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Lt Gen Jabulani Mbuli, the General of the Gunners and the Chief of Logistics, laying a wreath to honour fallen gunners at the Gunners Memorial Site near Potchefstroom.  
(Photo by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole)
This year, South Africans are celebrating 25 years of democracy. We, as citizens of South Africa, recently celebrated Human Rights Day and Freedom Day. This year’s Freedom Day celebrations coincided with the 25th anniversary of the existence of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Parallel to the progression of South Africa over the past 25 years, the SANDF has undergone fundamental changes in creating equality in its racial, gender and cultural demographics. Remarkable progress has been made in the transformation of the SANDF in terms of extensive affirmative action in the organisation.

27 April 1994 will always be remembered in the history of our country as the day that saw the first democratic elections that gave birth to freedom and constitutional democracy in South Africa. The SANDF assisted in ensuring that fellow South Africans could exercise their right to vote for the government of their choice without fear of prejudice.

These celebrations and human rights indicate that our nation has come a long way over the past 25 years. Every South African should make the most of these significant National Days of our country and participate in South Africa’s democracy.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was signed into law by former President Nelson Mandela on 10 December 1996. Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights. Over the past 25 years, South Africa’s Bill of Rights has been at the heart of our democracy. We all need these rights to be protected. In the Bill of Rights specifically states that Government “must respect, protect, promote and fulfill rights in the Bill of Rights”.

Human rights are at the very foundation of our lives, and every single person is entitled to them. When a person’s rights are protected, they are able to live a life free from discrimination, oppression and social injustice. The SANDF plays a huge role in making sure these rights are upheld. (Please read the articles about the participation of the SANDF in the Freedom Day celebrations on pages 6 and 7 and what part Defence plays in maintaining our human rights on pages 26 and 27.)

In the middle of this edition of SA Soldier (see pages 24 and 25), take note of your human rights as published on this poster: “Celebrating 25 Years of Democracy and Human Rights”.

Let us fully acknowledge and claim the rights we have as human beings.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

*N*Translation into isiXhosa by Ms Esethu Sodo.
New Defence Force Service Commissioners appointed

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, has recently introduced the new Commissioners of the Defence Force Service Commission (DFSC). The Minister intends to appoint two more women commissioners to the remaining three vacancies.

The Minister said: “Towards the end of 2018, I tabled before Cabinet the appointment of new members of the DFSC to replace those whose terms had come to an end and a reappointment of one still in service. The existence of the DFSC is founded on Section 62A of the Defence Act 2002, which provides for the establishment of a Defence Force Service Commission to, among others, make recommendations to the Minister on improvements of salaries and service benefits of members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said there had also been a presentation reporting on work done by the DFSC in improving the conditions of service of members of the SANDF. She said the current national fiscal framework was a serious constraint in the implementation of the recommendations of the DFSC.

The Minister added: “Other areas of work will be charted by the DFSC, working closely with the Human Resource Division. One of the recommendations you had made was on giving commanders greater autonomy and spending power; utilisation of the Works Formation as an exit mechanism.”

On 9 October 2018, the Minister received the recommendations of the Nominations Committee. In accordance with section 62C (7) of the Defence Act, Cabinet approved the appointment of four members to the DFSC.

Dr Siphelele Zulu is currently the Executive Director for Human Resources at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Zulu holds a PhD in Human Resource Management from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and has held various senior positions within the field of Human Resource Management.

Dr Ziyaad Essop is a medical doctor, who recently also completed an MBA at the University of Stellenbosch. Dr Essop has served in the SA Military Health Service at 2 Military Hospital in Cape Town for 11 years until his contract expired in June 2018. Currently, he is the Chairperson of the Board for Aquarius Healthcare.

Advocate Nokuzola Gloria Khumalo has over 15 years’ experience as a Senior Human Resources Manager. Currently, she is employed as the Human Resource Manager at AME Africa Healthcare (Pty) Ltd, which deals with IT solutions at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital. Advocate Khumalo has extensive experience in matters of law and the management of human resources.

