florence Nightingale’s lamp illuminated the way ahead. Military nursing in South Africa continues in the proud tradition established during the Crimean War, but it also makes a far broader contribution to the nation’s health.

Nurses in a developing country such as South Africa, may it be in military, public or private hospitals have a critical responsibility to bring about societal development. Even though they may find themselves in situations where their personal safety is at risk, they still need to uphold the values commonly associated with their profession – values such as excellence, caring, patient-centredness and ethical practice.

When SAMHS members qualify as nurses, they solemnly take the Nurses’ Pledge of Service as used in South Africa. They abide by the following nurses’ pledge at all times:

- I solemnly pledge myself to the service of humanity
- And will endeavour to practice my profession with conscience
- And with dignity.

- I will maintain by all means in my power the honour
- And the noble traditions of my profession.

- The total health of my patients will be my first considerations.

- I will hold in confidence all personal matters coming to my knowledge.

- I will not permit considerations of religion, nationality, race or social standing to intervene with my duty and my patient.

- I will maintain the utmost respect for human life.

- I make this promise solemnly, freely and upon my honour.

We salute our military medical personnel for rendering the so needed health services in volatile circumstances. (Ensure to read the in-depth article on how the SANDF assisted in restoring health care services in Mahikeng on pages 16 to 19.)
Thousands of people waving South African flags chanted as the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) and the NCG Band marched into the Dr Petrus Rantslai Molemela Stadium in Bloemfontein to start off the proceedings of National Freedom Day celebrations. The event was held under the theme “The year of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela: towards full realisation of our freedom through radical socio-economic transformation”.

This event was dedicated to the memory of the late President Nelson Mandela who would have celebrated his 100th birthday on 18 July this year. It also highlighted his role in building a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa, as well as commemorating this renowned world icon’s personality, principles and values.

The NCG as the pride of the nation made the occasion eventful and did not hold back at the celebrations. The members’ seamless performance on parade was something to behold. The NCG has witnessed some moments in the history of the country, dating back to the inauguration of the first democratically elected President, President Mandela. The NCG members thrilled the audience with their military precision, picture perfect uniforms and highly polished rifles.

The ceremony was followed by a 21-gun salute performed by members from the SA Army Artillery Formation. Thereafter a salute flight was conducted by a BK 117 and an Agusta A109 light utility helicopter from the SA Air Force dragging the National Flag and the SA National Defence Force Flag respectively. The ceremony also included an array of melodies delivered by the NCG Band. The Band members enthusiastically performed musical pieces conveying the meaning of sacrifices, allegiance and love for South Africa.

The onlookers were stunned by the supersonic speed of the aircraft from Air Force Base Makhado.

The National Ceremonial Guard left community members enchanted during National Freedom Day celebrations at the Dr Petrus Rantsai Molemela Stadium in Bloemfontein, Free State province.
PRIDE IN MILITARY HOSPITALS

We have the best military hospitals in South Africa. Military hospitals not only serve soldiers, but also their dependants and military veterans, as well as the public in emergency cases.

From my point of view, to be in the military health field looks like a difficult job, but the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) personnel makes it look easy and appealing. Yes, funds are always a challenge in all departments, but the smiles of health personnel and warm caring hands surpass the lack of any resources. Batho Pele does not need much funding, but only the best hearts to render good health services.

Weekends, holidays and everyday - all year around - we are being taken care of in our military hospitals. My children were born in military hospitals and we still consult there. The nurses and doctors are always working to the best of their abilities to provide the best health services. Keep it up - Military Hospital personnel!

Cpl David Mabusha
Tshivhula, 1 Parachute Battalion

FROM A FLIGHT CAP TO A DOCTORAL CAP

I would like to ask for your help in congratulating and rejoicing over the success of Capt (Dr) Leon Kenny who is an Environmental Officer at Air Force Base (AFB) Swartkop. Dr Kenny was conferred a PhD in Environmental Science during a ceremony recently held at the University of North West (Mahikeng Campus).

Dr Kenny started his academic career back when he was working as a petrol attendant before answering his call to serve the nation. He is a true definition of a real soldier and a leader, a role model and a mentor to us young people. He stands for what is right and he is an advocate for change. This is highlighted in a letter that he wrote where he pointed out the shortcomings of various policies with regards to education and the utilisation, retention and compensation of members with qualifications and how they can improve the capabilities of the SANDF.

Dr Kenny preaches the need for education and how education is the only tool that can be used to better our society and how it can enhance our ability to solve problems in an innovative manner as opposed to the traditional ways that are failing the test of time.

This is a man who believes that one is not a leader until he produces his successor. Dr Kenny is currently mentoring Lt Ramogopa who is also an environmental officer at AFB Swartkop. He inspires people to educate themselves in any way they can and rise above respective challenges. If you know Dr Kenny then you should be familiar with his trademark quote: “When you have a certain degree of knowledge you are conferred a degree, after obtaining that degree you extend that knowledge in other words you honour that knowledge, then you are conferred an Honours degree. After honouring that knowledge you further expand it to a point where you master the subject and once you master that particular field, a Master Degree is conferred to you. After Mastering you decide to be a philosopher and that is when a Philosophers Degree is conferred to you”. CO Prince Molekoa, Air Force Base Swartkop

Dr Leon Kenny after he obtained his PhD in Environmental Science during a ceremony held at the University of North West (Mahikeng Campus).
Soldiers brought smiles to 120 learners of the C.S. Linda Primary School in the Sake area, Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), who recently attended a career exhibition day. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members deployed in the Sake area hosted a career exhibition day in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Battalion Sake Base. Addressing the learners, the Public Information Officer, Capt Siboniso Maseko, urged the learners to take education seriously. He pleaded with them to learn what the SANDF is teaching them as it will help them to choose professional careers. Awareness with regard to child protection was presented to the learners. Representatives from the Engineer, Signal, Medics, and Light Workshop Troop (LWT) presented their roles and functions to the learners.

The Principal, Ms Nanzie Mulongo, said: "I am excited by what the RSA Battalion did for the learners and this will help them to see life in a different way and choose education.”

Capt Siboniso Maseko, email
SANDF AFFORDED MILITARY CEREMONIAL HONOURS TO DR ZOLA SKWEYIYA

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) accorded military honours to the former Minister of Social Development and High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and Ireland, Dr Zola Skweyiya, following the declaration by the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, that a Special Official Funeral be accorded to the late struggle icon and diplomat. (Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Thaole)

FAREWELL TO A GENTLE GIANT - BRIG GEN WISEMAN KOHLIWE

Friends and colleagues recently gathered at the Personnel Services School Officers’ Mess to bid farewell to the retiring Brig Gen Mveliswa Wiseman Kohliwe, the then Director Human Resources Strategy and Planning.

The Chief of Staff Joint Operations, Maj Gen Ashton Sibango, a long-standing friend, said that Brig Gen Kohliwe is passionate about his work and is always effervescent, robust and strong and always brought a sense of calm and relief to sad and uncomfortable moments and situations. Maj Gen Sibango said: “What thrills me today is that we are celebrating the life of a legend, the man who has a backbone of tempered steel. As a soldier, he was truly an iron fist in a velvet glove.”

Addressing his employees, Brig Gen Kohliwe emphatically encouraged them to do their very best in whatever job they are employed, regardless of the position. He said: “In life, even if you are a street sweeper, let the people say if you are no more, there went a great man.”

Brig Gen Kohliwe advised his employees to be genuine in their dealings with others. He told them that he likes working with straight talking people, people who will tell him in his face that this is wrong for he too is a man of such qualities.

His further advice was that everyone should try to be his or her own distinctive brand at all times. Brig Gen Kohliwe added: “When I am at work or at home I do not act inappropriately. Wherever I am, I always protect my brand. Whatever I do, I do it to the best of my ability.

“The Almighty has been instrumental in helping me, but I also played my part in repositioning myself well to be assisted by the Almighty.” Brig Gen Kohliwe thanked everyone present for coming to bid him farewell. Mr Tsholanang Zwane, Pretoria

Maj Gen Ashton Sibango, the Chief of Staff Joint Operations, addressing the members at the farewell function of Brig Gen Mveliswa Kohliwe. (Photo by Mr Tsholanang Zwane)

BELOW: Brig Gen Mveliswa Kohliwe giving a word of thanks to his friends and colleagues at his farewell function. (Photo by Mr Tsholanang Zwane)
SANDF SAYS NO TO RHINO - POACHING

www.dod.mil.za
Poaching is the illegal hunting and killing of animals for various reasons. Those who commit these heinous acts are driven by the desire for money because they sell the poached animal products to those who believe or presume that such animal products such as rhino horn, elephant ivory or fur have medicinal properties, mystical powers, are a source of food, have aphrodisiac properties or are trophies or status symbols.

In recent years poaching has risen to such high proportions that it threatens these animals with extinction. Poaching is a trans-border challenge that one country alone cannot possibly deal with. The 4th Multi-lateral Meeting of Defence and Security Chiefs on Anti-poaching was recently held in the Kruger National Park.

The SA National Defence Force demonstrates the tactics they employ in capturing “rhino poachers” (in blue clothes).

The Meeting was officially opened by the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Dr Edna Molewa, on behalf of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula. The meeting was chaired by the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and outgoing Chairperson of the Anti-poaching Forum, Gen Solly Shoke. The meeting was attended by Defence and Security Chiefs or their official representatives from Botswana, led by Maj Gen Gotsileene Morake, Deputy Commander of the Botswana Defence Force. The Namibian delegation was headed by Lt Gen John Mutwa, Chief of Namibian Defence Force, Mozambique by Col Simon Zengeni, the Mozambican Defence Attaché, Zambia by Maj Gen Jackson Miti, Deputy Army Commander of Zambia, and Zimbabwe by Gen Philip Sibanda, Chief of Zimbabwe Defence Force.

Addressing the delegates, Gen Shoke emphasised the need to deal with the scourge of poaching collectively to find a common long-term solution to the problem. He noted that as member states who are closely knit, it was important to work together to address the problem of poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

When the Minister of Environmental Affairs addressed the delegates, she highlighted that the main purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on the problem. Dr Molewa said: “This meeting is aligned with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement and the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-poaching (SADC LEAP) Strategy. The SADC region is unique and rich with abundant wildlife. This makes the SADC region prone to daily threats of poaching. Therefore, collaboration and coordination of law enforcement efforts are the key to maintaining the ecological integrity of the SADC region.”

Minister Molewa further asserted transnational organised crime was a threat to the environment, society, local economies and security. She added:
There has been a decrease in rhino poaching during the period under review compared to 2017 in the Kruger National Park and the Hluhluwe Imfolozi Park. However, there has been an increase in Phalaborwa Private Game Farms. Relevant law enforcement agencies as well as cooperation among neighbouring countries must continue to collaborate, share intelligence and intensify efforts for the purpose of the effective combating of wildlife trafficking by targeting the stubborn hotspots. South Africa also reported an unprecedented onslaught from poachers on several fauna and flora species such as abalone, birds of prey, big cats, pangolins, fish, and cycads, which are harvested for food, medical and financial purposes.

Zambia reported that coordinated efforts with Zimbabwe to prevent and counter cross-border poaching and illegal fishing were successful.

