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2005 - Winner of the Government Communicator of the Year Award (GCIS).
2005 - Winner of the National Ubungcweti Award (GCIS).

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The outgoing Officer Commanding of the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG), Col Ntsundeni Thenga, and his entourage inspecting the guard of honour during the parade. (*Photo by Capt Kefentse Mofokeng*)

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For the latest news on defence matters in South Africa, visit our website at: [www.dod.mil.za](http://www.dod.mil.za)
This year’s State of the Nation Address (SONA) was the 25th since the dawn of the democratic era. Read all about what this prestigious event means to you as a South African on pages 14 and 15 and the role that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) played during the 2019 SONA.

The National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) captivated thousands of citizens at the Opening of Parliament during the recently held SONA in Cape Town. The NCG members’ performance was something to observe. They delighted the spectators with their precision drill, tailored military uniforms and highly polished rifles.

The National Ceremonial Guard continues to be the pride of the SANDF and the nation, but it also boasts a newly appointed Officer Commanding, Lt Col Putswe Jacob Litlhakanyane.

During the change of command parade, Lt Col Litlhakanyane quoted the great Sun Tzu on command and control when he said: “If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the General is to blame, but if orders are clear and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of the officers” (read about the change of command parade on pages 42 to 43).

Over the past 25 years of democracy, the National Ceremonial Guard has witnessed some important moments in the history of South Africa, dating back to the inauguration of the first democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, the late Mr Nelson Mandela.

The NCG renders effective and efficient ceremonial support to the Presidency, the Department of Military Veterans, government departments, the Department of Defence and the Metro Councils by providing VIP protection, the NCG Guard of Honour and NCG Band during official visits by foreign dignitaries. The NCG has an additional component, namely the NCG Entertainment Band which adds lustre during official functions and other events.

The vision and mission of the NCG is to be an exquisite SANDF unit, which strives to professionally present ceremonial parades of a high standard, VIP protection and musical services at national level.

Just recently, when the President of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, paid an official visit to Defence Headquarters, the members of the NCG again delivered a tremendous military performance (read pages 10 and 11).

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier
The SA National Defence College hosts Chinese Defence University delegates

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo by L Cpl Paul M pangala

Approximately 40 Chinese students from the People’s Liberation Army National Defence University (PLA NDU) led by Maj Gen Lu Wen, Director of Military Management College, visited the SA National Defence College (SANDC) at Thaba Tshwane recently.

The PLA NDU is a national university administered by the People’s Liberation Army. It is the top university for military education in China committed to the joint education at national security level for the PLA and civilian government agencies, policy consultation for strategic and defence issues and the development of mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation between the PLA and other armed forces through international outreach. The NDU is tasked to prepare senior commanding, staff and research officers for the Army, Navy and Air Force of the PLA, and to provide policy consultation to the State Council and Central Military Commission.

The objective of the PLA NDU visit to the SANDC was to benchmark with the college in some academic spheres of interest and through presentation be enlightened on governance policy and leadership of the South African Reserve Force and Para military force. Brig Gen Marcelino Sereko, the Commandant of the SANDC, welcomed the delegation and gave a comprehensive presentation on the mandate of the SANDC the execution thereof.

His presentation further served to inform the PLA NDU student visitors of the universal successes the college has had in educating many students from various state departments and countries. Brig Gen Sereko indicated that those who studied the SANDC curriculum gained valuable knowledge and internationally recognised qualification.

Brig Gen Sereko highlighted to the PLA NDU delegation that South Africa and China not only enjoy cordial and healthy diplomatic relations, but economic relations between the countries have blossomed. He said: “In a mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, China has for nine years in a row been South Africa’s largest trading partner.”

Indicating the existence of healthy academic relations between the two countries Brig Gen Sereko said that China’s Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Lin Songtian, and his staff availed scholarships to South African students wishing to study in China in 2018.

“China supports South Africa to play a leading and pioneering role in Africa, and become the bridge to lead Africa’s industrialisation,” Brig Gen Sereko concluded his speech.

The Chief of the Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, gave a presentation on the overall existence of the Reserve Force within the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) on the role of the Reserves that covered aspects of the role of the Reserves, the One Force Concept, the command and control line of the Reserves, utilisation, strategic objectives and how to join the Defence Reserve Force.

Maj Gen Andersen concluded by telling the PLA NDU visiting students the advantage of the Defence Reserve Force system to the SANDF and the country in terms of nation building.

Maj Gen Lu Wen, Director of the Military Management College, and Brig Gen Marcelino Sereko, the Commandant of the SA National Defence College, with the Chinese students from the People’s Liberation Army National Defence University.
DEPLOYED MILITARY WOMEN

There has not been much said about a military woman, yet no wars could ever been won without her. A military woman is a teacher of independence, perseverance, discipline and integrity. She possesses a great sense of humour, and can make any house a home.

She is a woman of quiet strength, who has shaped the hearts of our bravest heroes, And taught them to value peace above all. The military woman is unshakeable and unshakably in love for her country. That is how she is able to let go of her most precious treasure: her family and loved ones. We proudly salute all the military women on the lines sacrificing their lives to protect our beautiful country.

For all the people who think a military woman is incompetent, you are welcome. A military woman will still do her best to protect you. We are mothers, sisters and daughters, Wearing boots and carrying guns, We are the ones leaving all we own, To make sure your future is carved in stone.

Military women, we are the ones who fight and die We might not be able to save the world, but at least we try. We walked the paths to where we are at, and we want no other choice other than that. We came here to fight for the ones we hold dear. If that’s not respected, We would rather stay here and pray for those behind the enemy lines.

I am a military woman; I stand as one on foreign soil because of my strength. I can care for myself when I am sick or lonely because I am brave. I can dry my own tears because I know what it cost to sacrifice. I can give support to my soldiers because I have devotion. I can say good-bye to my loved ones when I don’t want to because I have courage.

Military women are a life givers, miracle creators, and magic makers. They are born fearlessly and sweet. We are born with the fire of queens and conquerors.

We are born with the wisdom of sage, We are the tellers of our own tales. We are born with immeasurable soul, and desire for passion.

Remember, a woman is more than what you can see. We have the power and grace, the depth of our deep sea heart. Never forget we are still women, divine as we have been from the heart. We are strong, smart and crafty, passionate, courageous and generous. We have emotions and devotion, hope, beauty and power.

We have a brain and we know how to use it.

Military women, I apologise for them who call you pretty/beautiful. Before they can call you pretty/beautiful, We are intelligent and brave. I am sorry if I make it sound simple because of what you’re born with, Is the most you have to be proud of. From now on I will rather say to you military women: You are resilient and extraordinary Not that I don’t think you are beautiful, but because you are so much more than that.

So military women, don’t settle to be beautiful, They keep saying that beautiful is something a girl needs to be, But honestly, forget that. Don’t worry about being beautiful, Be intelligent, be witty, be interesting and be adventurous. We are an eternity of other things to be other than beautiful. And what is beautiful anyway? But a set of letters strung together to make a word. Be our own definition of amazing always. This is so much more important than anything beautiful, ever.

In conclusion, as the great Maya Angelou said: “Women are phenomenal, phenomenally woman”. And remember military woman, it is possible to be strong, powerful and beautiful.

Lt Mahlabane Mabogoene, email

LETTERs TO THE EDITOR

SA SOLDIER welcomes letters to the Editor. Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters may be edited for reasons of style, accuracy or space limitations. Letters should preferably be typewritten. All letters must include the writer’s full name, address and home telephone number. The opinions expressed in letters are not necessarily the views of the Department of Defence/ SA National Defence Force. The volume of letters we receive make individual acknowledgement impossible. Please send your letters to: The Editor, SA SOLDIER Letters, Private Bag X158, Pretoria, 0001. Letters may also be faxed to (012) 355-6399 or sent via email to sasoldiermag@gmail.com. We would like to hear your comments or ideas, particularly about matters concerning the Department of Defence. Regrettably, anonymous letters cannot be published - Editor.
Advocate Sylvester Jewell (30) with 10 years of military service is a Private in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and Pte Randi Davids (27) with seven years of military service. Both completed their Bachelor of Laws (LLB) through Unisa in 2017. Both graduated on 19 May 2018.

They are both members of 6 SA Infantry Battalion, a unit known for its operational successes, which shines bright with their members' academic successes. These two Riflemen each undertook 40 modules, obtained through correspondence, while performing their SANDF duties to their maximum ability. Together they bagged a total of 20 distinctions, an achievement which brings much pride to the Unit. During the course of their studies, they participated in several Infantry courses and organised SA Army events. This demonstrates the capabilities of an Infantry soldier when operating under pressure.

In addition to his LLB, Adv Jewell has a three-year National Diploma in Financial Management with a distinction. He is currently enrolled for a Master’s degree in Law (LLM) which will be completed in 2020 and African Thought Leadership with Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institution (TMALI) under Unisa which will be completed 2019. He is admitted as a practicing advocate of the High Court of South Africa, exempted from pupillage. Furthermore, he is a member of the National Bar Council of South Africa and a Certified General Tax Practitioner with the South African Institution of Tax Practitioners. Currently Adv Jewell has been accepted to do an MBA at MANCOSA in 2019 and a Postgraduate Diploma in Labour Law Practice part-time.

Pte Davids completed his degree in a record time of four years, equivalent to the time taken by full-time students, to complete a LLB. He also boasts with an overall average of 67% and 13 distinctions and is currently busy completing his articles. Both Riflemen completed their practical legal training at the Nelson Mandela University during night classes through LSSA LEAD and Practice Management Training which is the only management qualification that you need in law to be a director in a law firm or to start your own law firm.