Mr Ian Hugh Robertson (Acting Chairperson of the DFSC) has served on the Permanent Defence Force Service Commission for a period of five years until his contract expired on 30 September 2018. Section 62C (9) provides that a member of the Commission may be reappointed by the Minister for another term. Mr Robertson has extensive experience in the Security Cluster and was the Director for stakeholder management and cooperative governance in the Gauteng Department of Community Safety until his retirement.
Thousands of people were thrilled when the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) and the NCG Band marched into the Miki Yili Stadium in Makhanda to start off the proceedings of the National Freedom Day celebrations. To mark the day thousands of South Africans across the country celebrated 25 years of freedom with the theme of “Celebrating 25 Years of Democracy”.

27 April 1994 will forever resonate in the history of South Africa as the day that saw the first democratic elections that gave birth to freedom and constitutional democracy in the country. It is a time to look back at South Africa’s roots. A time to remember the bitter history, but also to celebrate how far South Africa has come as a nation and to re-examine the challenges and gains made thus far in transforming the country to be socially inclusive of all its citizens.

Since then, the country has undergone a fundamental transformation from being an apartheid state to a state that is playing an increasingly important role in international, regional and sub-regional affairs. Much has also been done internally to advance reconciliation and nation building, and Government has been transformed to ensure transparency and accountability in governance, as well as to focus all spheres of government activities on serving the people of South Africa.

The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, rising to the podium for the parade.

The President of the Republic of South Africa and the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, arriving at the parade.
on improved service delivery. The celebrations coincided with the 25th anniversary of the existence of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Parallel to the country’s progression, the past 25 years have seen the SANDF undergo radical changes in terms of creating equality in its racial, gender and cultural demographics. Major strides have been made in the transformation of the SANDF in terms of extensive affirmative action in the organisation.

Transformation focused on the integration of former combatant forces into one national defence force, making the SANDF representative of the people of South Africa, and to ensure transparency in defence management and accountability to civil authority to establish greater efficiency and aligning defence policy with the Constitution, national culture and international law.

This day also give the SANDF an opportunity to reflect on its progress and achievements over the past 25 years of democracy. The SANDF has become a force for peace and a force of great pride in the country and on the continent because of the hard work, dedication and commitment of its members. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa places on the SANDF the responsibility to undertake the protection and defence of the Republic, its sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest and its people.

Looking at the matter objectively, we could agree that when called upon to render assistance in peace support operations or humanitarian assistance in countries affected by natural disasters or otherwise, the SANDF always distinguishes itself. Here at home, the men and women in uniform continue to inspire the nation by providing much needed assistance and support in communities that are faced with natural disasters such as floods and other disasters. The people could rely on the SANDF to rescue and assist those in need and also to provide medical care and other support. The SANDF was also involved in operations to assist the people of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe with disaster relief after the ravages of tropical Cyclone Idai.

The contribution of the SANDF to anti-crime border operations should also be commended. The success is visible in the number of illegal weapons seized and the recovery of stolen vehicles and livestock. The SANDF will continue its participation in the peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of the United Nations Force Intervention Brigade.

In this regard the SANDF has proven its commitment by ensuring that its contribution towards peace and stability on the continent, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts leave a footprint that will forever be remembered by the people. This is evident in the manner in which the SANDF has conducted its assignment for the benefit of the people at large. The SANDF has never failed to deliver on SANDF ordered commitments regardless of its budget constraints.
It is enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa that the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) may be requested by the State’s relevant authorities to support any department internally for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment. Not only can the SANDF assist in support of other departments on request, but can on its own accord offer civil humanitarian assistance internally. This assistance forms part of the SANDF’s role in peacetime in a democratic state. The essence of this role is encapsulated in the phrase: “SANDF for the people”.

This follows on the unfortunate incident during which six Grade R and Grade 2 learners from Popopo Primary were swept along by a strong river current as they were crossing the river on their way home from school in Freyistata, Popopo, Matatiele in the Eastern Cape Province, causing their untimely death on 6 March this year. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, subsequently sent a team of SA Army Engineers to Matatiele to do an assessment where the incident happened to determine what could be done to assist the community.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula, joined by the Minister of Public Works, Mr Thulas Nxesi, met the Freyistata community. The Mayor of the Matatiele Local Municipality, Councillor Momelezi Mbedla, and the Chief of the Freyistata community, Morena Khomotsoana Lebenya, and other esteemed community leaders were officially introduced to a team of 29 SA Army Engineers (mostly from 35 Engineer Support...
A team member from 35 Engineer Support Regiment, Spr Ephraim Seretlwa, a construction machine operator, indicated in an interview that the duration of building bridges was dependent on climatic conditions. Spr Seretlwa said: “We are going to build four bridges in this community. The bridges are approximately a kilometre apart from each other. On average we should complete four bridges in less than three months if the weather is conducive.”