Zimbabwe reported that it currently has a healthy wildlife population. However, illegal harvesting of wild flora and fauna remained one of its greatest challenges. Poaching is reported to be perpetrated by both foreign and local poaching syndicates. In a bid to curb poaching, Zimbabwe is well placed regarding the exchange of real-time intelligence on the movement of poachers and their modus operandi.

SANParks reported that there has been a fast pace of recruitment by poaching syndicates which poses a challenge to wildlife protection in South Africa. Currently, SANParks is working with various forces that apply different doctrines and pursuing other interests. Hence there was a need to define common and comparable outcomes and enhance collaboration towards the attainment of a common goal of wildlife protection. It has been noted that the poachers are highly trained in bushcraft and are very familiar with the terrain where they are operating and this is attributed to infiltration of the internal systems of SANParks, the SA Police Service and the SANDF. Owing to the fact that protected areas are situated along international borders, SANParks relies heavily on SADC borderline integrity and there is a need for shared responsibility.

Members agreed to establish a wildlife anti-poaching coordination centre; the setting up of a forensics laboratory to assist in research on wildlife crimes, strengthen prosecution of wildlife crime; to create and maintain databases on wildlife crimes; and the exchange of information and intelligence on wildlife crimes.

Member States were urged to adopt a common position ahead of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species CITES Conference of Parties 2018 to be held in Sri-Lanka in 2019.

Namibia was nominated to be the next chair. The next meeting will be held in Namibia in 2019 at a date and venue to be confirmed.

“Facilitated and enhanced cooperation with other complementary partners could serve as the basis of general cross-border cooperation, including the sharing of technology, training, joint operations and joint operational centres, information sharing and common communication systems. It is therefore imperative that we find a legal means to ensure that the punishment meted out to the convicted poachers in the region is standardised.”

During the presentations, Botswana reported that poaching remained a challenge to the country’s biodiversity and tourism development. The country also noted that poaching had the potential to deplete wildlife resources, creating insecurity for tourists and its territorial integrity. Botswana continues to step up its efforts to combat poaching through a multi-sectorial approach that includes all law enforcement agencies. Transnational poaching syndicates in the country mainly target elephants and members of the cat family. Most of the poaching incidents occurred in the traditional hotspots of the Chobe District along the common boundaries with Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Poaching incidents involving the killing of elephants normally increase during and after the rainy season when overgrown vegetation provides cover for the poachers thus making patrols and tracking of poachers very difficult. Botswana is in the process of reviewing its National Anti-poaching Strategy in line with the resolution on domestication of the SADC LEAP Strategy.

Namibia reported progress towards the fight against poaching, which was more prevalent in protected areas. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the newly integrated Namibian Security Forces have constituted a Technical Committee in Anti-poaching to deal with the worsening situation throughout the country.

South Africa reported that due to continued joint efforts by all relevant role-players, guided by the overarching approach of the National Integrated Strategy to combat wildlife trafficking, continued success was achieved.
Military Police members steadfast to fight crime

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photos by S Sgt Elias Mahuma

The Military Police as the custodian of policing in the Department of Defence (DOD) plays an integral role in crime prevention in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). The Military Police members protect and preserve the rule of law by enforcing military laws, regulations, preventing crime and responding to emergencies. Military Police members also provide mobility support, control traffic, undertake police intelligence operations and crime prevention programmes, support battlefield operations and maintain supply route regulations and enforcement.

SA Soldier met with MWO Stella Ngwenya, the Regimental Sergeant Major of Potchefstroom Military Police Area Office, who shared her impressions of military policing and issues of criminality.

What are some of the advanced training opportunities available in the career field within the Military Police? MWO Ngwenya replied that the Military Police are trained in various occupational specialities such as correcting and confining military inmates, prisoners of war, conducting commercial crime investigations, including fraud and corruption, and military/civilian laws and jurisdiction pertaining thereof.

MWO Ngwenya mentioned that a Military Police member could also become a crime scene investigator, detective, motorcyclist, explosives expert, VIP protector, support customs, be drug, narcotic or non-narcotic experts, a horse rider, dog handler and a training and development specialist.

She added: “Some of the disciplines are similar to civilian occupations and law enforcement agencies such as the SA Police Service, Correctional Services, Metropolitan and Traffic Police.” She added that other skills are in the use of firearms, training in lethal and non-lethal capabilities, investigating and collecting evidence, securing prisoners in detention centres, crowd control, security, arrest and restraint of suspects.

When asked to share her views on crime as a female Military Police Official, she replied that it was firstly necessary to understand and acknowledge that different types of crimes have different causes and occur in different circumstances and that criminality in the DOD cannot be viewed in isolation. MWO Ngwenya added: “Various types of crime such as theft and fraud, including abuse of resources contribute to high levels of ill-discipline.”

Asked to define what crime and a criminal offence are, MWO Ngwenya said that in ordinary language a crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority, while a criminal offence is an act harmful not only to some individual but also to a community, society or the state. She added that such acts are punishable by law.

MWO Ngwenya pointed out that crime and violence against women and children posed a serious threat to democracy, freedom and the social fabric of our society. She said that the fight against irregular conduct and unlawful acts was one of the foremost priorities of the DOD, adding that the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, and the Service and Divisional Chiefs, including the Provost Marshal General, R Adm (JG) Alpheus Maphoto, had adopted a zero tolerance
MWO Stella Ngwenya is also a qualified Military Police motorbike instructor.

Military Environmentalist supports anti-rhino poaching

By Capt Adri Liebenberg, Senior Staff Officer Military Integrated Environmental Management, Defence Works Formation

The recently promoted Capt Victor Nembambula reported to the Military Integrated Environmental Management (MIEM) section of the Defence Works Formation in early May 2018 in the post of SO3 Natural Resources and Integrated Waste Management. He is the newest environmental member to join the Defence Works Formation after he was transferred from 5 Special Forces Regiment in Phalaborwa, where he experienced the reality of rhino poaching within the Kruger National Park.

Capt Nembambula has obtained a Bachelor Degree in Environmental Science from the University of Venda. On 18 May 2018, he was requested to accompany an intern photographer and designer at SA Soldier, Mr Katiso Mabuza, for a photo session with rhinos at a reserve near Pretoria. Capt Nembambula mentioned that it was the first time ever that he got so close to a rhino.

It was a special experience to observe these endangered animals close up, although all of the rhinos have been dehorned and remaining piece of horn injected with poison and dye. These measures are being applied to most rhinos in the wild in an attempt to safeguard these animals against poaching.

The close proximity to the majestic animals has brought the realisation that rhinos are in fact more dangerous than one might think and not as slow as they seem. It was not possible to stand unprotected close to the animals as the male rhino seemed to get unsettled and attempted to chase at sudden movements.

The passion of this young soldier for the environment is apparent and the positive contribution and impact that Capt Nembambula will have on environmental management in future will undoubtably be to the benefit of the military.
Through Resolution 2098 the United Nations (UN) Security Council established the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) within the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in March 2013. The FIB was to be a more aggressive form of peacekeeping force in response to seemingly obdurate conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The UN authorised FIB to use force not normally associated with peacekeeping in carrying out targeted operations to “neutralise and disarm” the notorious 23 March Movement (M23), as well as other Congolese negative forces and foreign armed groups.

According to recent UN reports, MONUSCO has been found to be one of the costliest peace missions. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) with America being the major UN financial contributor at the helm sought to undertake a belt-tightening exercise at MONUSCO. The budget cut essentially meant that the FIB Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), namely South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi ought to scale down their mission operation capacity and capability in accordance with the new UN budget constraints. This belt-tightening exercise implicitly meant TCCs reduction of troops and combat equipment. This included a possible withdrawal of the Rooivalk attack helicopters from the peacekeeping mission area in the DRC.

Given the above state of affairs, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) initially had an engagement with the UN in July 2017 and a subsequent engagement in February 2018. The meeting attempted to persuade the UN to reconsider its intended reduction of the FIB. The meeting agreed to form a SADC/UN Joint Assessment Team from 21 April to 5 May 2018. The team comprising of Maj Gen Ntakaleleni Sigudu, Brig Gen Mninimzi Sizani, Brig Gen Etienne de Bond, Col Thamsanqa Gosani, Col Bonginkosi Mabaso, Lt Col Banele Mbaneleli and Lt Col Aubrey Tlhapane Motlogeloa embarked on a visit to the DRC to meet the UN. The visit included the other two FIB Troop Contributing Countries (Malawi and Tanzania), the SADC Secretariat and representatives of the Double Troika Plus of the SADC (Angola and Zambia). The Assessment Team included the UNDPKO representatives from New York and the MONUSCO Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General.

The SADC and TCCs fully comprehended the rationale behind the UN decision in reduction of the FIB capacity and capability, both entities however (SADC and TCCs) are of the opinion that if this decision is to be strictly adhered to as is, it will be a futile exercise for both the FIB and the DRC attempts to combat relentless resurgence of negative forces. It was with this in mind that SADC and the TCCs agreed that though reduction was a necessary financial move, it was rather premature to wholly withdraw the capacity and capability as UN requisition. However, all relevant parties agreed that for the DRC’s peace to prevail a compromise must be reached without putting the safety of the Congolese people in jeopardy. The withdrawal of the Rooivalk, artillery and reduction of troops were particularly thorny issues that were debated robustly and at length.

The Rooivalk attack helicopter was instrumental in 2013 in breaking the stubborn M23, negative force torments in the DRC. SADC and the three FIB TCCs acknowledged that the repercussions of withdrawing these attack helicopters would be calamitous. Other relevant mission operational concessions were mutually reached without compromising the effectiveness of the FIB.

SADC and FIB TCCs acknowledged the importance of the Rooivalk helicopter as a vital instrument to support the troops during engagements with negative forces. The UN and SADC reached a broad consensus on what was needed to be reduced in order to retain the service of the Rooivalk. In this respect the UN is still to engage individual countries to renegotiate the state of unit requirements and an applicable memorandum of understanding.
On arrival to the DRC in Kinshasa the TCCs paid a courtesy call to the Republic of South Africa (RSA) Ambassador and Tanzania Embassy staff where briefings were received on the political situation and planned elections. The SANDF delegation visited the deployment areas in Aviation and Sake military bases. The Joint Planning and Assessment Team had an opportunity to visit Semuliki, Beni, where the suspected Allied Democratic Force (commonly called ADF), a negative force operating in the DRC and Uganda killed approximately fifteen Tanzanian soldiers in December 2017. The visit offered the visiting teams a chance to see the general area of responsibility and the impenetrable Semuliki jungle area in which the deployed FIB soldiers operate. Presumably some recommendations to the UN were made based on this first-hand experience from the assessment visit. While concretising the FIB’s combat capability and enhancement of the TCCs coordinating relations in terms of the mandate was the main objective of Lt Gen Hlatshwayo’s visit to the DRC, he and the TCCs paid a courtesy call to the South African Ambassador in Kinshasa, Mr Abel Shilubane at the RSA Embassy. The Ambassador briefed South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania on the current DRC e-political situation and the impending election that could affect FIB operations.