They both wrote all four the Attorney’s Board exams twice as there was a national issue with the papers and required to do so. They are now just awaiting the results. They once again thank the SANDF and their Unit for the assistance. They aim to practise law within the Department of Defence and more specific the SANDF.

Both Riflemen said: “We want to thank the Minister of Defence, the Chief of the SANDF, General Officer Commanding Infantry Formation, our Officer Commanding, the Leader group (Lt Col Yandisa Gaxeni, Maj Carl Fuller, Maj Gaga, Maj Pabatso Manwedi, Lt Tebogo Morodi, Lt Mandla Maseko and currently retired WO1 Brain Visagie) who played a personal and vital role in our development, all protocols observed, our wives Ms Sherilize Jewell and Ms Ashmita Davids, our family and friends for their continuous support. Without your help, we would not have achieved our success. We hope that as we strive to become legal practitioners, we will continue to have the support of the SANDF. We acknowledge that our success is not our own, but that it is the success of the entire SANDF.”

These are their words of encouragement for any member of the SANDF who intends to start studying and to those who are studying: “As an Infanteer you are taught to operate under any condition and to perform to the best of your ability with what you have. Should you apply for this teaching, success will surely follow. Do not let fear of failure discourage you because failure is a building block in every success-story.” Pte (Adv) Sylvester Jewell, 6 SA Infantry Battalion.
The Force Intervention Brigade Commander receives the United Nations Special Representative to his area of responsibility


The SRSG visited the FIB Areas of Responsibility around Mavivi and Beni where Tanzanian, Malawian and South African Battalions are based. Immediately after landing at Beni Airport, the SRSG accompanied by the Deputy Force Commander, Maj Gen Bernard Commis, the FIB Commander, Brig Gen Njabulo Dube, the Deputy Commander FIB, Col Maseko, the Commanding Officers of the three Battalions and her civilian entourage were escorted to the Malawian Battalion situated at Boikene near Beni town.

On arrival at the Malawian Battalion Headquarters, the SRSG was briefed via a presentation on the security situation and the ongoing operations and later a close meeting with the contingent commanders.

The message delivered by the SRSG carried weight as she told the MONUSCO Republic of South African Battalion members that she came to greet and thank members of the Blue Helmets for their commitment in fighting against the enemy forces to bring peace in the DRC.

The SRSG praised the members of the Blue Helmets for representing the UN in good faith, being resolute to the Mandate even when they lost members during Operation USALAMA Centre that was carried against the Allied Democratic Forces in the Jungle named...
The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of the United Nations (UN) Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms Mami Mizotori, reassures the members of the SA Battalion that she will return to spend time with them.

“Triangle of death” from 5 November 2018.

She indicated that she had to come to pass her condolences to the FIB regarding the deceased members from the Malawian and Tanzanian Forces. The FIB areas visited by the SRSG and her entourage include all FIB Level 1 hospitals and the Air Medical Evacuation Team.

Coincidentally, the visit of the SRSG was executed on the same day that the local population organised a march declaring their support to the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) which is the DRC government forces. The marchers carried banners with the writing that they are behind the MONUSCO partnership.

Throughout, her visit the SRSG voiced her happiness at the work carried by the FIB in the DRC and that she fully supports the FIB in its endeavours to bring peace.

While addressing RSA Battalion members at the Tactical Headquarters, the SRSG told the members: “I came here to greet you and I am very happy to see you. Being here in the DRC is a good thing for me as the SRSG and I really appreciate it”.

The SRSG went on to say that she would like to return and spend time with the FIB to see how they carry on their daily routine.

The Catering Staff of the SS Battalion looked delighted after being complimented by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) of the United Nations (UN) Disaster Risk Reduction, Ms Mami Mizotori.
The Commander-in-Chief visits Defence Headquarters

By Ms Esethu Sodo
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano and Mr Timothy Makhubele

Following his much anticipated visit, the President of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, accompanied by the Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and other senior government officials undertook an official visit to the Defence Headquarters recently.

The visit took place as part of the commitment given in the President’s 2018 State of the Nation Address that he would engage with and visit senior officials in government departments to ensure that the work of the Government is effectively aligned.
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, hands over a gift of appreciation to the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, President Cyril Ramaphosa.

After the parade, President Cyril Ramaphosa greeted the members of the Military Command Council.

Employees at Defence Headquarters cheering for President Cyril Ramaphosa.
SA Navy doing more with less - a promise of a bigger and better 2019 Armed Forces Day

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photo by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The SA Navy will host the 2019 Armed Forces Week from 15 to 21 February. This much anticipated annual event on the calendar of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) culminates in the address by the President of the Republic of South Africa and Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, on Armed Force Day on 21 February.

As a precursor to this important annual event, the SA Navy held a media launch on 28 February 2019. The media launch was held on board the SAS AMATOLA that had docked in the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront (V&A Waterfront) in Cape Town.

Rear Admiral Guy Jamieson, the Deputy Chief of the SA Navy, in his strategic overview address of the Armed Forces Day to the members of the media indicated that though the SA Navy was excited about hosting this event as most of its resources and equipment are effectively based in Cape Town, the event should not be seen as an exclusively SA Navy event because the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Military Health Service are all involved. This makes the Armed Forces Day an annual SANDF event.

The Deputy Chief of the SA Navy lamented that though there have been budget cuts, not only in the SANDF, but also in all Government departments, it was necessary to have an event such as this. It is during events such as these that the SANDF can test its capability and capacity to execute an exercise of this magnitude. It compels the SANDF to move forces around the country because all Services and Divisions take part in this event. R Adm Jamieson said: “We are going to have aircraft flown from as far as Makhado in Limpopo and there will be mechanised forces coming from Bloemfontein.

All this needs proper planning. This gives us an opportunity to test our combat readiness and improve our capabilities in a joint manner as a One Force. Above all, the Armed Forces event gives us a chance as the SANDF to interact with the broader public, because we rotate Armed Forces Day every year around the country.”

R Adm (JG) James Matshimane, Director Naval Personnel and 2019 Armed Forces Chief Coordinator, in addressing the media highlighted that all occupational health and safety (OHS) rules and standards and the Cape Town Municipality bylaws requirements were considered and adhered to in the planning for this event.
The Fan Park will be based at the Mandela Park Stadium in Khayelitsha from 16 to 19 February. The purpose of the Fan Park is to interact with the community of Cape Town and the surrounding areas and to create awareness of career opportunities in the SANDF. A 5km and 10km walk/run aims at building friendship through sport, as part of the interaction between the Armed Forces and the community. Sport development clinics for various sporting codes, such as cricket, football, netball, rugby and swimming will be held in Khayelitsha over the period 18 to 20 February.

At the Fan Park the SA Army will display technical and training capabilities of the Infantry, Armour, Artillery, Air Defence Artillery, Engineering, Signallers and Intelligence. The SA Air Force will display the A109/BK117/Rooivalk aircraft, armament and survival equipment, aircraft mechanics, tactical mobile radar/Umlindi radar antenna, a mobile tower, two Impala simulators, ten PCs with flight simulators and two fire and rescue service vehicles.

The SA Navy will display their various war ships and divers in a diving tank. The SA Military Health Service is to exhibit an air droppable surgical post, a Gecko vehicle, two CB detection vehicles, three Level 2 field hospital components, a pharmacy component, one search and rescue equipment, one soft skin ambulance, a communicable disease isolation unit and specialised unique medical equipment.

At the Special Forces stall, survival tactics and skills, signaling on land and sea, including seabourne and urban equipment, parachutes and Special Forces weapons will be on display for the public.

The public will be given access to naval ships and submarines to increase awareness and to showcase the community the different types of vessels being operated by the SA Navy. These naval ships and submarines will be open to the public on 16 and 17 February at the V&A Waterfront.

An interfaith church service will be held at the Cape Town City Hall on 17 February 2019. The service’s objective is to create an opportunity for the members of the SANDF and the different faith communities to interact with each other.

On 18 February 2019, the Combined Military Bands and Choirs will entertain the members of the public with a variety of music during a gala concert to be held at the Cape Town City Hall.

One of the most exciting events of the Armed Forces event to be held would probably be the Night Shoot at Sunrise Beach, Muizenberg, on 18 and 19 February 2019. This spectacular event showcases how the SANDF assets are deployed and utilised.

Every year the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, hosts a Legacy Project. This project is meant to empower impoverished entities that need attention in terms of refurbishment or any improvement within the community during the week that the Armed Forces event is held. This year the Siviwe School of Skills in Gugulethu was identified as the Minister’s Legacy Project. The Legacy Project will be held on 19 February. Repair works will be carried out by SANDF members and material for improvements at the school will be sourced through donations and sponsors. Other stakeholders involved are the Department of Education, the Department of Sport and Recreation, and the City of Cape Town.

The week’s activities will culminate in the address by President Ramaphosa on 21 February 2019. Armed Forces Day will start with a wreath-laying ceremony at the SS Mendi Memorial site at the University of Cape Town Lower Campus in the morning followed by the main parade at Table View at Bloubergstrand. This will be followed by a capability demonstration at Table View Beach.

In an interview with SA Soldier, the Deputy Chief of the SA Navy said: “Notwithstanding the stringent budgetary cuts by treasury, the SANDF makes a concerted effort to bring the SANDF to the people. Doing more with less, going the extra mile to reach our milestones regardless of the challenges is the culture we seek to inculcate in the SANDF. The 2019 Armed Forces event will be as good as expected if not going beyond expectation. South Africans should bear in mind that this event is not just about the display, but about a show of force as the National Defence Force of the country and indeed a celebration and appreciation of the SANDF of the democratic era.” In his opinion the SA Navy as the 2019 host and custodian of the Armed Forces event has “pulled out all the stops” to make this event successful, bigger and better.
State of the Nation Address 2019 - what it means to you as a citizen

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano
and Mr Timothy Makhubele

Every year the State of the Nation Address (SONA) is held at Parliament in Cape Town. The 2019 SONA, which was the 25th since the advent of the democratic epoch, was held on 7 February 2019. What does this prestigious yet highly significant political event, also referred to as the opening of Parliament, mean to you and the country?