The two Ministers went to the burial site of the six children where they addressed the community. Addressing the community members, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula emphasised that though it was election season, her visit had nothing to do with politics as her Department does not get involved in politics, but only gives support to the government of the day and the citizens of the country. The Minister said: “We as Government are deeply touched and indeed saddened by the loss of life, more so with the loss of children’s lives, especially losing six young lives under such circumstances. The Government should have foreseen the possibility of impending disaster considering the area in which the school is situated, the distances that needed to be covered and the river that these children had to cross everyday to and from school.”

Alluding to her own personal tragedy in an effort to console the bereaved families of the six children, Ms Mapisa-Nqakula said: “As a mother I know the pain of losing a child, it is a pain I would not even wish my worst enemies to go through. It is for this reason that when I heard of this incident, I immediately issued an instruction to the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, to dispatch engineers to build bridges to avoid any further loss of life in this area. It is indeed regrettable that it had to come to this for Government to act expeditiously. But the good thing is, we are a listening Government capable of learning from its own mistakes, and so the SANDF will continue with these good deeds.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula indicated that the SANDF was a compassionate National Defence Force that was working energetically and with enthusiasm to show the citizens that the SANDF was not about camouflage, boots and guns only, but it was a new defence force with UBUNTU with a driving force behind it. She further indicated that the bridge-building project will be rolled out throughout South Africa in conjunction with various local authorities and relevant national departments. The Minister encouraged learners to study hard and never to get disheartened by their conditions and socio-economic status as there are different careers waiting for them in the SANDF.

Morena Lebenya thanked Minister Mapisa-Nqakula and “her soldiers” for being so compassionate. He encouraged the engineers not to run out of steam as they criss-cross the country helping those in need of their assistance. “These bridges - in many ways more than you can imagine - will literally change lives. You make us proud of the SANDF. You inspire confidence in our children and the rest of the community. It is because of this positive visibility that we now feel that this is indeed the SANDF for the people,” Chief Lebenya said when thanking the SANDF and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans.

Bidding farewell to the soldiers to be deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo

The following day, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula, accompanied by the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, and Chief Army Corporate Services, Maj Gen Tembelani Xundu, visited the soldiers to be deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo at Port St Johns where they were in the last pre-deployment stage. The Minister was at pains to explain to the soldiers the cardinal sins that soldiers must take all possible precautions to avoid, the highest of which was being involved in sexual exploitation and abuse cases. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula warned those who will be found engaging in such misconduct will be legally prosecuted and if found guilty, will be discharge from the SANDF and will serve at least ten years in jail.

Defence Minister hands over the bridge in Nyosana village

After bidding farewell to the soldiers at Port St Johns, the two Ministers headed to Nyosana village, Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape where they met the community, as well as
traditional and political authorities. During her visit to Nyosana village, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans indicated that upon being informed of the situation at the village, she realised that help was needed in that community.

Subsequent to consultations with the Department of Public Works under Minister Thulas Nxesi, it was agreed that the Department of Defence should take the lead in these bridge-building projects. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula said it was her wish that the relationship with her Department must not end or be defined by bridge-building projects, but it should be a sustainable relationship through which the community members become beneficiaries of all the efforts and humanitarian assistance brought forth by the Department.

In appreciation of the gift, the community and its leadership requested that the bridge be named after Nomalizo Cecilia Malima, who turned 100 years on 9 February. Gogo Nomalizo Cecilia Malima, who was present at the handing-over ceremony of the bridge, can still walk with a stick, of course, and still has a good memory and good eyesight.

The building of these Bailey/Mabey bridges where they are most needed in South Africa not only makes the citizens’ lives a lot better, but also brings significant social and economic benefits to these rural communities and acts as a catalyst for local and regional development. It is about leaving an SANDF legacy that will always be etched in the community make-up for generation to come.