The three TCCs had an opportunity to visit their respective countries’ battalions at Sake military base where they addressed their soldiers separately dealing with issues unique to their specific country. At the RSA Brigade Administration Area in Sake and Aviation Unit, the Chief of Joint Operations addressed the troops on issues of equipment, maintenance and repair, discipline and procuring of some consumable goods locally while deployed away from home.

**Addressing the troops, Lt Gen Hlatshwayo indicated that ill-discipline will not be tolerated from soldiers because bad behaviour by soldiers while in a foreign country reflects negatively on South Africa as a country.**

The General indicated that he understood the challenges that came with deploying for a full year away from their loved ones. In consideration of these challenges and to attempt reducing such challenges, the Chief of Joint Operations said the SANDF leadership in consultation with the political leadership are pondering the possibility of reducing the deployment period from twelve to six months.

Brig Gen Sizani, the UN Military Advisor in New York, talking to deployed soldiers went an extra length in explaining diplomatic values of deployed troops, expectant behaviour and the importance of them to uphold the values of the RSA and the SANDF enshrined in the Code of Conduct for uniformed members. He spoke about the importance of maintaining and upholding the UN values and that sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is the antithesis of those values and undermines the standing of the RSA in the community of nations.

Acts of SEA are frowned upon by the UN and the RSA because the perpetrators perpetuate such actions from the point of advantage on the vulnerable community they must protect. Brig Gen Sizani said: “Though we understand the dynamics of deployment and that you as social beings might amicably have relationships with locals. Such relationships and/or interactions must be strictly in accordance to the UN policy and precepts. You are solemnly urged as RSA troops not to violate the people you seek to protect. Such actions are a complete breach of human rights and indeed contrary to African cultural, religion and ethos of Ubuntu.

“However, our understanding of deployment dynamics does not mean we condone such behaviour. In fact, it should be mentioned abundantly explicit and unambiguously that we as the leadership condemn such behaviour from any men and women in SANDF uniform whether on deployment or not. I therefore emphasise and caution you to desist from acts of SEA because the repercussions of such acts will be dire and regrettable. Disciplinary measures against the SEA perpetrators or those associated with such atrocious acts may include, but not limited, to immediate repatriation without further debate.” Brig Gen Sizani left nothing to the imagination regarding what SEA entailed and the effects and consequences thereof.

The SA National Defence Force delegation led by Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo, the Chief of Joint Operations, and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) delegation deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) delegation.
A South African takes charge of the Force Intervention Brigade

By Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole
Photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

Following his appointment by the United Nations (UN) as the Commander of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), Brig Gen Njabulo Dube has hit the ground running on his arrival in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He presses on with operations targeting armed groups in the eastern DRC and reducing the threat posed by armed groups to State authority and civilian security in the DRC, as the country heads for election later this year. Brig Gen Dube said on his first week on the ground he was confronted by angry mobs of people who were frustrated by the perceived despondency of the mission, but managed to calm the situation.

This tri-national force falls under the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and comprises of forces from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania and staff officers from Senegal. The Brigade have subsequently been involved and continue to be involved in over a dozen combat engagements against various armed groups in the DRC, such as the Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Mai Mai and other various armed groups.

Brig Gen Dube is a patriotic South African and an Africanist who believe in the power of Africans to find home grown and practical solutions to the vast challenges facing the continent. Primarily his responsibilities as the commander are to ensure the effective, dynamic and integrated protection of civilians and to neutralise armed groups by employing the battle groups formed by Malawi, Tanzania and South Africa.

He said in doing that the commander’s core function will come into play.

He has vast experience in peace support and peacekeeping operations on the continent. He excelled both as a staff officer and commander throughout the various appointments that were bestowed on him. He learnt his ropes as a UN peace mission officer during his stint as a senior staff officer (SSO) in the Directorate Peace Support Operations at Joint Operations Division. He was also a critical member during the reorganisation of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) where he served as the SSO in Strategic Planning in the mission to assist the FARDC in drafting the Military Strategy 2010-2012.

In 1998 he completed among others the UN Military Observer Course at the Regional Peacekeeping Centre in Zimbabwe. He was exposed to his first deployment as a young officer during Operation BOLEAS as a Platoon Commander in Lesotho. He has also deployed as a company commander in internal operations, as a Battalion Second in Command in 2003 in the DRC and Battalion Logistics Officer in 2004. The highlight of Brig Gen Dube was his appointment as the FIB Second in Command during 2013/14. During that time the FIB was credited with disarming several armed groups in the DRC, chief among which was March 23 Movement (M23) rebellions.

While acknowledging that his job is challenging, Brig Gen Dube told SA Soldier that he felt privileged and honoured.
Brig Gen Patrick Dube, the Commander of the Force Intervention Brigade, with SA National Defence Force soldiers deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mentioning some of the challenges faced by the FIB, Brig Gen Dube said the terrain in the area of operation of the FIB is very demanding and it demands physically prepared soldiers, the worst is the difficulty in identifying the Armed Groups since they blend in the community, use the same uniform of the Government forces and have used all means to instil fear to those who are seen to be collaborating with peacekeepers. He said those armed groups especially the ADF uses asymmetric warfare and been in this forest more than twenty years.

Looking at the future plans of the mission, one of his key priorities in fulfilling the mandate of the mission will be to be judicious in the effective and efficient applications of the resources at his disposal. He said he will apply his experience gained over the years in his military career, to always keep men and women under his command motivated, work closely with the FARDC in order to bring an end to the violence in the FIB’s area of responsibility.

Brig Gen Dube said: “The task at hand is tough but not insurmountable, we are prepared and have sophisticated resources to squarely deal with what they present to us, we have the support of the international community and we are motivated to neutralise them. The FIB is the spear of MONUSCO since it is the only force charged with conducting offensive operations. In a number of instances has supported the FARDC in combat and has yielded results. The challenge though is the vastness of the DRC which makes it difficult for the FARDC to occupy the terrain that has been cleared of the illegal Armed Groups.”

He believes that women are an important part of UN peacekeeping, since they are in a position to relate better to other women in a conflict area. He said they come to realise that women have an opportunity to be active in all aspects of life should peace prevail. In addition he said women in blue helmets play a critical role in giving hope over and above being involved in combat as it is the case in the FIB. They employ women to talk to local women to discourage their men into joining illegal armed groups.

Speaking about misconduct perpetrated by few peacekeepers, Brig Gen Dube said that indeed a few rotten potatoes have the tendency to spoil the good work of the peacekeepers. Brig Gen Dube said: “The fortunate part is that Troop Contributing Countries have taken a firm stand on those that are found to be contravening rules. In some instances individuals have even lost their jobs. The UN has a zero tolerance approach on issues of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The message is very clear that peacekeepers should not exploit their position and abuse already suffering people. As the FIB commander I have had an opportunity to address soldiers of the brigade and my message is very clear to them that we have a task at hand and all our strength and energy should be focused on fulfilling our objective. I do not tolerate or will not allow a situation where we will be bogged down by issues of ill-discipline, I believe countries have contributed their best men and women and that should not be tainted by few individuals who cannot control themselves. Self-discipline becomes key in the success of our operations.”

In conclusion he said that he was looking forward to a successful tour of duty that will bring about a conducive environment for the government and for the people of the DRC to continue with their normal life – a life without fear from physical harm by illegal armed groupings.
follow several interdepartmental meetings between the Department of Defence and Military Veterans and the Department of Health, it was resolved that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) should deploy its military health practitioners in an effort to restore health services in the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital, as health services were close to collapsing amid ongoing labour action.

The protests also resulted in major disruptions to the supply of medicine to clinics and hospitals across the North West province since the pharmaceutical depot in Mahikeng was closed as part of the protests. The medical supplies of the Hospital were depleted and there were no medical apparatus. The deployment of military health practitioners was to alleviate the plight of affected citizens of the province who were bearing the brunt of the labour action.

A total of 104 SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) members were deployed to Mahikeng Provincial Hospital. These included 19 Medical Officials according to their specialist fields, a Pharmacist, five Pharmacy Assistants, 64 Nurses, eleven Operational Emergency Care Practitioners, a Human Resource official, two bus drivers and the Commander of the medical task group. In addition, 114 members from 10 SA Infantry Battalion were deployed to safeguard the area.

Since their arrival at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital, the SANDF has stabilised security within the hospital, ensured successful distribution of medical products by the depot to
support to the people

LEFT: Maj (Dr) Andrew Teasdale from Area Military Health Unit Free State, deployed as part of a team of specialists, evaluating a patient at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.

ABOVE: Sgt Ramasela Rubeshney Moabelo of the SA Military Health Service registering a patient at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.

ABOVE: A member of the SA Military Health Service evaluating a patient at Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.

ABOVE: Lt Monique Moolgie, a Registered Nurse at Neonatal High Care (a Scrub Nurse of 1 Military Hospital) attending to a newborn baby at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.
healthcare facilities and secured access to the hospital for patients. This was done to ensure that the lives of the most vulnerable were preserved, who relied heavily on government healthcare services and ensured that their Constitutional rights to life-saving healthcare were protected.

Maj (Dr) Bhekisizwe Mtshali, an Emergency Medicine Practitioner from 1 Military Hospital, said since the depot was protected by 10 SA Infantry Battalion (10 SAI Bn), the chronic medication and other medical supplies were successfully managed and distributed.

Maj (Dr) Mtshali said: “The involvement of the SANDF in its first 24 hours has seen soldiers successfully delivering 21 newborn babies, including six Caesarean births. The intervention of the SANDF was done to keep the health services of the province operational since the staffed medical officials at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital were forced to down tools. When we arrived here we had to be hands on right away. We had to try our best by structuring ourselves in a way that we can do something for our country and particularly this province.”

His role as Emergency Medicine Practitioner was to oversee all the clinical issues. He ensured that every clinical department had a plan in place. Maj (Dr) Mtshali always made sure that the wards were running smoothly. He said that he would personally make sure that patients’ lives were not compromised in any way. Maj (Dr) Mtshali said he was grateful to be given an opportunity of a life time.

In agreement with Maj Mtshali, CO (Dr) Paliso Keta from 3 Military Hospital, Anaesthesia Department, said that they were assigned to theatre with CO (Dr) Stephan le Roux from 3 Military Hospital, Orthopeadic Surgery, to help with anaesthesia as well as overseeing all emergency Caesarean cases, fractures and trauma patients. CO (Dr) Keta said they had a whole team of doctors and nurses, each assigned to different departments. He said that when they arrived at the Hospital.
Capt Motseothata Chweneyagae, the nurse in charge of operation at the Casualty Department, pushing Mr Thabang Motsweneng, a patient, who was pleased about the medical services provided by the SA National Defence Force at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.

they immediately started to operate and attend to the patients’ medical needs. He said everything was under control and patients were happy.

The nurse in charge of operation at the Casualty Department, Capt Motseothata Chweneyagae, said they saw different kinds of patients every day and they tried to help them as quickly as possible. He said his role was to try by all means to limit the duration of patients’ stay in hospital since the start of the strike. Capt Chweneyagae said when they arrived at the Hospital they started by tiding up and setting up all the apparatus in order to assist in the smooth running of medical procedures.

While the military operation was ongoing during the strike action, patients were admitted and discharged. Mr Thabang Motsweneng, one of the patients, said he was very proud of the SANDF that helped the patients a lot to receive proper medical treatment.