What is SONA?
This annual event in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) as a sovereign state is an occasion during which the incumbent President of South Africa as the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) addresses a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament, the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP). During his address, the President reports on the current political and socio-economic state of the nation and gives further direction on Government’s key policy objectives and deliverables for the year ahead in a comprehensive speech to Members of Parliament, which is the basis for executive action.

The participation of the SANDF in SONA
Though the SANDF is apolitical in its nature, as the custodian of the protection of the sovereignty of the South African state, it is duty bound to provide the highest ceremonial honour to the event in recognition of this special official sitting of all three tiers.
of Government, namely the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.

The SANDF provides a guard of honour to the Presidential Convoy lining the streets en route to Parliament. At the Parliament Precinct, the SANDF fulfills various roles, such as musical entertainment by a military band as parliamentarians move on to take their respective seats in the NA in accordance with the stringent rules of this specific joint sitting. In honouring this respectable annual event and its incumbent Commander-in-Chief and the National Flag, the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) salutes the President and takes the lead in the National Anthem. The SA Air Force (SAAF) provides the flypast salute while the SA Army performs the 21-gun salute.

Provision of aide-de-camp as SANDF duty
The aide-de-camp role, which is performed by high ranking military officers, is a ceremonial duty to honour the President as the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF. This function (aide-de-camp) is attached to the President of the RSA at all ceremonies of the State, such as the opening of Parliament and the inauguration of the President. Their role in the country is limited to ceremonial duties and once this task has been fulfilled, they are immediately withdrawn.

During the SONA, the aides-de-camp lead the Presidential Procession onto a saluting platform on the steps of the National Assembly to receive the ceremonial honours in the form of salute by the NCG, the 21-gun salute, the National Anthem and a salute flight. They then lead the procession into the Chamber and stand guard at the entrance of the Chamber. Col Palesa Make, Senior Staff Officer Education, Training and Development at Military Health Training Formation, and Col Molefi Rapoo, Personal Staff Officer to the Surgeon General, were availed by the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) as aides-de-camp for this year’s SONA.

Brief composition of SANDF participation
The SANDF comprising the SA Army, SAAF, the SA Navy and SAMHS provides soldiers in different ranks to march in columns as a guard of honour lining the designated streets and the Parliament Precinct. The SA Army provided 240 soldiers, SAAF 120, the SA Navy 120 and SAMHS 80 soldiers, as well as five ambulances for the occasion. The numbers exclude supporting staff and all other logistical support associated with this event.

The SONA speech theme and the meaning thereof
The President’s address for every SONA is categorised into themes that is meant to summarily capture the essence of the speech and inspire the nation, as well as cajole the nation to action as per the speech of the event.

Dissecting the theme for your benefit and without getting political in this regard. The theme for this year’s SONA was “Following up on our commitments: Making Your Future Work Better”. The Head of State in this theme seeks to inspire confidence in his administration. Based on the theme, the President highlighted the Government’s objectives that were reached and programmes that the Government initiated. By keeping promises he made previously, his administration is making all efforts as Government to improve people’s lives for the better.

It was in this vain that the President in his speech said: “We plan to do things differently, starting with a deeper partnership with our communities in the planning, building and maintenance of infrastructure. Just as we did with the Vaal River, where the SANDF intervened to address a sewage crisis; we will call on all the capabilities of the State and the private sector to address infrastructure challenges.” By highlighting this effort of the SANDF in Parliament, the President indicates Government’s appreciation of what the SANDF is doing for the country over and above its Constitutional mandate.

This fits in with the SANDF’s mantra “SANDF that cares” because the SANDF is also concerned about the wellbeing of the nation and the betterment of people’s lives.
Military Academy embraces education

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

The Military Academy hosted its annual Passing-out Parade for the third-year group, MA18, recently in Saldanha at the Military Academy parade ground.

This parade is the zenith of the Military Academy’s activities and symbolises excellence in terms of the institution’s core business. The event not only marks an important day on the national military calendar, but also in the West Coast.

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, said despite budgetary constraints students still work hard to achieve their degrees.
At this event students who excelled and graduated in completing their three years of academic learning and military professional development were rightly rewarded for their achievement in the presence of their peers, families, lecturers, community and the senior staff members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

Among this wonderful crop of young talent, the best candidates in the various Services were awarded with floating Services’ trophies. The overall best candidate, combining both military prowess and academic work, was awarded with the Sword of Honour.

CO Gugu Nxumalo was the star of the day, receiving the Sword of Honour, as well as the trophy for the Best SA Military Health Service student. Other trophy winners were Lt Shinay Ruiters (Best SA Army student), CO Prince Manaile (Best SA Air Force student) and Ensign Cameron Chetty (Best SA Navy student).

The main functionary at the parade, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, was delighted by the number of students at the Passing-out Parade. He said though the parade is taking place when the SANDF is facing serious budget constraints, the students still put efforts into their studies despite the dispiriting economy.

General Shoke said if hands are not joined together in fighting this budgetary matter, in three years to come the SANDF might not be able to fund some of the students.

Having mentioned the budgetary challenges, Gen Shoke still motivated the students to study hard to become the light to the people of South Africa and the organisation itself.

The Chief of the SANDF shared his enthusiasm with those students who tirelessly fought all the odds towards achieving their Doctoral degrees.

Part of his address encouraged these students to put the knowledge they have acquired over the years of their studies to practice in the very organisation not forgetting to encourage Service Chiefs to use this crop of young talent in their right mustering.

Acknowledging all these students, Gen Shoke added on the point that even though they have obtained their degrees, they must remember that the military is still a calling to be admired.
Students receive accolades at Military Academy Awards Evening

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

The Military Academy in Saldanha has once again removed the perception that soldiers are only men and women of war when hosting its annual prestigious Awards Evening ceremony at the Military Academy Combined Club for the deserving students who were at their first, second and final year as well as post-graduate students.

CO Gugu Nxumalo, Lt Shinay Ruiters and CO Tembakazi Swartbooi were accoladed with overall prizes, making these three the most prevalent crop of the year 2018.

In total more than 30 students, who excelled in their studies, received certificates, trophies and gifts as tokens of recognition for their hard work during the academic year from the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke.

In addition to the students’ acknowledgement, the members of the Faculty of Military Science who excelled in their academic and professional development were also awarded.

The Undergraduates trophies were awarded to the overall best first year student and overall top student over three years of study wherein the CEMIS certificates were awarded to all post-graduate students, who presented papers at recognised national academic symposia during the past year.

Addressing the students and guests, the Chief Operating Officer Stellenbosch University, Professor Stan du Plessis, said universities were created more than a thousand years ago to institutionalise a process by which opportunities are given to the next generation to learn certain skills and to improve
The Chief Operating Officer Stellenbosch University, Professor Stan du Plessis, addressing the students.

themselves as well as to the betterment of the society.

Professor Du Plessis said: "At Stellenbosch University we are delighted that we can also offer programmes in the military service with the collaboration of the Department of Defence to pass knowledge and skills to the next generation."

Professor Du Plessis added: "Tonight we can celebrate the outcome of this collaboration where we honour those students who have excelled academically, I congratulate all students who will be honoured here this evening."

He also shared his enthusiasm with the 78 students who after the day of the Award Evening ceremony were to be capped with their degrees at Stellenbosch University. Among the 78 students, two were capped with Directorate Degrees.

Professor Du Plessis concluded: “A student’s success is the call of what we do at Stellenbosch University and we strive to do better.”

At the event, the overall best first-year student was CO Tembakazi Swartbooi and the overall top students over three years of study were Lt Ruiters (in first place) and CO Gugu Nxumalo (in second place). The overall top students over three years, both believe that the secret for their success was spending more time studying.

CO Swartbooi who is studying towards her BMil degree in organisational and Resources Management said she pulled through all odds by keeping her focus and by prioritising her tasks while remaining true to herself and by keeping reminding herself of her goals.

She said to SA Soldier, as much as studying is not easy, she had to find joy out of it. CO Swartbooi was awarded with three certificates for overall student in different subjects apart from several rewards.

CO Swartbooi remarked what gave drive to her was the fact that she is the first born whose siblings are looking up to her, so she needed to do well to show them that everything is possible.

She believes in challenging herself always to do the best in everything that she does and that is what made her bag more than three certificates and trophies that night.

The top achievers, fltr: CO Tembakazi Swartbooi, Lt Shinay Ruiters and CO Gugu Nxumalo who shared the limelight at the award evening ceremony.
Chief of the SANDF makes his intent known to his commanders

By Ms Esethu Sodo
Photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirimbe

Walking through the gates of the Military Health Training Formation, you could sense the atmosphere changing, filled with the presence of power. That is when you realise the leaders of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) are convening for the Chief of the SANDF Commanders Communication Session.

The Surgeon General, Lt Aubrey Sedibe, welcoming delegates to the Chief of the SA National Defence Force Commanders Communication session at the Military Health Training Formation.

The aim of the session was for the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, to provide military strategic guidance to his general officers, flag officers and officers commanding, in terms of his Commander’s intent for the year and provide necessary guidelines to the key cohort of senior commanders tasked with spearheading the organisation’s mandate at various levels.

The Chief of the SANDF also used the session to receive and give feedback on resolutions taken at his previous Communication Session held in 2018. He also charted the way forward for the year ahead to ensure that his commanders at all levels are well aligned with his intent and the need for them to adapt to the ever-changing defence community mandate and the military guidelines.

In addition, it also gave the commanders an opportunity to voice out their concerns and propose possible improvements.
needed in the SANDF. During the session the commanders provided detailed environmental scans of their areas of responsibility, highlighted critical areas and sought ways and means to mitigate identified challenges.

In welcoming delegates, the Surgeon General, Lt Gen Aubrey Sedibe, emphasised the attributes and characteristics of a good leader. He said that a good leader is a visionary person who always led by example, values, professionalism and integrity. He stated that a leader must be the epitome of a professional, dedicated and disciplined officer.

Lt Gen Sedibe added: “A leader is a person who goes to his people and stays with them, serves them, learns what they know and teach them what he knows. A leader must provide foresight and courageous leadership at all times. As a leader you must portray a very positive attitude and have an energetic approach to the performance of your duties. Be a very efficient multitasker, well organised, able to meet deadlines and work well under pressure.”

Speaking to the commanders, the Chief of the SANDF echoed the same sentiments as the Surgeon General. Gen Shoke said as a leader one must provide duty of care to personnel under their command and uphold discipline and morale of his subordinates. He said: “Your disciplinary record, the manner in which you conduct yourself and the enthusiasm with which you perform your duties, must be a very clear indication of your excellent disposition towards the SANDF.”

Furthermore, Gen Shoke shared his concerns with regard to the state of the SANDF and current risks facing the organisation. He said that by being disciplined does not mean your conduct at work and in public, but it also includes reporting criminality happening within the SANDF. Gen Shoke urged the commanders to be wary of negligence when discharging their duties. He advised them not to tolerate ill-discipline among the ranks and act whenever it is required of them to do so, stating that they should “call a spade a spade”.

The Chief of the SANDF also voiced his concerns with regard to the leakage of information by some members in the SANDF. He urged the commanders to stop sending people on courses if they do not have plans for them. He asked the commanders to improve the quality and standard of training and requested them to prioritise sport and fitness in the SANDF. He mentioned that some of these concerns were touched on and resolved during the feedback of the previous Communication Session.

General Shoke elaborated further on this by stating: “We are here together not as friends, but as comrades in arms to serve the people of this country. We are here as an institution above petty politics and should we fail, we must ask ourselves why and how we could fix it.”

The Service and Divisional Chiefs and other commanders listening to the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, addressing them.
The importance of education can never be underestimated. The 2015 Defence Review stated that education, training and development are the pathway for the development of military leaders with the required character, knowledge, skills and attitudes. This statement was echoed by the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, recently during the opening of the Security and Defence Studies Programme (SDSP) 05/19 at the SA National Defence College in Thaba Tshwane.

According to the Chief of the SANDF, the Programme is one of the quick wins of the implementation of the recommendations made in the Defence Review. He said the SANDF’s focus was on the enhancement of both professional and academic qualifications of members, especially senior military officers. Gen Shoke said the Programme prepared members to address emerging challenges and to generate and propose strategic responses.

General Shoke said: “After the course, it is expected of you to be able to advise your principals on how to address defence and security challenges related to the four milestones set out in the Defence Review. This will enable you to give relevant advice to the SANDF to Arrest the Decline, to rebalance, capacitate and respond to strategic challenges.”

Furthermore, the Chief of the SANDF said that South Africa’s security was an integral component of its developmental process. Gen Shoke said: “The Programme reflects this in many ways, since it aims at harnessing human resources among the senior civil and military officers who attend the course. Graduates from this course occupy from the highest positions in the SANDF. Hence they bring along a rich tapestry of learning, which help them to craft the best possible solutions, not only to security dilemmas, but also other issues that cross their way in the business of governance and nation building.”

The SDSP is a year-long, postgraduate-level educational programme with a strong practical focus, which provides senior military and civilian officials with the knowledge, awareness and skills to operate at the highest level of leadership, command, policy formulation and management.

The focus will be on enabling the participants to analyse the contemporary security environment using a multidisciplinary approach, assess long-term political and security trends, develop elements of the national security policy and cooperate with other national security systems on a regional and global level.

The Programme is the result of many years of development, refinement and fine tuning. As South Africa’s most advanced Programme of professional military education, it provides members with the opportunity to spend a year of learning, thinking and writing about the challenges that they will face as they proceed to command and management roles at the most senior levels of their profession. Participation in this programme offers members the opportunity to shift their focus from tactical and operational levels to strategic level.
A new Brigade Warrant Officer for 46 SA Brigade

By Ms Maeshela Kekana
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The outgoing Brigade Warrant Officer (BWO) of 46 SA Brigade, Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Elia Erick Snyders, recently handed over the symbol of office to Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Victor Johnnie van Wyk at a Change of Office parade held at 46 SA Brigade in Johannesburg.

CWO Snyders who is retiring from active military duty was responsible for echelon systems during exercises, such as Exercise SEBOKA, NDLOVU and YOUNG EAGLE. He served in various positions as a member of the SANDF during his military career. He served as an instructor to train junior leaders and was the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) at Eastern Transvaal Command, the Training Warrant Officer at 111 SA Infantry Battalion and later the RSM at the same Battalion, including the Group Sergeant Major at Soutpansberg Military Area, among others.

He was deployed internally to various provinces. In addition, CWO Snyders was the Mission Support Warrant Officer at the African Mission in Burundi between 2003 and 2004 and Mission Warrant Officer in Burundi between 2008 and 2009.

His highlights in the SANDF included being appointed as the SANDF Liaison Warrant Officer (WO) to the International Non-Commissioned Officers Association (INCOA). From 2010 until 2018 he was the liaison WO and NCO with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). These countries participate in the SA Army WOs and NCOs’ skills evaluation.

Addressing members on parade and the guests, CWO Snyders paid tribute to some of the people and organisations that had played a significant role in his career and thanked them for their support. In particular, he thanked his mentors such as WO1 Eddie Sykes, WO1 Dennis Johannes and MWO Abe Bengell (Ret), as well as his staff and members of 46 SA Brigade for standing by his side during some very difficult and trying times, not forgetting the role they played many times during his time as BWO.

In handing the symbol of office over, CWO Snyders was excited that all his work will not fall through the cracks and said: “I am very proud to hand over my role to one of the WOs whom I trained years ago to become an instructor. I watched him over the years and he has become a formidable soldier and a leader”.

MWO Van Wyk when accepting the role of BWO of 46 SA Brigade said that he has all confidence that he will lead the Brigade with the distinction it deserves. CWO Van Wyk is an operationally experienced and highly qualified Warrant Officer and is well versed in military operational thinking, directing, planning and conducting military operations.

While he is humbled by the trust shown in him by the SANDF, he is fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead. However, MWO Van Wyk is optimistic that with the support of his principals, stakeholders and the people of South Africa he will be able to carry out his mandate as expected.
Reaping the rewards sowed over 30 to 40 years

“There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread” - Mother Teresa, Roman Catholic Religious Sister and Missionary.

Conferring of medals to soldiers is a highly valued honour by the recipients that the President of the country as the Commander-in-Chief of the above and beyond the call of duty.

Mandated by the President, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, confers medals and decorations. Gen Shoke as the highest authority militarily holds the prerogative to choose any one he deems appropriate to confer medals on his behalf. The Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Jabulani Mbuli, held a medal parade on behalf of Gen Shoke at SA Army Support Base Eastern Cape in Port Elizabeth recently.

Approximately 40 members received medals for 30 and 40 years of service. SWO (Ret) Johannes Swart was decorated with the 40 Year Service Medal. Two members posthumously received the 30 Year Service Medal.

SA National Defence Force (SANDF) bestows onto soldiers who distinguish themselves while executing their duties, perform conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity acts at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Mandated by the President, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly

Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

It is a well-known and long established tradition that military as a security entity of a state confers various awards and decorations to deserving soldiers. One of these awards and decorations comes in a form of a medal.
Addressing the medal recipients on behalf of Gen Shoke, Lt Gen Mbuli said he was pleased to be the one to bestow these medals to the members who have served the SANDF with such loyalty and gave due diligence while executing their responsibilities as soldiers. The Chief of Logistics said: “It is said that a soldier does not boast about his or her service, medals are the mouth pieces as they reflect the bearer’s history, bravery, merit and loyalty in support of various activities of the SANDF.”

The Deputy Chief of the SA Air Force, Maj Gen Mzayifani Buthelezi, on behalf of the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, congratulated and thanked SWO (Ret) Swart on his 40 Year Service Medal. Maj Gen Buthelezi said to SWO (Ret) Swart: “Your dedication and patience serving in the SANDF are not only encouraging, but inspiring to all young soldiers. You typify resilience that a soldier should possess this is the spirit that military training seeks to inculcate in all young soldiers at the beginning of a soldiering career.” At the time of retirement SWO (Ret) Swart was the Senior Warrant Officer at 19 Squadron at Air Force Base Hoedspruit.

Maj Gen Buthelezi added: “Congratulations to all the medal recipients for their long service, as the first Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Nelson Mandela, said: ‘It always seems impossible until it is done’. During your service in the SANDF you have gone beyond just the call of duty, you surely have proven that hard work can only be preceded by perseverance and one can only reap what one sows.”

The Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Jabulani Mbuli, decorating SWO (Ret) Johannes Swart with the 40 Year Service Medal.

The Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Jabulani Mbuli, accompanied by the podium group inspects the parade.
Goodwill Parcel Project Sponsors appreciate deployed soldiers

The Goodwill Parcel Project (GWPP) delegation under the leadership of Brig Gen Nkosana Bavuma, Director Conventional Operations, Joint Operations and Brig Gen Mkula, Director Area Defence, with the sponsors held a GWPP gift offering ceremony to soldiers from 9 SA Infantry Battalion (9 SAI Bn) deployed in Skukuza, Kruger National Park in Mpumalanga Province. At the deployment area Col Martin Gopane, Officer Commanding (OC) Mpumalanga Joint Tactical Headquarters, gave a presentation to the visitors where he pointed out the successes and challenges of the mission.

Brig Gen Bavuma thanked the soldiers for the sterling job they are doing in protecting the fauna and flora of South Africa. He acknowledged that the upper echelon of the SANDF was aware of the challenges they are facing in the execution of their tasks and that they are working hard to find long-term and sustainable solutions therefor.

This simple act of goodwill grew by leaps and bounded into a project that had now become firmly entrenched on the annual SANDF events calendar. The GWPP has seen the buy-in from a number of South Africa’s large businesses sponsoring this venture over the years, among them Avbob, Sanlam, Mintirho ya Vulavula, Old Mutual, Metropolitan, Hullets, SAAB, the SA Military Health Service Fund, the SA Army Foundation, Liberty Life, Maxi Credit Solutions, Assupol, Clinix Health Group, Novare, the SA Navy Benevolent Fund and the MFS Retirement Advisory Services. Financial donations are used to purchase items, such as household products for military families whose loved ones are on deployment - duty away from home - at year-end. At the same time a militaristic, functional gift is bought for distribution to soldiers on various internal and external deployment missions. At this auspicious event Lt Col Riaan Oberholster, OC 9 SAI Bn, thanked the GWPP sponsors.

Goodwill and/or acts of goodwill are defined as an attitude or spirit of cooperation and benevolence towards or between individuals or entities.
Col Martin Gopane, Officer Commanding Mpumalanga Joint Tactical Headquarters, giving a presentation on the deployment situation in their area of responsibility.

A combined cultural group of 9 SA Infantry Battalion entertains the guests and sponsors with various cultural music and dance reflecting all the South African ethnic groups.

The manifestation of these goodwill attributes can be in various forms. Though goodwill is intangible in terms of its physicality, it is an important asset because we derive some value from it. An act of goodwill plays a significant role in providing a competitive edge, building high employee morale and encourages esprit de corps.

When the GWPP was established almost 17 years ago by the then Sergeant-Major of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), WO1 “Jakes” Jacobs (current rank would have been Master Chief Warrant Officer) who asked all senior Non-Commissioned Officers in the SANDF to voluntarily contribute R1 towards the GWPP. The money raised would be used to bring some festive season spirit to soldiers deployed away from their homes and their families.

Ms Annerie Schultz from the SA Army Foundation, one of the sponsors of the Goodwill Parcel Project, presents a chess board to Lt Col Riaan Oberholster, Officer Commanding 9 SA Infantry Battalion.
The rural Khoapa community under the traditional leadership of Chief Charles Talija Khoapa, learners and teachers from Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School in Matatiele were full of praises for the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) for building three classrooms. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, handed over these classrooms on 20 July 2018.

During the handing over ceremony Minister Mapisa-Nqakula pledged that in addition to the classrooms the Department would donate desktop computers to the school. Honouring the Minister’s pledge subsequent to the handing over of the classrooms, the Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo, recently handed over computers to the school. The SANDF donated 20 desktop computers and the Provincial Department of Education donated 15 computers.

Addressing the attendees, Lt Gen Hlatshwayo said that the SANDF initiative to build the classrooms and donating computers was not in any way obligatory to the soldiers, but voluntary. He indicated that this action typifies the coming to life of the SANDF’s mantra “SANDF that cares”.

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Article and photos by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

The Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo (right), officially hands over the donated computers to Mr Jerry Lepheana, Principal Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School.

Principal of the Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School, Mr Jerry Lepheana, in the newly built computer lab during the interview with the media.

The Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo addresses the attendees about the computer handing over ceremony in the Eastern Cape.
Some of the desk top computers donated by the SA National Defence Force and the Department of Education to Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School in Matatiele. They are installed and ready to use.

“You should always bear in mind that you have a friend indeed in the SANDF,” said the Chief of Joint Operations on behalf of Minister Mapisa-Nqakula.

Talking to SA Soldier the Principal, Mr Jerry Lepheana, said that he was grateful to the soldiers who were touched by the dilapidated state of the school and voluntarily took it upon themselves to do something about the state of the school. This was the genesis of the project to build these classrooms that culminated to the handing over of 35 computers by the SANDF and the Department of Education.

In emphasising the importance of this project in assistance of the school, Mr Lepheana quoted the former President of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, Mr Nelson Mandela: “It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor; that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine; that a child of farm workers can become the President of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given that separates one person from another”.

The Manager in the Office of the Member of the Executive Council (MEC), Mr Mziwandile Mampunye, added his voice in appreciating the SANDF’s endeavour. The Mayor of the Matatiele Local Municipality, Councillor Momelezi Mbedla, said that the occasion felt like it kicks-start their back to school programme. Cllr Mbedla said that as someone who was born, raised and studied and currently works in the villages of Matatiele he could not help it, but to be emotional as he remembers the turbulent past he endured, which the learners of Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School will not have to experience because this newly installed information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure will impact positively on them. The Mayor said: “The message is clear: gone are the days when a black child only sees a computer set for the first time at varsity.”

Cllr Mbedla thanked Minister Mapisa-Nqakula and her Department: “Thank you for giving our children a chance to compete fairly with their peers in the world, which has become a global village. Proper facilities such as we see here today, guarantee a bright future for our young minds”.

Caiphus Khoapa Junior Secondary School was established by the rural community in 1990 when they built three mud classrooms and in 1995 three more classrooms were donated to the school. In 2012, the community built an additional three classrooms. The school currently has 180 learners from Grade R to Grade 7 with Grade 8 envisaged to be commenced soon.

The acts of goodwill by the SANDF, as a government entity, characterises attributes such as compassion and empathy. It is such acts that embodies the essence of the mantra: “SANDF that cares” and indeed echoes the sentiments as voiced by Lt Gen Hlatshwayo in saying: “When in need you have a friend indeed in the SANDF”.  

Fltr: Cllr Momelezi Mbedla, Mayor of the Matatiele Local Municipality, Mr Babalo Madikizela, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) of Human Settlements, Matatiele, Eastern Cape representing Mr Mziwonke Ndabeni, MEC for Education, King Matatiele Khoapa community, Mr Talija Khoapa, and the Chief of Joint Operations, Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo.
The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, paid an official working visit to Nigeria (Abuja) recently. Lt Gen Yam and his delegation were welcomed by the Chief of Army Staff of the Nigerian Army, Lt Gen Tukur Yusuf Buratai. He stated the purpose of the visit by highlighting that Nigeria and South Africa had signed several bilateral agreements through the South Africa/Nigeria bilateral commission on cooperation in areas of defence and other national issues. This follow-up visit afforded them the opportunity to identify key areas of cooperation between the two armies, as well as strengthening the existing relationship and cooperation between the two countries.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, was welcomed by the Chief of Air Staff Nigerian Air Force, Air Marshal S.B. Abubakar. Staff of the Nigerian Army indicated in his welcoming address the dynamics and challenges that his country were facing at the time. One of the main focuses of the Nigerian Army is to sustain peace and security in West Africa. Lt Gen Buratai made mention of his

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, inspects the quarter guard with his visit to the Chief of Army Staff of the Nigerian Army.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, after being welcomed by the Acting Chief of Naval Staff of the Nigerian Navy, R Adm H.A. Rabalola.
The Infantry Patrol Vehicle is a mobile strike capability designed by the Nigerian Army.

The learners of the watermen ship course had a practical demonstration and ground display as part of their passing-out parade.

successful staff visit to the Chief of the SA Army in January 2018 after which the following were accomplished:

- The Nigerian Special Forces troops received training in South Africa and were already deployed in their country using the skills that they had obtained.
- The exchange of one Officer as a Directing Staff at the SA National War College, which will ensure the training of future operational leaders.
- The building of a relationship between Director Military Intelligence and the General Officer Commanding SA Army Intelligence Formation to exchange learning programmes on a tactical level of training between the two countries.

The Chief of the SA Army also paid courtesy visits to the Chief of the Naval Staff, R Adm H.A. Rabalola, the Acting Chief of Naval Staff of the Nigerian Navy, and the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal S.B. Abubakar, the Chief of the Air Staff Nigerian Air Force.

The visiting group flew to Kaduna for a demonstration of watermen ship by Special Forces and a ground display by the School of Infantry.

A fictitious scenario was used to demonstrate a Special Forces team infiltrating behind enemy lines and the destruction of the enemy base.

The Chief of Army Staff of the Nigerian Army complimented the members who conducted the exercise and indicated that the course members would be ready to deploy to Lake Chad. Lt Gen Buratai said that Lake Chad would no longer be a safe haven for terrorist or insurgent groupings because these effective and potent Special Forces operators would decisively deal with the enemy.

They will form part of the Specialist Amphibious Brigade that the Nigerian Army was establishing to support the deploying troops in Lake Chad.

The next visit was to the Nigerian National Defence College.

General Yam highlighted the aim of South Africa’s foreign policy and the implementation of regional cooperation to promote peace and stability in Africa and stated that this was the main prerequisite for drafting its foreign policy.

He also talked about regional military cooperation and focused specifically on the training and peace support operations in which the SA National Defence Force are involved with on the African continent.