Mr Motsweneng said: “I was able to see the importance of the SANDF. Now I know that the SANDF is not only about fighting and safeguarding our country. They found the hospital closed and then they took over the operation of the whole hospital. The medical service they gave to the patients was good and they gave it with love. They have denied themselves time with their families to come and help us here.”

Lt Monique Moolgie, a Registered Nurse at Neonatal High Care (a Scrub Nurse of 1 Military Hospital) taking care of a newborn baby at the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.

S Sgt Puleng Chata, an Assistant Pharmacist, counting tablets according to a prescription for a patient at the pharmacy of the Mahikeng Provincial Hospital.
Project THUSANO advances technical service discipline

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The collaboration of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) with Cuban military mechanics forms part of Project THUSANO. This project aims to render technical and professional services through personnel training and analysing recommendations regarding the definition of policies and systems.

The Cuban contingent which is in South Africa to assist in resuscitating the technical capability of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has just rotated 44 members who have completed their tour of duty in the country, replacing them with new members.

Brig Gen Joseph Tyhalisi, Director Project THUSANO, explained: “Project THUSANO came as a result of the decline of the core capability of our technical services. In assessing this we decided to look at what kept the Cubans going through the years of the US trade embargo. Even now they have vehicles which were manufactured around 1940 and that are still running. They have also manufactured spares and did not rely on supplies from any country.”

He said the introduction of the Army Support Bases coincided with the outsourcing of the SANDF technical services. As a result it reduced the Technical Services Core (TSC) to the replacement of the spare parts as opposed to fixing the components of vehicles.

Brig Gen Tyhalisi said: “Thus far we have copied what the Cubans were doing.”

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, welcomes the Cuban military mechanics during a luncheon. He is flanked on his right by the Head of the Cuban delegation, Brig Gen Rafael Borjas Ortega, and by the Interpreter of the Leader Group of the Cuban delegation, Capt Iraelvis Laffita Ramirez.
doing with the aim of resuscitating our TSC core capability as directed by the defence review. We now have got well over 200 apprentices that have been trained through this programme. Over 1 500 combat and logistics vehicles have been repaired since the start of the programme in 2015.”

Vehicles and other prime mission equipment are preserved after being fixed. They are greased and kept in a hangar before being commissioned in an operational area. Vehicles which have been fixed are put through the logistics system and issued to units which require them.

Brig Gen Tyhalisi says a policy is in place on preservation which allows spare parts to be taken from all vehicles classified as beyond economic repair and that are on disposal schedule to be dismantled. He said that they were now repairing simulators which are force preparation tools for the SANDF.

He believes that the project has impacted positively on cost saving measures and skills transfers among SANDF members. He said: “While we are doing all the fixing we are saving money that was supposed buy the spares needed to have the vehicles running. There are several cost-saving activities in Project THUSANO, and we have the Cubans to thank for assisting our members to be better in their work.

“For our members who specifically have theoretical training, they have the opportunity to do practical work alongside the Cubans. There is development on the side of the individual and the SANDF as a whole”.

In 2016, one of the mobile teams of the TSC was sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) two months before the country’s own equipment inspection by the United Nations (UN), and they were able to raise the serviceability status of deployed SANDF members‘ equipment. As a result the evaluation by the UN was much better.

Brig Gen Tyhalisi highlighted the contribution of the programme in supporting SANDF operation: “There is a lot that we can show as evidence of the success of the programme. We are now able to send our people to mission areas and do not depend on industry technicians of these machine manufacturing companies as that may compromise the missions. Along the borders of South Africa, e.g. in Operation CORONA, we have a team that was sent there as required by Joint Operations. They are doing work on B and D vehicles”.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, hosted a welcoming luncheon for the Cuban contingent after their arrival in South Africa for Project THUSANO at the Pretoria Military Sports Club at Thaba Tshwane.
In an effort to eradicate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) among its ranks, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) recently convened a high level conference at the Peace Mission Training Centre (PMTC) in Thaba Tshwane. This event served as a visible demonstration at the highest level of the SANDF in condemning this scourge. The conference aimed at mobilising the defence community against offences committed by a few. The conference’s realisation will go a long way in shaping the SANDF and its commanders in dealing with SEA and give understanding.

The conference underscored the SANDF’s leadership consistent message that no one serving in the SANDF and under the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) should be associated with SEA. They denounced such despicable acts. They were all in agreement that SEA is a conduct which is abhorrent and is extraordinarily painful to its victims and undermines the SANDF itself and of course, dents the trust that communities have in the SANDF. They further said in an effort to maintain a level of trust between soldiers and local communities in which the SANDF is deployed, it is prudent that the SANDF deal harshly with incidents of this nature.

During the conference various speakers shared their expertise on best practices in eliminating SEA by soldiers deployed in mission areas. The delegates looked at the UN and the SANDF policies in terms of SEA. They also evaluated the success of the SANDF’s approach to combating SEA. The SANDF also adopted a zero tolerance approach towards SEA.

Through this demonstration of the SANDF leadership’s commitment in dealing with matters of SEA, the SANDF committed themselves to measurably improving the organisation’s effectiveness in preventing SEA and pledged to put the rights and dignity of victims at the centre of their efforts. This provided delegates with a timely opportunity to discuss the implications of the SANDF policy going forward, including the impact of recent reforms and initiatives on national efforts to prevent and tackle SEA.

Addressing the attendees at the conference, the Chief of Staff of Joint Operations Division, Maj Gen Ashton Sibango, said although more needed to be done; much progress has been accomplished over the years. He stressed that SEA is a global menace from which no country, institution or family is
In his introduction, the Chief of Staff of Joint Operations Division noted that it is a moral and organisational imperative to put an end to SEA. Maj Gen Sibango said that peacekeeping is a primary role of the SANDF and the vast majority of the SANDF members carry out their duties with professionalism and pride, often under challenging and dangerous circumstances.

Furthermore, he said that the conference stands in testimony to the recognition that even a single case of SEA by SANDF personnel, charged with protecting and assisting vulnerable people inflicts deep personal wounds on victims and sullies the high purpose of the SANDF. Maj Gen Sibango said: “We cannot allow the unspeakable acts of a few to cause irreversible harm and tarnish the work of thousands of men and women in uniform who uphold the values enshrined in the Constitution and the Defence Act with pride and honour, often at great personal risk and sacrifice.”

The Chief of Staff of Joint Operations Division welcomed all speakers to share their views and best practices on how to prevent and respond to SEA across the SANDF’s system. He said the conference was hosted in an effort to ensure that the Code of Conduct for uniformed members of the SANDF is followed to the letter and that the good prescripts applicable to the UN and the AU soldiers in operations are followed and no member of the SANDF is allowed to put the organisation’s name into disrepute.

The delegates came up with numerous interventions on the subject. A concrete action plan will be developed and implemented after the conference. It include additional pre-deployment training for soldiers as well as education that filters down to basic military training and recommended criminalising offences through military courts. Action plans will also include victim support and tackling the allegations within ten days after being reported.

During the media briefing after the conference, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the SANDF, Maj Gen Wiseman Mbambo, said that the SANDF has for many years included preventing SEA in its pre-deployment training and SANDF has a small number of cases, but is trying to reduce these even further. Maj Gen Mbambo said: “SEA has a hugely negative impact on the SANDF and our image as a country. The fact that we have identified a problem is a first step to resolving it. The issue of SEA is relevant on deployments both in and out of South Africa. It is very much clear we have much work within the borders before we tackle the problem beyond our borders.”

In addition, Maj Gen Mbambo said in spite of a number of reported incidences of SEA, the UN has recognised South Africa as having one of the best approaches in dealing with SEA, such as having investigators on standby, preparing to criminalise SEA, supporting victims, having paternity testing and being transparent. He said the country has been recognised as the best example for other countries to understand our methods. Maj Gen Mbambo further said the SANDF does not allow criminal conduct, they act on the spot.
SANDF showered with accolades at the Bloem Show

By Capt Marumo Machete, SD2 Communication Improvement and Research, Defence Corporate Communication
Photos by F Sgt Heinrich Louw

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) scooped top honours at this year’s Bloem Show recently hosted at the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality in the Free State province.

Recognised by fellow exhibitors and the show authorities as the entity that added the most value to this year’s show, the SANDF took home the coveted Bloem Show Floating Trophy for the best outside area exhibition, the best open area exhibition and the Medi-Clinic Floating exhibition stalls and its capability demonstration, martial arts performance and arena programmes watched by an audience close to capacity. The SANDF also took part in the 4x4 track vehicle demonstration for the first time this year with plans to ratchet up its participation in this activity next year.

Putting the cherry on top of the SANDF’s captivating participation at this year’s Bloem Show was the versatile military music offering by the SA Army Kroonstad Band, SA Air Force and SA Military Health Service Bands.

The bands had the audience in stitches with their impromptu flash mob performances at the showground, the riveting performances thrown at the three township schools, as well as during a one-time-only 30-minute evening slot by the combined band at the Coca Cola stage.

The people’s National Defence Force bagged three highly sort after awards for its professional and well-presented exhibitions and it was all thanks to the hard-working men and women in uniform who sacrificed their Freedom Day and Workers’ Day long weekend to execute their duties. The SANDF’s...
participation included contributions by all four Services. And adding another dimension to our military’s participation at the show was the mathematics and Science educational sessions for learners, conducted by the Military Academy’s Maj Lucky Monaledi and 2Lt Khodani Tshivhi. The two officers shared their Mathematics and Science expertise with visiting learners and carried out coaching classes on the sidelines of the show.

Using its Bloem Show participation as a springboard to reach out to students who are seen as prospective recruits for our country’s military, the SANDF’s recruitment and marketing officers were on overdrive visiting the University of Free State where the Combined Band comprising the National Ceremonial Guard and the SA Military Health Service Bands mesmerised the students.

The National Ceremonial Guard Band also opened the SANDF League Karate Championships at the Tempe Indoors Sports Arena with the National Anthem, which truly instilled a sense of pride among the spectators and athletes.

The recruitment and marketing officers took their crusade to three other institutions in the township: Commtech...
events

Maj Gen Lawrence Mbatha, General Officer Commanding Training Command, visiting an SA Military Health Service exhibition at the Bloem Show.

An SA Army Specialised Infantry Capability member from Potchefstroom on a quad motorbike showing how to cross an obstacle at the Bloem Show.

Comprehensive School, Sehunelo Secondary School and Kopanong High School where the SA Army Kroonstad Band, the SA Navy Precision Drill Squad, the SA Army Precision Drill Squad from 15 SA Infantry Battalion and the SA Army Artillery Drill Squad kept the learners on their toes and marveling on the well-orchestrated offering by our soldiers. Capt Metja Mashiane and Candidate Officer Zachiah Hassan from the SA Army Communication Office directed the proceedings from the SANDF broadcast vehicle and kept the learners *edutained* about the role that the military plays in a democracy. The two officers took every opportunity to remind the learners to lead disciplined lives and steer away from teenage pregnancies, alcohol and drug abuse – a scourge that many local schools are battling.

On the last day of the show, a learner outreach programme by the MEC of Education in the Free State, Mr Tate Makgoe, and the SANDF took place in Botshabelo, 50km from Bloemfontein, targeting learners from Botshabelo and surrounding areas.