The Chief of the SA Army stated that regional security cooperation and robust military intervention were particularly looking to solving African problems with African solutions.

The visiting group continued with their programme to the Nigerian Army Museum and the Nigerian Army Resource Centre where the SA Army received individual membership to the centre.

The General Officer Commanding SA Army Intelligence Formation, Brig Gen René Mercuur, was welcomed by the Director Military Intelligence of the Nigerian Army, Maj Gen Adebayo. The Nigerian Army Intelligence Corps was established in 1963 and has a rich history.

A brief introduction was given on the organisation and layout of the structures and roles on how they conduct intelligence driven operations. The Commandant of the Defence Intelligence College gave the layout and a detailed explanation of all the learning programmes that they present. He mentioned that courses are divided into traditional and non-traditional courses, whereas the traditional courses are mainly for all Corps members.

A short briefing on their involvement in counter-terrorism operations (BHT) in the north-east of Nigeria and the type of equipment they use in these operations was given. A static display of all their equipment was introduced by their personnel and each department gave a brief explanation of their roles and responsibilities.
Work in progress - the Vaal River Project continues

The Khumalo family in Sebokeng Zone 6 has seen the worst of the disaster as their house is built on the Vaal sewer line near the Boitumelo pump station.

They have had to live with raw sewage that had flooded their living room since early last year. When the Vaal sewer crisis worsened wreaking havoc at the over burdened sewer infrastructure in the area. However, the involvement of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has brought relief and joy to this family.

With a smile on her face Ms Emily Khumalo said:

“I am very happy that we had a wonderful festive season because the atmosphere had a clean smell. We are grateful for the help from the SANDF.”

Project Vaal River is well under way and the amazing progress is starting to show at the Sebokeng Water Treatment Plant. The SANDF is largely mandated to defend and protect, safeguard South Africa, promote peace and security and execute ordered developmental tasks. However, it has been involved in a number of socio-economic upliftment programmes in various communities around the country. The SA Army Engineers’ involvement is encouraged by their determination to ensure the people’s wellbeing.

The General Officer Commanding of the SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen Nkhabu Nthejane, expresses his impression.

Project Vaal River is an SA Army-initiated intervention to assist the community of the Vaal with water rehabilitation. This is motivated by the Mandate of the SANDF to assist in the preservation of life, health and property.

The General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the SA Army Engineer Formation, Brig Gen Nkhabu Nthejane, indicated certain shortfalls that cause slight delays that may lead to the project taking longer than expected.

The Commander of Project Vaal River, Col Andries Mahapa, took the media on tour to the sites. Starting at the Boitumelo pump station, we met the Khumalo family, including the engineers working there.

The SA Army Engineers are
LEFT: What a module looks like before it is drained.

LEFT: The Boitumelo pump station team leader, Sgt Setumo Hlongwane from 35 Engineer Regiment in Springs, hard at work with his team of engineers.

now guarding the Sebokeng Water Treatment Plant and its pump stations, currently with soldiers on the ground.

With their presence there were no break-ins over the festive season. The soldiers also assisted during the post-Christmas floods at the Sebokeng Zone 6 channelling the water away from the residential areas.

Col Mahapa also continued to explain the processes and progress of engineers by showing the different modules, the slug drained modules (sewage waste water receiver tanks) and the ones that have not been worked on yet, including the stages.

Module three is 95% complete and module five 80% - using Biochemical Nutrients Remover (BCNR) to clean the waste water. With limited resources and slow financial injection, the SA Army Engineers are working to achieve their goal of completing the task in twelve months.

ABOVE: The progressed module 3.

RIGHT: The almost completed module 5.
Aviation medicine ensures flying safety

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

Flying safety during airborne missions proves to be an intricate skill required by the SA Air Force. On average, only 2% of the total candidates for pilot selection will complete training.

Interestingly, physical fitness may not be the only thing that gets you through but also physiological factors and other risks associated with flying. For instance, accelerating at 9 g-force speed on a fighter aircraft barely allows one to make sudden movements without putting in much effort.

Aspiring pilots discover this through the centrifuge chamber during the aeromedical examinations. It is part of the medical tests that are conducted at the Institute for Aviation Medicine under the medical discipline termed Aviation Medicine.

Aviation medicine strives to treat or prevent conditions to which aircrews are particularly susceptible and applies medical knowledge to the human factors in aviation, which is a critical component of aviation safety.

CO Veronica Awe is a nurse who conducts Hyperbaric Treatment Sessions at the Institute of Aviation Medicine. The machine is used to treat decompression sickness, thermal burns, carbon monoxide poisoning and acute traumatic crush injuries, among others. This helps the healing process to take place much faster, particularly patients referred from surgery and autopedics at 1 Military Hospital.

Lt Col Rob Bedford is the Acting Officer Commanding at the Institute for Aviation Medicine. He is also the Chief Medical Officer, who performs aeromedical examination for the SA Air Force for pilot certification at the unit.

He said: “There are several components: the first is that a pilot in the SA Air Force and other aircrew as well need to undergo regular medical examination to enable us to make the decision whether they are fit to fly or not. It is a very strict medical procedure and we maintain a very high standard. For instance, if a pilot wants to take certain medication, we need to determine that it will also be safe for him to fly having to take that kind of medication.”

Aeromedical examinations aims at screening for an increased risk of sudden incapacitation, such as a tendency towards heart attacks, epilepsy or the presence of metabolic conditions, which may be hazardous at a higher altitude. It is conducted to protect the life and health of pilots and passengers by giving reasonable medical assurance that an individual is fit to fly.
and we need to teach the pilots to recognise that.
The oxygen concentration gets less and one gets hypoxia
when flying at high speed? When pilots fly at a high speed in
a fighter jet, the gravity in a turn thrusts them into the seat at up to
ten times the force of normal gravity. It pulls the blood out of your head
and therefore you can lose consciousness. To lift your hand at
9g-force can weigh nine times more than it normally does. It is also
difficult to turn your head around to look where the other aircraft are
because it is so heavy and you might injure your neck.

To keep pilot safe, we give them
High-G training by putting them in
the centrifuge chamber, which spins
at 9-gs. The machine is not working
at the moment so we take our pilots
to Sweden. It is important for pilots
to carry out the correct manoeuvres
with their bodies, which involves the
tensing of all the muscles to push
the blood back to the heart. There is
a breathing technique called Anti-G
straining manoeuvre which is aimed
at straining the chest to force the
blood up into the head so that the
brain can still get enough blood in
oxygen.

What is the medical examination, which include stress
ECG, lung function, urine tests, blood
tests, audiology and spinal X-rays. Other
genetic issues for individuals,
who wish to train to become pilots,
could be that they are too small or too
big to fit in a cockpit of an aircraft.

Is the unit the only entity to
determine fitness to obtain a
flying license? For a person to be issued with a DD-50
that says a member is medically fit to
to fly, it is only this institution. We also
does have doctors at different SA Air Force
bases and they can do repeat medicals
on the individuals. They then send
the reports to us for confirmation and
then we issue the certificate.
Pilots undergo routine medical
fitness on an annual basis, but
for some individual such as radar
operators, traffic controllers and
electronic warfare operators it is
between two to four years.

The hyperbaric chamber.

Lt Col Bedford added: “There are all kinds of
medical problems such as hypoxia, which would
affect people when flying or medical conditions that
have an influence on medication. We are actually
an operational unit and we do a lot of aeromedical
support. There are aeromedical evacuation teams
at 8 Medical Battalion, which basically transport
patients by air. For instance, a patient might be
in Port Elizabeth and has to be transported to 1
Military Hospital and we have people who can do
that. Transporting a patient by air requires a whole
lot of specialisation because there are many aspects
that other doctors do not know about.”

Medical staff also need to be qualified to be able
to transport a patient by air. For example, the 8
Medical Battalion team conducted a mass casualty
evacuation after the church building collapse in
Nigeria that claimed the lives of congregation,
most of which were South Africans. They also assisted
with flood relief in Mozambique.

Lt Col Bedford shared more information about
Aviation Medicine: “We actually do all the air
evacuation throughout the country. Many of the
operations and exercises and even conferences
have an 8 Medical Battalion team. There are two
teams in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
deployment, one in Goma and the other in Beni. We
also do search and rescue when an aircraft crashes
and transport the patients to hospitals.”

What health aspect do you look into when
examining a candidate pilot?

Basically, we look at the stresses of flight and all the things
one would experience in an aircraft that one would not in
a vehicle. For example, as one goes up into the atmosphere,
the oxygen concentration gets less and one gets hypoxia
and we need to teach the pilots to recognise that.

The temperature goes down
when you ascend and you get cold
as well and we need to prepare the
pilots for that. There is lots of noise
and vibration. Some people have
decompression sickness because
of the change in pressure in the
atmosphere. We need to ensure that
a pilot is medically fit to handle these
conditions. We also go around in the
SA Air Force squadrons to give lectures
on what to expect; what hypoxia
is and what it feels like. Medical
examinations include stress ECG and
lung functions, among others.

How different is the medical
examination of pilots when
compared to other aircrew
members?

Certain medical examinations for
pilots are much stricter. Regular
exercise is a requirement to a large
extent and also education on lifestyle
issues, such as a healthy diet and
avoiding excessive alcohol drinking.
Some medical conditions such as
asthma prevent people from becoming
pilots. Some of the people who have
medical conditions can join the SA Air
Force as flight engineers or navigators.

What is the procedure that is
used to test flying fitness called
and what are the requirements?

We call it the aviation medical
examination. It is a complete medical
Innovations in engineering and technology play an important role in the economic growth and development of modern communities. The Chief Director SA Army Corporate Services, Maj Gen Thembelani Xundu, said these developments open opportunities to enable people to become engineers and technologists.

He was speaking at the first Department of Defence (DOD) Engineering, Science and Technology conference recently at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria.

Maj Gen Xundu said investing in skills advancement and development as an organisation is a commitment to the country in peace times and times of unrest. He advocated for the professionalisation of military engineers and technologists.

He said: “The employment of military engineers is highly magnified in the art of war, but however not confined to war times. As we speak the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) is being called to assist with engineering services at the Emfuleni Municipality, in the Vaal Triangle. This mission is aimed at preventing environmental hazards and diseases”.

Maj Samkelo Vilakazi from the SA Air Directorate Combat Systems, who is one of the organisers of the

Attendees of the first Department of Defence Engineering, Science and Technology conference.

Maj Samkelo Vilakazi from the SA Air Directorate Combat Systems said they intend to establish interoperability among the various Services of the SANDF.
conference, said they have come together to discuss issues which are related to engineering issues and establishing capabilities.

He said they intend to establish interoperability among the various Services of the SANDF. He said they should ensure that systems relate to each other to ensure efficiency in operations.

The theme of the conference was termed – The DOD moving towards the professional development in engineering, science and technology development. The main focus was ensuring that members had developments that added value and aligned with professional bodies, such as the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA).

Maj Vilakazi said: “The issue is people come into the DOD with qualifications, but we do not develop them in line with what they are qualified or have studied for. We will then be guided by an external body that is in-line with the international bodies, which is the signatory of the Washington Accord. When the ECSA declares you an engineer you will also be a professional in the international context of their profession as an engineer. We should start ensuring that our engineers are professionally developed and are registered.”

Some of the issues that arose from the conference are that the SANDF is fully dependent on the manufacturers instead of being able to run their own systems. Delegates believe that it is a matter of developing skills and utilising those capabilities for their own benefit.

Maj Vilakazi said it is also a threat to engineering as a discipline itself if nobody will test work from the industry or challenge their thinking. He said they need to keep each other on their toes and sharpen their capability to ensure stainable development.

He added: “Operating in isolation is a big challenge for us because the SA Army and the SA Air Force and other Services are not speaking the same language. We are easily convinced to go to an external company than a fellow Service. Working relations are not explored among Services and we would rather outsource.

“There is also a concern from the defence industry that once you empower the DOD engineering capability, you will be putting them out of business. However, when you empower the DOD you are helping them to make informed decisions. For us, it will ensure that we do not continue to receive substandard services and we will be able to speak and interact on the same footing,” concluded Maj Vilakazi.

The delegates were informed that the SA National Defence Force is being called to assist with engineering services at the Emfuleni Municipality, in the Vaal Triangle. This mission is aimed at preventing environmental hazards and diseases.
The SA Armour Formation celebrated the SA Armoured Corps 72nd Anniversary recently, hosted by SAAB Grintek Defence.

Saab Grintek Defence (SGD), one of South Africa’s leading defence and security companies, was the main sponsor of the event. Members of the Armoured Corps from near and far attended the occasion.

Before commencing with the main activity planned for the evening, Mr Andrew Doyle from the SGD gave an informal briefing about the newly developed sensor technology system that can be mounted on a Rooikat Mk1D and a Piranha, which is basically an early warning system against any air threat on armoured vehicles.

The briefing was very interesting and the SGD encouraged the Armoured Corps to consider making use of this sensor technological system in the future. When the briefing was concluded, the armour shot action proceeded. Chief Warrant Officer Abel Mabote, the Formation Warrant Officer, lit the Flame of the Armour which was followed by the formalities. The Flame of the Armour symbolises the inextinguishable spirit and energy of the South African Armoured Corps.

The traditions of the Armoured Corps were honoured throughout the programme by adhering to the toasts on the Flame of the Armour, on the fallen members and on the horses. Each toast was concluded by a song that upholds the significance of the toast. What stood out most during the celebration was the Armour Formation Writing Skills Competition. Ms Rosa Barros, Deputy General Manager from the SA Army Foundation handed over a cheque to the value of R30 000 to the founder of the competition, Brig Gen Chris Gildenhuys (Ret), who was honoured for the legacy he had left behind to his successors.

The aim of the Writing Skills Competition is to encourage armour officers to empower themselves through reading, research and writing. Thus, finding solutions to challenges not only in the Corps, but holistically in the SA Army, in the end making the Armoured Corps’ officers persons of substance in the craft of warfare.

The Acting Chief of Staff of the Armour Formation, Col William Jansen, in the absence of the General Officer Commanding, thanked the sponsor of the Writing Skills Competition. The competition was tough this year and the members who participated were hungry for victory. Although not all members who participated in the competition can be winners at the end of the day, all were acknowledged for participating.

Brig Gen André Retief awarded the prizes to the members who distinguished themselves in doing their research objectively and factitively by making use of authentic sources. The prizes were awarded to the Officers Commanding as representatives of the winners in absentia.

Ms Evelyn Motsatsing, Deputy CEO of the SGD, commended the sterling job done by all who participated in the Writing Skills Competition and also mentioned that it would be good for her company to take the example of the Armoured Corps in order to attain new fresh ideas for enhanced systems created by the SGD. She mentioned that such working relations should be maintained between the SGD and the Armoured Corps.

On a lighter note, the audience was entertained by the “Trevor Noah” of the Armour Formation Headquarters, Lt Col Kubunyane Litsoane.
Army Support Base Mpumalanga conducts double parades

By Lt Col Coen van Heerden, Officer Commanding ASB Mpumalanga
Photos by Ms Lize Pienaar

Army Support Base Mpumalanga recently conducted two Company in Review Parades. This was the first time that the unit presented parades of this magnitude. The one parade was the Base Warrant Officer (BWO) Change of Office Parade between Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Daniël Kgoebane and MWO Ramodise Motaung.

In addition, a Medal Parade was held where members of Army Support Base (ASB) Mpumalanga and Area Military Health Unit (AHMU) Mpumalanga were awarded with medals. The medals received included the 20 Year Good Service Medal, the 10 Year Good Service Medal, the Unitas Medal, the Tshumelo Ikatelaho and the Mandela Medal (to an AHMU Mpumalanga member).

Addressing the members, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Army Support Formation, Maj Gen Luvuyo Nobanda, expressed his congratulations to the recipients and his gratitude towards the families of the members.

Maj Gen Nobanda also complimented the organisers of the parade and said that due to budget constraints the future will be more challenging than before, but that they will handle it like professional soldiers and maintain standards of professionalism.

The second parade that was conducted was the Change of Office Parade of the outgoing Base Warrant Officer (BWO), MWO Daniël Kgoebane, and the incoming BWO, MWO Ramodise Motaung. In his address the Officer Commanding ASB Mpumalanga, Lt Col Coen van Heerden, referred to the role of the BWO as not only maintaining discipline, but to act as a “father figure” to the unit members.

Lt Col Van Heerden said: “Although it is a leadership position, his main function is to serve the best interests of the unit, give direction to subordinates and advise and support the Officer Commanding.” He thanked MWO Kgoebane for his service to ASB Mpumalanga and welcomed the newly appointed BWO, MWO Motaung.

The members on parade did an amazing job and the ASB Limpopo Band contributed harmoniously to the success of the parade.
The Department of Defence devotes time towards disability issues

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

The estimated one billion people living with disabilities worldwide face many barriers to inclusion in many key aspects of society. As a result, people with disabilities do not enjoy access to society on an equal basis with others, which include areas of transportation, employment, and education as well as social and political participation.

Since 1992, the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) has been annually observed on 3 December around the world. The IDPD falls on the third of December each year, with the aim of promoting empowerment, and helping to create real opportunities for people with disabilities.

Chief Directorate Transformation Management Disability Equity Sections leaped to the opportunity to do its bit. Headed by Brig Gen Phage Mosianedi, Director of Equity Strategic Direction, urged the Department’s leadership to acknowledge people with disabilities. He said the aim of observing this day each year is to increase awareness and understanding of disability issues.

Brig Gen Mosianedi added: “Celebrations of this day are an important tool in promoting the right of persons with disabilities. We are not only here to honour people with disabilities within the Department of Defence, but the whole national and international communities.”

In addition to the United Nations general assembly promulgation of the IDPD, the South African Government approved the disability rights awareness month, which starts on the third of November to the third of December to make people understand that disability is a human rights issue.
S Sgt Charles Möller playing checkers during International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

Ms Moradi Dlamini demonstrates sign language to the spectators during International Day for Persons with Disabilities at the Armscor Sports Grounds.

Brig Gen Mosianedi said it is everyone’s responsibility to treat people with disabilities with all the respect and dignity they deserve. He said they need to be empowered and acknowledged for their potential and talent.

He added: “However, this day alone will not address the major challenges that people with disabilities face on a day-to-day basis. This day should not only be a celebration, but an opportunity for us to reflect on what has been achieved and also what still needs to be done. The theme for this year was Empowering people with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality - something which the Department of Defence (DOD) is doing.

“Today the DOD realises the importance of inclusiveness for people with disabilities and has undertaken to have them participating in sporting activities. The Directorate Physical Training, Sport and Recreation has joined forces with the Disability Equity Section to ensure that a number of sporting activities are organised for this event.”
The National Ceremonial Guard welcomes its newly appointed Officer Commanding

Members of the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) recently bade farewell to their outgoing Officer Commanding, Col Ntsundeni Thenga. At the same time, they welcomed the newly appointed Officer Commanding, Lt Col Putswe Jacob Litlhakanyane.