The Bloem Show houses a total of around 400 exhibitors and almost 50 food stalls offering visitors a “feast of quality products and lifestyle enhancing services”. The Show spans a period of 10 days and sees over 100 000 visitors making it through its gates every year.

The SANDF with its energetic communicators used this year’s show to reach out to the people of the Free State by showcasing our country’s military capability, exposing the youth to wide-ranging career opportunities within the military and educating the locals about the constitutional role the SANDF plays in a democracy.

The SA Navy Precision Drill Squad displaying their excellent drill skills.
Meet two women Marine Engineering Officers

By CPO Jean-Pierre Grant, Chief Photojournalist Navy News

S o many categories of historically male dominated environments are no longer male exclusive in the SA Navy. Yet it has taken 20 years after the advent of democracy for women to break the ceiling of becoming Marine Engineering Officers (MEO). Lt Cdr Elizabeth Yssel was the first to qualify and it was an historical moment when she was deployed on Exercise KETANA. Another phenomenal SA Navy officer who recently qualified as a Marine Engineering Officer was Lt Cdr Ntombifuthi Sithole.

Second deployment on board the SAS AMATOLA

H ow many engineers can say that they work with two large high speed engines and gas turbines on a daily basis? Well, not many. After all, it has been a long hard slog for Lt Cdr Yssel to get where she is today.

Tired but satisfied, she just returned from Exercise OXIDE with the SAS AMATOLA as the acting MEO on board for this exercise. She looks forward to seeing her family and two dogs. Lt Cdr Yssel says it has been an exhausting few weeks, but would not trade it for anything else as she just loves the great exposure and responsibility that the SA Navy has given her in the engineering field.

Lt Cdr Yssel quips: “We have beautiful marvels of engineering in the frigates and I have enjoyed the challenges the ships have given me.” She is staffed on the SAS MENDI but this was her second deployment on board the SAS AMATOLA.

Born in George, she spent her early primary school years in Langebaan before moving to Melkbosstrand. She matriculated in 2004. She said: “I then attended Cape Peninsula University of Technology where I obtained a National Diploma in Marine Engineering.”

Her father spent 10 years in the SA Navy and he fanned the idea for her to join the SA Navy as it would be “good for her character”. Asked if she has any regrets, she replied: “Without a doubt not at all!”

Lt Cdr Yssel describes herself as very goal orientated. “The SA Navy has been an excellent work environment in that it has provided me goals in the form of my engineering tickets to obtain. When I have a goal in mind I work exceptionally hard to obtain it.”

One of her highlights in the SA Navy has been her deployments on the SAS AMATOLA, which she says she enjoyed “enormously”. Lt Cdr Yssel said: “At the beginning of 2017 I sailed with them as the MEO for Exercise KETANE and then for Exercise OXIDE. I have really enjoyed all the challenges the ship has presented to me as we have sailed.”

But her most memorable occasion was receiving her MEO badge and a certificate of commendation from the Flag Officer Fleet. Lt Cdr Yssel emphasised: “But Exercise KETANE will always be one of my best exercises as it was the first exercise I completed as the vessel’s MEO. Not surprisingly, when asked what aspects she enjoys the least, she replied: “Not applicable”.

Asked what advice she has for other young people who aspire to follow in her footsteps, she says: “My advice is to make a decision as to what you want out of life and plan how you are going to get there. These steps must be achievable and if necessary broken down into small sub steps. Once your plan is laid out, execute it to the best of your ability.”

Lt Cdr Elizabeth Yssel.
A small ceremony was recently held at Fleet Command Headquarters where Lt Cdr Sithole was personally congratulated by the Flag Officer Fleet (FOF), R Adm Bubele Mhlana, and various other naval directors for qualifying as a Marine Engineering Officer (MEO). “I am very proud of you!” said the FOF while fondly recalling his days as her Officer Commanding on the SAS MENDI.

Lt Cdr Sithole hails from a small town called White River in Kabokweni Township (Mpumalanga Province). Here she was raised by a single parent as her father passed away in a car accident in 1992. She proudly described her mother as “a strong and very supportive parent” to both herself and her elder sister.

Despite this challenging background, Lt Cdr Sithole worked hard at school and became fascinated by the physics and other science projects conducted there. She says: “I was privileged to have good Mathematics and Science teachers who really helped me achieve good grades.”

Most South African matriculants today see tertiary education as an opportunity to elevate their economic status, as well as a method to honour their parents’ sacrifice. Unfortunately, inadequate financial resources and trends in our socio-economic climate tend to hamper many.

Fortunately, while in matric, her cousin came across a newspaper advert regarding bursaries being offered by the Department of Defence (DOD). She applied and was subsequently called for an interview. Lt Cdr Sithole commented: “I remember being so excited. An acceptance would be a big opportunity and would relieve my mother from paying for my tertiary education.” She was accepted and started at the DOD Youth Foundation Programme in 2003. This programme gives students a better understanding of the military environment. During a class visit to Naval Base Simon’s Town, Lt Cdr Sithole fell in love with the technical aspect of the SA Navy and declared: “I made an instant decision to join the SA Navy on completion of the programme”. Out of all her friends from Mpumalanga, she was the only student bold enough to make this decision.

Lt Cdr Sithole joined the SA Navy in 2004. Notwithstanding the difficult road she had travelled so far, she still had a way to go. A memorable moment of that year came in the form of a beach party, which she explained as follows: “One morning, in the wee hours, we were told we were going for a beach party. We had mixed feelings as it was too early for a party but, nonetheless, we were excited as we were going to a party after all.” That was the day she learnt that a ‘beach party’ in the Navy was vernacular for an intense physical training session at the beach.

On completion of basic training and Military Training for Officers Part 1, she enrolled at Cape Peninsula University of Technology for a National Diploma in Marine Engineering, which she obtained in 2008. She joined the crew of the SAS MENDI the following year as Assistant MEO.

For a Naval Officer to attain the title of MEO, a minimum tertiary qualification ND Marine/Marine engineering is required. Thereafter one is drafted to a warship and commences with functional training in order to obtain the qualifications. There are three types certification required to be a fully qualified Marine Engineering Officer, namely an Auxiliary Watchkeeping Certificate, an Engine Room Watchkeeping Certificate and a Marine Engineering Officer in Charge Certificate.

All the above qualifications comprise a Task Book, which must be completed and signed off by various mentors. Thereafter a written examination is completed, followed by an interview and oral examination in which you must be found competent by a board of examiners.

There are also specific courses required as prerequisites for certain boards. Members must also complete certain number of hours of watch keeping at sea after achieving each certificate.
Lt Cdr Ntombifuthi Sithole. An MEO is directly accountable and responsible to the Officer Commanding of the ship for the efficient functioning of the Marine Engineering (ME) department on board. The key duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, acting as the Head of Department and Divisional Officer for the personnel within the ME department. These include welfare, training and development of members; safe and correct operation of machinery and systems under his or her control; and maintenance and availability of all machinery, equipment and systems, in accordance with the SA Navy maintenance policy.

The Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Action Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence (NBCD) Officer, who is overall in charge of damage control activities, says an MEO also ensures serviceability of propulsion and steering in order to sustain command aim and priority at sea. Periodic testing of all NBCD equipment and systems are also part of the jurisdiction.

According to an article published by CNN in 2009, the majority of women who retire from the military do so in order to spend more time managing their families. In a patriarchal society such as South Africa, the decision between family and career can be difficult for women in the armed forces.

This is especially so when one considers the time it takes for a sailor to qualify, get practical experience and then deploy often. Lt Cdr Sithole, however, has overcome this particular challenge with the help of her life partner, friends and family. Her proud life partner says: “It is challenging for her to be a mom and study at the same time. However, when either of us is under strain, the other compensates by taking full responsibility for the boys’ needs and wants.”

Lt Cdr Sithole, who has since obtained her BTech in Marine Engineering, was recently deployed to Europe and numerous West African countries during Exercise KETANE. This deployment offered the ship’s company the opportunity to complete British Operational Sea Training, conduct anti-piracy patrols on the West Coast of Africa and participate in Exercise GOOD HOPE VII with the German Armed Forces.

This was a three-month deployment for Lt Cdr Sithole where she says she gained valuable experience ranging from naval warfare to engineering. Deployments of this calibre are highly sought after by aspiring MEOs as it “gives real-time experience of machine behaviour under different conditions while teaching important lessons regarding maintenance of machinery in order to sustain missions”.

Lt Cdr Sithole is appreciative of the mobilisation process conducted by each deploying member prior to deployment. She says: “While I am out there supporting my country, the Fleet provides a support structure for our spouses and families.”

Finding balance between work, family and time out with friends is very important, she says. According to Cdr Sithole, a balanced life is a fulfilling life, working hard, being disciplined and dedicated to one’s work does not mean you must neglect the important people in one’s life. She adds: “My family and friends played a tremendous role in my achieving this milestone by supporting and believing in me!”

Each year hundreds of thousands of hopeful female graduates look for direction and guidance for their futures. They often turn to prominent females found in newspapers, magazines and social media. When Lt Cdr Sithole was asked what she would like to say to those who will undoubtedly look up to her, she had this to say: “Do not let challenges or obstacles in any shape or form stop you from achieving your goals. Embrace the challenges, grow through them and believe in yourself. For every woman aspiring to be an MEO or go into an engineering or technical field, it is possible and can be done.”

She declares: “You do not have to choose between being a mother, wife and MEO. You can find balance and be all three. As is the case with anything, if you love it you will find a way to do it, to make it work despite the challenges. The opportunities are there, we just need to rise to the occasion.”

According to an article published by CNN in 2009, the majority of women who retire from the military do so in order to spend more time managing their families. In a patriarchal society such as South Africa, the decision between family and career can be difficult for women in the armed forces.
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is widely considered “the people’s defence force”. This makes it an integral part and parcel of the South African society it serves so dearly. Therefore, it goes without saying that whatever happens in the society is likely to be mirrored into the SANDF either on a short or a long-term basis.

The results of the recent Annual National Assessment (ANA) is one such example. They paint a bleak picture for the future of the next generation of Mathematicians and Scientists in the country. And this is surely going to have a negative impact on the SANDF as some of these children are aspiring soldiers.

The test which is under the custody of the Department of Basic Education shows that learners struggle when it comes to their mother tongue and Mathematics as Grade 1 - 6 subjects. Subsequent results are therefore enough to cause sleepless nights and send some shivers down any parent’s spine as they show that only one in four children is able to apply the basics of Mathematics.

But it is not all doom and gloom for the SANDF as there is that one-of-a-kind soldier, S Lt Khodani Sheriff Tshivhi who, together with his peers, is striving to ensure the survival and the perseverance of Mathematics for future generations in the SANDF.

This man is one of the top Mathematicians in the SANDF and he is doing everything in his might to lay a solid foundation for future and aspiring Mathematicians and Scientists in the SANDF.

Currently stationed at the Military Academy, S Lt Tshivhi did not get things handed to him on a silver platter. He was born and raised in Madombidzha, a rural village near Makhado in the Limpopo province. And unlike most people from impoverished rural settlements, he did not use his background as an excuse and obstacle that hinders him from reaching the top of the ladder.

The attention and love for Mathematics started earlier when S Lt Tshivhi was a Grade 8 learner at Litshovhu Secondary School. S Lt Tshivhi said: “I started noticing that I was getting highest marks each time we wrote a Maths test. So that motivated me and I went on to dominate the market in as far as Maths was concerned. I always collected best learner certificates each year from Grade 10 to Grade 12.”

Tshivhi who, together with his peers, is striving to ensure the survival and the perseverance of Mathematics for future generations in the SANDF.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, and S Lt Khodani Sheriff Tshivhi sharing a lighter moment.

S Lt Khodani Sheriff Tshivhi imparting Mathematical knowledge to a young and upcoming Mathematician.

By Mr Malose Malema
Photos by Mr Katso Mabuza
After matriculating with a Bachelor’s in 2011, S Lt Tshivhi was more pleased with his distinction in Mathematics. Armed with an overall impressive matric results, S Lt Tshivhi felt he finally had a chance of realising his ultimate dream of becoming a reputable Electrical Engineer.

But attempts to make it into either the Vaal University of Technology or the Tshwane University of Technology were unsuccessful and he failed to secure admission to study at either one of the two tertiary institutions.

After plan “A” and “B” failed to materialise, S Lt Tshivhi was staring academic failure in the face. Then suddenly out of the blue sky, things got better as he was finally able to get the green light to study BSc at the University of Limpopo in Turf-loop, Polokwane. And to this day S Lt Tshivhi still credits his friend for the advice he gave him to try his luck at one of the esteemed universities in the country.

S Lt Tshivhi said: “This was a dream come true and to my surprise I continued to excel in Maths even at tertiary level. And what that did was to give me the much-needed confidence boost and a springboard I desperately needed to complete my degree in record time. I did exactly that in 2014, and this massive feat made me the first person in my clan to be able to obtain a bachelor’s degree.”

It is true that the stone most builders disregard and consider to be worthless, turns out to be the most precious stone of them all. This is precisely what happened with S Lt Tshivhi. After coming across SANDF application forms and the corresponding newspaper advertisement encouraging people to apply for the Military Skills Development System (MSDS), he was reluctant to apply to “the people’s defence force”.

He said: “But eventually I said to myself, to hell with it. Yes, becoming a soldier was the furthest thing on my mind. But since I had no clear and concrete plans for the year ahead, it was really a no brainer so I finally applied. Part of me did that out of the respect for the friend who went out of his way to buy what was considered a luxury back then, a newspaper. The result of not wanting to dampen my friend’s spirit was a blessing in disguise as I was called for BMT in 2016.”

The prospect of being in the SANDF was enormous for S Lt Tshivhi. The urge of being part of the ultimate protectors of the 50 million South Africans caused him to turn down one of the most prominent organisations in the region; the South African Independent Schools Association (ISASA).

He elaborates: “Since Mathematics is considered one of the most important academic subjects, ironically it is by far one of the toughest subjects for most South African schooling generation. Unfortunately, this notion is not just based on unfounded rumours as there are countless research results proving it. But I, like any other Mathematician, will not rest until these disturbing statistics are successfully overturned.” Anyone who reads this should understand and take S Lt Tshivhi seriously on his promise, because it was not by sheer luck that he is the first member of the SA Navy to enrol for honours in Mathematics. Besides, he is under the supervision of the most-sought-after Prof Oluwole Daniel Makinde.

Prof Makinde is presently a Distinguished Professor of Applied Mathematics and Computations at the Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University. In addition, he is the winner of various awards, such as the prestigious 2011 African Union-Kwame Nkrumah Continental Scientific Award, the 2010 South Africa NRF/NSTF TW-Kambule Outstanding Researcher Award, the 2014 Nigerian National Honour Award (MFR). Prof Makinde is also a Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences, a Fellow of the International Academy of Physical Sciences and a Fellow of Papua New Guinea Mathematical Society

Both S Lt Tshivhi and Maj Lucky Monaledi employ what they call “the story-telling technique” of teaching Mathematics. Instead of the typical numeracy method, both lecturers replace those with normal family scenery examples comprising of a father, a mother and so on. According to S Lt Tshivhi, this method is working wonders. Hence the reason he is planning to proceed with it in his enduring quest of changing the negative stereotypes placed against Mathematics as the most difficult subject under the sun.

He said: “I have long been involved in community service together with my mentor, Maj Monaledi. We have been assisting learners and students during the Armed Forces Day in Kimberley, the Rand Show, and the Bloem Show, to name but a few.”

 Academic with fellow Mathematician and long-time mentor, Maj Lucky Monaledi. He elaborates: “I have long been involved in community service together with my mentor, Maj Monaledi. We have been assisting learners and students during the Armed Forces Day in Kimberley, the Rand Show, and the Bloem Show, to name but a few.”
A Geographic Information Systems Engineer maps the way

By Sgt Ally Rakoma
Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Thaole

Lt Gregory Kleinveld, a Geographic Information Systems Engineer at Engineer Terrain Intelligence Regiment, showing geographic data compiled into maps.

Lt Gregory Kleinveld, a proud member of the SA Army Engineer Corps, recently graduated from the University of Pretoria obtaining a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Geoinformatics. He is currently the Troop Commander at the Cartography Mapping Section, Engineer Terrain Intelligence Regiment.

During an interview with SA Soldier, Lt Kleinveld highlighted the engineers’ technology and service as essential in both conventional and peacekeeping operations. He mentioned a wide spectrum of various Terrain Intelligence disciplines ranging from the surveying of land, processing of data, drawing of maps, photography, specialised layout and printing. He added that all tasks can also be executed in the field, utilising an equipped container which fits on a Samil truck, serving as a mobile office.

When asked what geospatial engineers do, Lt Kleinveld replied that geospatial engineers are responsible for using geographic data that support military or civilian operations for disaster relief. “They collect, analyse and distribute geospatial information to represent the terrain and its possible effects. They extract geographic data from satellite imagery, aerial photography and field reconnaissance, create geographic data and compile them into maps. In a military operation it helps to visualise the battlefield, create and maintain multiple geospatial databases and also prepare briefs covering all aspects of the terrain.

What are the basic skills you learn? Lt Kleinveld said that you learn various skills such as basic knowledge of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), conduct geographic analysis, interpret imagery and exploitation. You also learn all aspects of a terrain, which are important in a battlefield situation.

What does it take to qualify as a Geospatial Engineer? Lt Kleinveld responded: “To qualify for this job, one must have interest in mathematics, geography, maps and charts. Have or possess the ability to use drafting equipment and programs, basic computer skills are essential.” He added that GIS are systems that incorporate software, hardware, including data for collecting, managing, analysing and portraying geographically referenced information. It allows the user to view, understand, manipulate and visualise data to reveal relationships and patterns that solve problems. The user can then present the data in easily understood and disseminated forms, such as maps, reports and charts.

Where do GIS apply? He replied: “GIS apply to the geographical facets of various aspects of everyday life, for example transportation, logistics, medicine, sociology, ecology, marketing, applied sciences, as well as emergency and disaster management. It is also utilised in other areas such as intelligence, national security and law enforcement intelligence domains.”

What about cartography and GIS inspired you? Lt Kleinveld, who hails from Clocolan in the Free State, said he was passionately curious about geographic analysis, systems and related skills after joining the SA Army in 2003 through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) and was exposed to it when he came to the Engineer Corps in 2004. Lt Kleinveld added: “I completed the Basic SA Army Engineer Corps Training, followed by the Young Engineer Non-commissioned Officer Training in 2009. In 2011, I completed the Field Section Leader and in 2013 the Troop Officers’ Course and the Demolition Phase 1 at the School of Engineer. In the same year I completed the Officers’ Formative Course at the SA Army Gymnasium.” On tertiary level he enrolled in 2006 at the Tshwane University of Technology and obtained a National Diploma in Cartography. Lt Kleinveld continued with his quest for knowledge by furthering his studies and enrolled in 2015 at the University of Pretoria where he obtained a Bachelor of Science in Geoinformatics in 2017.

When asked how his journey has been, Lt Kleinveld replied: “It was not easy. I was a Sapper (the equivalent to a Private) studying for seven years. You have to concentrate on both your career path and on your tertiary studies at the same time. It was not an easy task as it required immense sacrifices, commitment and the denial of some comfort in social life.” He says that nothing in life is to be feared, every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.

How do you describe fear? Lt Kleinveld firstly explained that life has got twists and turns, you’ve got to hold on. Adding: “Fear has two meanings: forget everything and run or face everything and rise.” His message is: “The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today. Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”

Lt K

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What’s Your Dream Holiday?

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SA Army Signal Formation recently welcomed its newly appointed General Officer Commanding, Brig Gen Freeman Mxolisi Moni, with a Change of Command Parade held at Wonderboom Military Base, Pretoria.

With so many VIP guests, officers, appointed Warrant Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, Privates, Public Service Act Personnel and civilian guests in attendance, over 130 members on parade, including the SA Army Band from Limpopo and all other support personnel, this was the largest parade at the Base in more than a decade.

SA Army Signal Formation under new Command

The newly appointed General Officer Commanding SA Army Signal Formation, Brig Gen Freeman Mxolisi Moni.

The SA Army Band Limpopo.

After receiving the “Sword of Command” ceremoniously from the previous General Officer Commanding, Brig Gen Leon Louis Eggers, Brig Gen Moni addressed all members at the parade. Brig Gen Moni said: “It is indeed a great honour to be offered the opportunity to lead such a big formidable element of the SA Army, the enablers of command and control during peacetime and more importantly during wartime”.

Brig Gen Moni also expressed his gratitude towards Brig Gen Eggers “be rest assured that what you have started will be pursued with as much dedication and vigour. I will build upon your accomplishments. I will do what an officer must do, that is to accomplish the mission at hand”. Brig Gen Moni ended his address with a quote by Kenneth Blanchard: “The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority”.

He was born in Cape Town, in a place called Nyanga. Being raised from a family of eight, he started his education at Bongani Lower Primary School. Highlights of his education are two fold, namely military and tertiary education. Brig Gen Moni currently holds a Senior Management Certificate with the Tshwane University of Technology and a Master of Art in Defence Studies with the King’s College in London, UK.

Through his military education he is a proud officer who is Junior Staff qualified through the SA Army College, R8 qualified through the School of Signals (SA Army Signal Formation), and Senior Joint Staff qualified through the Joint Staff Command and Services College in the United Kingdom.

Brig Gen Moni never thought of being a soldier, but the historical event of 16 June 1976, saw him developing an interest in politics and that led him to join Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1981, thus marking the beginning of his military career.

Brig Gen Moni’s military career is divided into two exciting military backgrounds, namely a non-conventional and a conventional military career. Brig Gen Moni integrated into the SA National Defence Force on 27 April 1994.

Today Brig Gen Moni stands proud to be part of the SA Army and in particular to be an officer in the South African Corps of Signals. Brig Gen Moni is a big fan of the Effect Base Approach within the Comprehensive Approach of which arguably the two concepts are the main drivers of peace support operations in the 21st Century.
A Command on the move

By Brig Gen Sean Stratford,
Commandant SANDF College of Educational Technology

Not only has the Training Command recently celebrated its 11th birthday in January 2018, but the Command, under the inspirational leadership of Maj Gen Lawrence Mbatha, is now setting a new benchmark when it comes to the delivery of education, training and development (ETD).