This explains why the day was flooded with mixed emotions among the members, because goodbyes are never easy. However, there was also a feeling of excitement in the air which comes with receiving a new commander, who will lead the members into the future, and to get an opportunity to welcome him into the NCG family.

After all, change is a part of life, especially in the military, which brings to mind the words of Dr Raymond Irving Lindquist, who once said: “Courage is the power to let go of the familiar” which was the case for all the members who were attending the parade.

Shortly before the arrival of the two Colonels on the podium, they were welcomed by a full guard of honour that was awaiting them on the parade ground. The guard consisted of members from Alpha Company. This was followed by a musical performance delivered by the NCG Military Band which played astounding melodies that had many spectators tapping their feet to the rhythm.

During the parade, Col Thenga and his entourage inspected the guard of honour, which was followed by a company in review to conduct the general salute to the Colonel.

Addressing the NCG members, Col Thenga thanked everyone who attended the parade. He added: “I loved working in this unit and I had a great team that strived for the achievement of the unit and its goals. I will miss this unit and
Col Ntsundeni Thenga, and his entourage inspecting the guard of honour during the parade.

Col Thenga used to remind the members of the unit that after all the sweat and hard work of their VIP Protection tasks; working non-stop on national holidays; and the execution of ceremonial parades, they should not forget to enjoy the honour which comes with being unique in the whole of the Department of Defence.

Col Thenga also congratulated his successor, Lt Col Litlhakanyane on his new appointment and wished him well with his future endeavours as the Officer Commanding of the National Ceremonial Guard. He also informed him to be ready for his journey ahead as the Officer Commanding of such a prestigious unit, and being the only one of its kind in the whole organisation, it comes with its own unique challenges. Nonetheless, it is a journey that has disguised its self as an opportunity of a lifetime, where one gets a lot of exposure and also learns a lot.

Upon the completion of his final address, Col Thenga handed over the Rifle of Command, which signifies the relinquishing of command of the NCG to the incoming Officer Commanding, who welcomed the Rifle of Command with pride and zeal.

The parade was concluded with a spectacular display by members of the Specialist Company that deals with protection services in the NCG, who demonstrated to the spectators how they protect a principal during an attack or ambush.

During the reception for invited guests after the parade, Lt Col Litlhakanyane took the opportunity to present gifts to his predecessor on behalf of the unit members and to express his appreciation for being entrusted to lead the National Ceremonial Guard.

Lt Col Litlhakanyane said: “I promise today in this role that I will uphold the profession’s covenant principle between the leader and the led and commit to give my all to the service of this formation (SA Army Support Formation), to the SA Army and the SA National Defence Force at large.”

He also quoted the great Sun Tzu on command and control when he said: “If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the General is to blame but if orders are clear and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of the officers”.

The incoming Officer Commanding said that he was glad to be part of this formation, which when it speaks, there is no ambiguity in their orders. This has inspired him to do likewise.
Every knee shall bow and confess that He is GOD

By Ms Maeshela Kakana and Capt Kelebogile Letanke
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano

It is only when we feel broken that we think of turning to God; a moment of reflection was given at the Chief of the SA National Defence Force annual Thanks-giving Ceremony. The theme of the day “Rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks in all circumstances, for it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16.

Messages of hope, encouragements and words of wisdom showered the congregation through the choir performances by the SA Army Headquarters, the SA Air Force, the SA Military Health Service Band and 4 Artillery Regiment and engaging gospel that was filled with uplifting spiritual messages.

From the Scripture 1 Corinthians 15:10-15 read by Chaplain (Cpln) Jennifer van der Ross ushered the message that serve God and trust His grace to lead you to do good. Humble yourself by the grace and watch the wonders of His mercy work upon you; do not concern yourself with your position or the qualification you have here on earth.

The Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Andrew Jamangile, had this to say, among other things: "It is God who put you where you are now, for..."
He knows what He wants you to do for His people. Expect no more than what you give, as you are who you are because He is.”

One of the points highlighted by the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, in his goodwill message was that the soldiers who are deployed on peacekeeping missions face the worst situations beyond imagination. Those who are now in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are there under extreme conditions, where the rebels are killing innocent civilians, raping women and children, and it is worsen now with the Ebola outbreak.

Gen Shoke said: “This country and its people depend on ‘us’ (soldiers). Hence we have this day to appreciate the efforts and courage of soldiers and their families for their support. In our midst we have some families of members who lost their lives in the line of duty for this country. We are grateful for the strength they kept to be with us.

“Most of us who are here are aggrieved or not at peace with themselves for unknown reasons to me, which may lead to them conducting themselves in an unprofessional manner affecting their performance at work in a negative way.

“When we go back to our units, we must do the best that we can do because we serve the people of this country and they expect the best from us all the times.”

The Vosloorus Old Age Home, a charity organisation for elders, surprised and honoured the Chief of the SANDF with their presence and appreciation songs. They also extended their gratitude to the whole SANDF family for being there for them.

Before the service was closed, a few Chaplains from the Services and Divisions led by Cpln Hazel Msiza laid blessings upon the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, the Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, the Service Chiefs and other SANDF leadership to thank them for a job well done and to wish them good luck the year ahead.

The service was concluded by a couple performances by the choirs and a few worship songs led by Cpln Frans Manganyi. This was followed by over-whelming praises, including a twist by Cpln Caroline Pillay who sang “Bambelela” that kept everyone on their feet.
A word for the season

By Chaplain F.A.A.J. Smit, Unit Chaplain SAS SIMONSBERG

We live in challenging times. The Western Cape is drought stricken, personal tax and value added tax were increased. The fuel price has escalated and the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has suffered yet another budget cut. What are we to do? It is easy to supply an answer from a religious point of view, for in scripture we find a word for the season. Therefore in faith we do find hope and comfort.

From a Christian point of view this hope can be derived from a reference in the Bible: II Chronicles 7:14 prescribes the following: “If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”.

God provides four prerequisites as a requirement for healing and blessing:

“Humble themselves”
This means that one must subject him/herself to God’s authority and direction: Isaiah 5:21 “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” Pride, as in vanity, is dangerous. It reminds me of a little poem of a person who had a realisation regarding the effect of pride: “There is nobody like me Lord, Nobody likes me Lord... Nobody like Thee Lord”.

James 4:16 affirms this; “But now you boast and brag and all such boasting is evil”. Proverbs 11:2 warns that “When pride comes, so does shame, but wisdom brings humility”. How do we find this wisdom that brings humility? Proverbs 9:10 advises that “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord”. So respect for God brings wisdom. God must in other words be our “One Stop” and “First Stop”. We should know our place as created beings. God is our Creator. He is the Universal Ruler over all the galaxies and its inhabitants.

“Pray”
Prayer is communication with God. This should be a daily activity. Imagine if your friend only phones you up when he/she needs your help or to borrow money, how would you feel? We do the same with God many times. We only call on him in prayer when disaster strikes or when we need something to be done for us. But in the good times we forget about him.

Prayer brings relief, because you can share your heart with God. But it is important to come to God firstly with gratitude and thanksgiving: “Why, I ask myself, are you so depressed? Why are you so upset inside? Hope in God! Because I will again give Him thanks, my saving presence and my God”. (Psalm 42:5).

Prayer makes things right between you and God. You are in other words on speaking terms with him. So don’t be a stranger, God is waiting on your call. “Pray continually.” (I Thessalonians 5:17).

“Seek my face”
James 4:13 – 15 shows us what to do: “Pay attention, you who say: ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such town. We will stay there a year, buying and selling, and making profit’. You don’t really know about tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for only a short while before it vanishes. Here’s what you ought to say: ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that’. We are to seek counsel with God and to honour him. Not to seek favour from people. We should be a God pleaser and not a man/woman pleaser. “It is far better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust any human”. (Psalm 118:8).

Lastly, there is reward in seeking God’s presence: “Those who (wait upon) hope in the Lord will renew their strength: they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary (during their journey on earth). (Isaiah 40:31).

“Turn from their wicked ways”
“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”. (Isaiah 5:20): And II Timothy 3:1 – 5 warns: “Understand that the last days will be dangerous times. People will be selfish and love money. They will be the kind of people who brag and are proud. They will slander others, and they will be disobedient to their parents. They will be ungrateful, unholy, unloving, contrary, and critical. They will be without self-control and brutal, and they won’t love what is good. They are people who are disloyal, reckless, and conceited. They will love pleasure instead of loving God. They will look like they are religious but deny God’s power”. If one is guilty of any of these, repentance is the way out. To ask God’s forgiveness and the strength to commit to doing what is right and just.

If we comply with these four prerequisites we can expect healing personally, in our marriages, in our children’s lives, in our careers, in our communities and in our country. It is so simple really. We just need to put God first in our lives. He knows what tomorrow brings and is all powerful to provide our every need.

One just needs to be cautious not to choose to serve God for the benefits; e.g. “what’s in it for me?” That is the wrong attitude, and hence the need for humility and true remorse and repentance. God knows our hearts; He is all knowing and all-seeing. We cannot hide anything from him. Not even our deepest secrets or hidden agenda escapes his perception.

So I invite you to join me. Let us accept God’s advice and guidance. Let us seek God’s face and pray for forgiveness. Pray for Him to heal our country and He will; because He said so. We can take His word for it.
The SANDF Education Trust


The main objective of the SANDF Education Trust is to support the education needs of the dependants of the following persons:

- SANDF members killed or severely injured subsequent to April 1994, while on official duty.

- Civilian members of the Department of Defence (DOD) killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, while deployed during official SANDF operations.

- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, during official SANDF operations provided that such citizens are not engaged in activities opposing the SANDF.

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

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

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