With no less than ten training institutions, representing seven units and three capabilities under command, this is no small feat. This was the narrative of a recent work session of Training Command held at the SA Army Gymnasium in Heidelberg.

During the work session the deliverables of the SA National Defence College (SANDC), the SA National War College (SANWC), the Military Academy, the SANDF College of Educational Technology (SANDF COLET), Personnel Services School, Warrant Officers’ Academy, Peace Mission Training Centre, the Centre for Conflict Simulation (CONSIM), Civic Education Centre of Excellence, and Centre for Competence Development Training (CCDT) were carefully synchronised and co-ordinated as reflected in each training institution’s Annual Performance Plan (APP).

Each training institution was afforded the opportunity to present its APP, highlighting what can be achieved, based on resource allocations. The classic definition of strategy, which requires the balancing of ends, ways and means, was a skill required from all commanders while presenting their plans. Special attention was given to the risks and the implications for each unit, and commanders were required to be as creative as possible with solutions to mitigate those.

The tone for the work session was set by Maj Gen Mbatha during his introductory remarks in which he emphasised the importance of teamwork, mutual respect for each other, and being end-state driven. These are three key components in the ETD fraternity. Regardless of times lacking human resources or funding, understanding what you are working towards and promoting mutual support between the units, can go a long way in promoting the success of Training Command as a whole.

The impact the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Training Command wished to achieve was not left to chance, but it was with thorough consideration that he also requested Mr Busani Makaringe, Acting Assistant Director CCDT, to deliver a presentation on ethical leadership. This laid a firm foundation for unpacking, dissection and reformulation a new vision and mission for Training Command, with the theoretical construct being presented by the experienced Cdr (Dr) Ishmael Theletsane from the Military Academy.

For the benefit of all members reading this article, the revised Training Command vision reads as follows: “World-class defence education, training and development provider”. All ten training institutions under command can subscribe and institutionalise this vision.

Furthermore, the new mission reads as follows: “To direct, manage and provide professional Defence Education, Training and Development (ETD) services to the Department of Defence (DOD), including its strategic partners through designated learning opportunities to enhance force preparation”. Subsequently, all units and capabilities under command have conducted their own work sessions to revise their missions and visions accordingly, and have already presented it to the GOC Training Command during a series of functional staff visits in March 2018. The winds of change are blowing through Training Command. The role and relevance in uplifting the standard of ETD is unquestionable. Training Command has over the last few months gained momentum and the impact thereof are felt by all the clients of Training Command.

Here are a few examples of what is to be expected in future from units under command. Starting with the most senior unit (SANDC), the College will still continue during 2018, in collaboration with the University of Witwatersrand, to present the Post-Graduate Diploma in Management - Field of Security. It is anticipated that by the end of 2019, the first group of learners would have qualified on a new master’s programme on the Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP).

The SANWC will see learners qualifying and exiting the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme (JSCSP) 2019 with a post-graduate qualification in collaboration with the Military Academy. Senior officers reading this article should now come to an emphatic conclusion - get qualified in order to gain access to these programmes.

Mention can also be made of SANDF COLET and Personnel Service School, delivering on their mandate where the former will be responsible for qualifying instructors through train-the-trainer programmes in order to uplift the standard of instruction to the benefit of the SANDF. The latter is to provide tailored courses and programmes to enhance the quality of our human resource practitioners. All the other units and capabilities are also geared to provide professional ETD services to the DOD, with a fresh impetus.

The work session ended on a high note with closing remarks from Maj Gen Mbatha. Emphasis was placed on building on our success and maintaining the momentum, which served as theme throughout the work session. Furthermore, to maintain our identity as soldiers by giving credence to our unique regimental aspects. We are required to maintain our discipline, communicate with our subordinates and lead in a way that inspires confidence in the organisation. The work session was concluded with the inspirational line to “Never Give Up”. Training Command is a Command on the move.
Hypothyroidism – what you need to know

By Martina Nicholson Associates
Newsdesk on behalf of the
Government Employees Medical
Scheme (GEMS)
Photo by Mr Katiso Mabuza

Not producing sufficient thyroid hormone to keep the body running? You could well be suffering from hypothyroidism ...

Hypothyroidism is a fairly common healthcare condition, particularly among women. It is estimated that approximately 6% of people suffer from thyroid disease with women estimated to be six to eight times more prone to thyroid disease than men.

The majority of those suffering from this ailment are completely unaware that they have the condition, as the symptoms of hypothyroidism can be so subtle that they are often overlooked and it is sometimes mistaken for other healthcare conditions.

What is hypothyroidism?

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland in the neck which produces hormones that regulate almost every part of the body. If this little gland does not produce a sufficient amount of thyroid hormones, a condition known as hypothyroidism, which will disturb the normal balance of chemical reactions in the body, will develop.

Apart from a certain amount of tiredness and weight gain in the earlier stages of hypothyroidism, the condition does not initially cause undue health difficulties. However, if left untreated, it can over time cause a number of health problems including obesity, joint pain, infertility and heart disease.

Accurate thyroid function tests are available to diagnose hypothyroidism and treatment with a synthetic thyroid hormone is usually simple, safe and effective once you and your doctor have determined the correct dosage of medicine for you.

Typical symptoms

Symptoms of an underactive thyroid may include: lethargy or sluggishness, tiredness, mild weight gain with poor appetite, constipation, cold intolerance, poor memory and difficulty in concentrating, shortness of breath, a hoarse voice, muscle cramping and heavy menstrual periods.

Typical tell-tale signs of an underactive thyroid may include:

- Thin, dry hair
- Eyebrows which may curve straight down on outer edges
- Hair that is missing on outer edge of eyebrows
- Lower eyelashes missing or sparse
- Dry skin

Treatment for hypothyroidism

Once your condition is diagnosed you will find that the use of the medicine prescribed for you will restore hormone levels and will gradually reverse the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism.

The most common medicine used to treat the condition is levothyroxine, a synthetic form of thyroid hormone. While it is an effective hypothyroidism treatment it can also be somewhat tricky to manage as it can take weeks or even months to determine the ideal daily dosage that would be best serve each individual patient.

Getting the most from your treatment

It is very important to closely follow your doctor’s instructions and to take your medicine exactly as prescribed. If you do not follow instructions when taking your hypothyroidism medicine,
your body may not be able to fully absorb the levothyroxine and this will result in a fluctuation in your hormone levels.

To ensure the effectiveness of your thyroid medicine it is recommended that the medicine is always taken on an empty stomach immediately after waking up or at least three hours after dinner at night.

Be very careful of medicine interactions when using levothyroxine. For example, iron and calcium supplements can impact the absorption of levothyroxine as iron or calcium can bind with the synthetic hormone, thereby preventing your body from using the medicine properly. The hormone, oestrogen, on the other hand may interfere with the body’s ability to use levothyroxine. This means that women who are taking birth control pills may need an increased dosage of thyroid medicine.

There are a number of other medicines like aspirin, certain antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs, arthritis medicine, beta-blockers and insulin that interfere with the absorption of levothyroxine.

Not taking levothyroxine the right way or drug interactions can impact on thyroid hormone levels thereby causing harmful side effects. For example, increased hormone levels can leave you feeling shaky, jittery, and jumpy and you may notice your heart racing. You may even have difficulty sleeping at night and may lose some weight.

Hormone levels that are too low can cause tiredness and sluggishness. They can also slow down the heart rate, cause loss of hair, weight gain and depression.

If you establish and maintain a regular routine with your hypothyroidism treatment and work closely with your doctor until such time as the correct medicine dosage can be determined for you, the condition can be effectively managed, and you should experience no real further impact on your overall health and wellbeing.

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The iron fist boxing tournament

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Katiso Mabuza

There were no chants of Bumaye Ali (Kill him Ali) in the arena, but the mood and atmosphere during the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Boxing Tournament which recently took place at 2 Field Engineer Regiment in Bethlehem was on the same level as the 1974 Heavy-weight bout between Mohammed Ali and George Foreman.

The magnitude of the two-day SANDF Boxing Tournament

competitors ignore health hazards such as bruises or long-term brain illnesses such as Parkinson’s disease.

What made the tournament more interesting was the participation of the forever dominant and the main draw card, the SANDF Boxing Champion, Pte Siphamandla Notyandela from 6 SA Infantry Battalion (6 SAI Bn).

Pte Notyandela was first the six times Boxing Champion before joining the SANDF. He then joined the defence force in 2010 through the SANDF sports recruitment drive. From then on, the sky has only been the limit in a glittering career that saw Pte Notyandela become the reigning and defending SANDF Boxing Champion since 2010. This streak is one of the longest active reigns in sport, let alone boxing in the SANDF.

He said what keeps him winning his matches is the amount of quality time he spends at gym correcting his

Superseded expectations as it almost reached the levels of major boxing matches in history.

SANDF boxers from all around the country put their bodies on the line in search of that glorious crowning moment. The will and drive to win at all costs made both male and female

Contestants of the 2018 SA National Defence Force Boxing Tournament.

Referees and judges at the SA National Defence Force Boxing Tournament.
slip-ups. Pte Notyandela said: “Gym is my life. I utilise every chance I get for training. That had helped me a lot in my quest of improving myself and my boxing career. I always make sure that I go an extra mile in the sport that I love so much. For me going to the gym every day after work is not strenuous because this is my passion.”

Moreover he said due to his passion for the sport of boxing, Pte Notyandela was once among boxers who represented the SANDF in Brazil. Pte Notyandela said because of his intensive training and practice, he had managed to win most of his matches while his peers kept a downward losing stride.

He started boxing when he was 10 years old. Pte Notyandela said he joined this sport at this age to avoid unnecessary street gangs that were ultimately going to make him end up a criminal.

Pte Notyandela was not the only winner. The tournament also witnessed a female winner by the name of Ms Boitumelo Kobone who represented 10 SAI Bn. Ms Kobone is a boxer and also a Master in statistics student at the University of North West.

Asked how she manages boxing and studies, she said everything is under control. Ms Kobone said she studies at night from 20:30 and gym between 18:00 and 20:00. Though she likes boxing, Ms Kobone said education still is the key to success.

She said education helps us build opinions and have points of view on things in life. Education gives us knowledge of the world around us and changes it into something better, Ms Kobone emphasised.

Ms Kobone explained: “The one thing I wish I can do is to provide education for all: nobody left behind and change the world for good.”

One Star Amateur International Boxing Association qualified Referee and a Judge, Sgt Monwabisi Tshona, said the purpose of this tournament was to actively involve SANDF boxers in preparation for the Boxing Championship that will take place in Kimberley.

An enthusiastic Sgt Tshona believes that boxing is one of the combat sports. He said that boxing promotes fitness among soldiers and also perceived it as a self-defence sport. He added: “Boxing puts soldiers in a state of combat readiness. It also plays a pivotal role in keeping soldiers healthy as well as promoting discipline. This sport plays an important part in preparing psychological part of the athletes.”

The tournament comprised of various fights from different weight classes. Nine units participated namely: ASB Eastern Cape, 6 SAI Bn, Infantry School, 10 SAI Bn, 1 Construction, 9 SAI Bn, 2 Field Regiment, Bloemfontein and Smiley Tigers (a local boxing team from Bethlehem).
One encounters numerous kinds of people in one’s lifetime but only a handful that truly grab one’s attention such is Cpl Rampolokeng Mkutshane, fondly known as “Boxer”. He is currently a parachute instructor at 44 Parachute Regiment in Bloemfontein. Cpl Mkutshane is also a personal trainer, aerobics instructor, an amateur Olympic Style boxing coach and a professional boxing coach. His enthusiasm and professionalism in sport and fitness, especially boxing are nothing short of inspiring.

Cpl Mkutshane’s love for boxing and fitness started at an early age. He grew up at a place where many were a boxer. Not only was he a good boxer, but also a good soccer player. In the end he opted for boxing and has never looked back. He was a boxer in the featherweight category for 20 years. This is quite an achievement for any athlete to fight in one weight division for such a long period. It takes a lot of discipline and dedication. Over this period Cpl Mkutshane competed in numerous National, Africa and International boxing competitions. He was the Free State Champion for a long time until his retirement as a boxer in 2005. His passion and commitment for the sport is inspiring when speaking to him. His achievements in boxing are what make him outstanding as a trainer.

Although Cpl Mkutshane has been an eager boxer since 1986, he also decided to join the defence force as a paratrooper in 1993. One of his highlights in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) was his involvement in the Battle of BANGUI in the Central African Republic when their convoy was attacked by the Seleka Armed Group in March 2013. During that deployment he was the driver of the Commander of 1 Parachute Battalion.

He has been involved in the boxing arena since his first amateur fight in 1986. In 1988 he received his Springbok (National) Colours and was crowned the South African Boxing Champion. He continued with boxing after his enlistment in the defence force and was the SANDF Boxing Champion from 1996 to 2005. In 2001 he toured England with the South African National Team and Denmark. The following year Cpl Mkutshane won a Silver Medal in the United States.

Cpl Mkutshane participated at the Military World Games in Croatia, Zagreb, in 1999 and won a Bronze Medal. He was crowned as the best boxer in 1997. Also from 2000 to 2001,
he was nominated for Sportsman of the Year Award. In 2000, he was a gold medalist at the Eastern and Southern Africa Liaison Office (ESALO) Games. Cpl Mkutshane coached the SANDF Boxing Team for the World Military Games in Mumbai, India, in 2007. As a coach he won various medals with different teams, namely 13 medals with the SANDF team at the National Boxing Championships, as well as 14 medals with the Free State team and 13 medals with the Western Cape team in 2010.

Since 2005 Cpl Mkutshane became a boxing trainer after attending a boxing training course at the Cuban Raben Sanchez Boxing Club in Nairobi, Kenya. Besides running his own boxing club, known as Skhokho Boxing and Fitness Gym, in Mangaung, he is also currently the head coach at the Free State Sports Science Institute in Bloemfontein.

Among outstanding fighters under his watch are professionals such as Mr Doctor Ntsele (SA Flyweight Champion, WBF International Champion and WBF Intercontinental Champion), Ms Matshidiso Mokebisi (SA Featherweight Champion, WBF International Champion), Mr Sihle Jwelana (Ranked No 3 SA Flyweight) and Mr Seapi Mokoena (SA Junior Middleweight).

Speaking to SA Soldier, Cpl Mkutshane said that sport and fitness form an important part of his daily routine. He believes exercise should be incorporated into one’s daily life in order to become routine. He is keen supporter that exercise can prevent health problems and improve one’s quality of life. He looks forward to helping his trainees to achieve their fitness and lifestyle goals. He is confident that an inner athlete lives inside everyone, and it’s his job to motivate his trainees to unlock their physical potential.

Cpl Mkutshane said: “I believe that health and fitness goals can be reached through hard training and determination. As a former amateur boxer, I implement aspects of the sport into my training sessions, including focusing on foot work and heavy bag workout. I am fascinated with human movement and the power to transform body and mind.”

Furthermore he said that he likes giving fitness advice and it’s rewarding to him when his trainees achieve great results. Cpl Mkutshane said: “I keep it real. I coached everybody as if they were to prepare for a fight.” His advice to aspiring boxing athletes is to focus on their technique and always to strive to persevere.

In addition he said a boxing coach is responsible with molding a fighter or simply improving his left hook, a boxing trainer is one of the most important factors in honing a boxer’s skills in the ring and to whip your fighter into shape and help him perfect his every punch. Cpl Mkutshane said: “I am familiar with many forms of different training techniques, designed to stimulate different muscle fibers and achieve different goals. Boxing and functional training is my passion, combine that with my strength and conditioning knowledge, and I can push your performance, sculpt your body and make every minute of your time spent in the gym productive.”

Fltr: Cpl Rampolokeng Mkutshane, Ms Matshidiso Mokebisi (SA Champion, WBF International Featherweight Champion), Mr Doctor Ntsele (SA Flyweight Champion, WBF International Champion and WBF Intercontinental Champion), Mr Sihle Jwelana (Ranked No 3 SA Flyweight) and Mr Motebang Mosala. (Photo courtesy of Cpl Rampolokeng Mkutshane)
2018 SANDF Freshwater Bank Angling Championships

By Lt Col Ig Gründlingh, Chairperson
SANDF Freshwater Angling Association
Photos by WO1 Christo Crous

On 5 May 2018 the quiet North-West province town of Bloemhof, affectionately known as the freshwater angling mecca of South Africa, welcomed the 107 anglers, including support personnel, from six Military Sport Clubs (MSCs) across the country to the 10th annual SA National Defence Force (SANDEF) Freshwater Bank Angling Championships.

Addressing the anglers and support personnel, the Chairperson of the SANDEF Freshwater Angling Association (SANDEFFAA), Lt Col Ig Gründlingh, acknowledged the privilege granted by S Sgt Pieter Human from 10 Anti-Aircraft Regiment lands a beautiful Bloemhof Carp.

The Championships were held as three separate day competitions (of eight hours each) from 8 to 10 May 2018. The 98 anglers caught a total of 1 729 fish with a combined weight of 1 575 kg. Participants were spoilt with favourable weather conditions over the five days – temperatures above freezing point, clear skies, bright sunshine and moderate wind speeds.

The Championships were held in accordance with rules as prescribed by the South African Freshwater Bank Angling Federation (SAFBAF) and officiated by the SANDEFFAA’s own SAFBAF-qualified team under the leadership of the Head Official, WO2 Marthie Mouton.

The aim of the Championships was twofold: firstly, to identify the top regional teams and individuals in the Masters, Seniors and Development Divisions. Secondly, to select the three SANDEF teams for participation in the SAFBAF versus National...
Forces Tournament (National Level) in September 2018 and the SAFBAF Bank Angling Festival (International Level) in January 2019.

Administrative and logistic support was provided from within own capabilities while proper planning and preparation prevented unforeseen challenges negatively influencing the execution.

Results

Masters Division: Team Category
- **1st Position** – Gauteng North A (Pretoria MSC)
- **2nd Position** – Free State (Bloemfontein MSC)
- **3rd Position** – Mpumalanga (Nelspruit MSC)
- **4th Position** – Central North West (Potchefstroom MSC)
- **5th Position** – Gauteng North B (Pretoria MSC)
- **6th Position** – Northern Cape (Kimberley MSC)

Masters Division: Individual Category
- **Victor Ludorum** – Lt Col Ig Gründlingh (Gauteng North A)
- **2nd Position** – Lt Col Shaun Carroll (Free State)
- **3rd Position** – Maj Wessel Hattingh (Gauteng North A)

Senior Division: Team Category
- **1st Position** – Gauteng North (Pretoria MSC)
- **2nd Position** – Limpopo (Polokwane MSC)
- **3rd Position** – Gauteng North (Bloemfontein MSC)
- **4th Position** – Northern Cape (Kimberley MSC)
- **5th Position** – Free State A (Bloemfontein MSC)
- **6th Position** – Free State B (Bloemfontein MSC)
- **7th Position** – Central Gauteng (Heidelberg MSC)
- **2nd Position** – F Sgt Darryll Goosen (Gauteng North)
- **3rd Position** – S Sgt Thinus Conradie (Central North West)

In his closing remarks, Lt Col Gründlingh emphasised the fact that recruitment and development is the responsibility of Regional Chairpersons and that budgeting and planning thereof remains at the MSC level. He furthermore congratulated the members selected for the upcoming tournaments and appealed that they be true ambassadors for the SANDF.
Ramadhan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. It is the most important month of the lunar calendar. It is a tremendous gift from Allah in so many ways. In our current state of being down and out, it can uplift us, empower us, and turn around our situation individually and collectively. It is the spring season for the garden of Islam when dry grass can come back to life and flowers bloom. The most important message of Ramadan is that we are not just body but body and soul. During Ramadan we deprive the body to uplift the soul.

Ramadan is here to liberate us from the evil within ourselves. We therefore need to:

- Try to abstain from all acts which will deviate us from reaching a highest level of piety.
- Rediscover our inner self.
- Reorientate yourself.
- Devote our time to read of the Qur’an, voluntary worship, prayers and conversations with Allah.
- Reflect on the direction of our lives and our priorities.
- Reflect and strengthen our relationship with our Creator.

On the last day of one Sha’ban, Prophet Muhammad [Peace be upon Him], gave a sermon about the upcoming month of Ramadhan. It is a very important sermon that we should carefully read before every Ramadhan to prepare ourselves mentally and spiritually for the sacred month. It begins: “Oh people! A great month is coming to you. A blessed month. A month in which there is one night that is better than a thousand months. A month in which Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night. Whoever draws nearer to Allah by performing any of the voluntary good deeds in this month shall receive the same reward as is there for performing an obligatory deed at any other time. And whoever discharges an obligatory deed in this month shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time. It is the month of Sabr (patience), and the reward for patience is Heaven. It is the month of kindness and charity. It is a month in which a believer’s sustenance is increased. Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast, shall have his sins forgiven, and he will be saved from the Fire of Hell, and he shall have the same reward as the fasting person, without the latter’s reward being diminished at all.” The hadith continues and contains many other very important messages.

However let us take the time to highlight two of the statements contained above. First, that Ramadhan is the month of sabr. The English translation is patience but that word has a very narrow meaning compared to sabr. Sabr means not only patience and perseverance in the face of difficulties, it also means being steadfast in avoiding sin in the face of temptations and being persistent in performing virtues when that is not easy. Overcoming hunger and thirst during fasting is part of it but protecting our eyes, ears, minds, tongues, and hands, etc from all sins is also part of it. So is being persistent in doing good deeds as much as possible despite external or internal obstacles. Ramadhan requires sabr in its fullest sense and provides a training ground for that very important quality to be developed and nurtured. Here is a recipe for the complete overhaul of our life, not just a small adjustment in meal times.

The second statement to consider: that Ramadhan is the month of kindness and charity. With those in distress in the millions in the world today, the need for remembering this message of Ramadhan cannot be overstated.

We would like to wish all Muslims a Ramadhan Mubarak and may all good deeds in this month be accepted and a joyous Eid.
The Force That Cares.
The Centenary Celebration of the 1st Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
18 July 1918 - 5 December 2013

Be the Legacy