Do you know?

**THE BUILDING OF BRIDGES**

The military has been building bridges since World War I. The **Bailey bridge** was the brainchild of Sir Donald Bailey, who was a civilian Civil Engineer working for the British Army. The Bailey bridge, which is uniquely military, can be constructed in 12 to 24 hours’ time depending on climatic conditions and the terrain where the bridge is to be placed. Although designed for the exigencies of wartime, the Bailey bridge can last for more than 70 years.

The **Mabey bridge** was founded by Mr Bevil Mabey. The Mabey bridge was constructed after the Bailey bridge using the same concept as its predecessor. Bridge building capability in the SANDF resides with the School of Engineers, which is part of the SA Army Engineer Formation. The Formation provides combat engineering corps training and teaching to military officers and personnel, as well as to other Military Schools throughout the SANDF.

A completed bridge that was handed over to the Nyosana community.

LEFT: Morena Khomotsoana Lebenya, Chief of the Freyistata community, and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, at Freyistata, Popopo, Matatiele in the Eastern Cape Province.
The Department of Defence and Military Veterans has taken a step further to open the defence industry market when the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Defence Sector Charter was launched at the CSIR in Pretoria. One of the principles of the Charter is to ensure transformation within the industry so that it is reflective of the demographics of South Africa.

The purpose of the launch is to create a framework for meaningful and sustainable transformation and growth of the South African Defence Industry (SADI) through ownership, management and skills development programmes with the emphasis on Military Veterans and Small, Medium and Micro Sized Enterprises (SMMEs).

SADI, like other industries, is negatively affected by problems of the past and needs a framework to find solutions and grow the industry and the economy, as well as strengthen South Africa as a democratic developmental state. In this regard, the need for effective and significant economic transformation is essential.

Such transformation must include access to economic opportunities and productive resources for previously excluded groups, the promotion of local business and entrepreneurship, the development of skills for a knowledge-based economy and the development of innovative and Intellectual Property.

The Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, indicated that the National Defence Industry Council (NDIC) has been established as a mechanism to address some of these challenges. Its objectives are to ensure that industry products and services are aligned with the requirements of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

The Defence Sector Charter makes provision for companies to procure at least 60% of products from local companies. Private sector entities in the defence industry must subcontract no less than 30% of any contract exceeding R30 million to companies owned by designated black groups. Another highlight is that the black ownership target has been increased to 30%, which is higher than the 25% benchmark of generic BEE codes.

Dr Gulube said the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) is also making efforts to speed up decisions on approving defence imports and exports and is meeting more regularly. The Department is also paying the majority (85%) of its invoices within 30 days’ time, compared to 50% at one point.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, said the Charter is going to benefit the marginalised, in particular women and the youth, who are the country’s future. The Minister indicated that the launch of the BBBEE Defence Sector Charter was historical and has the ability to contribute to economic growth, especially through exports.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “The defence industry is a key contributor to the economy. SADI is an integral part of the SANDF capability. It has become a tool for defence diplomacy and foreign policy and a key contributor to the South African Government’s imperatives.”

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, during the launch of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Defence Sector Charter.
Defence Minister reports on the progress of the Vaal River Rehabilitation Project

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano

An inter-governmental task team including the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, and the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Gugile Nkwinti, recently re-visited the Emfuleni Local Municipality to give a joint report on the progress and work done thus far at the Vaal River Rehabilitation Project.

This follows an initial visit by Minister Mapisa-Nqakula to Emfuleni Local Municipality in November last year after a pronouncement by the Minister of Finance, Mr Tito Mboweni, to request the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) to assist with the rehabilitation of the Vaal River System. The focus of the visit was to obtain a technical report on the implementation of the project, conduct site visits to stations that have been rehabilitated and engagement with communities who were affected by the sewerage.

The Ministers and the inter-governmental task team attested that soldiers deployed to the district to assist in the pollution crisis have made a significant progress since arriving in the area about five months ago.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans commended the soldiers that are on the ground for progress that has been made.
However, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said although soldiers have made notable progress, they are still facing challenges. The Minister added: “There is a problem of machinery that they are supposed to be using. The amount required to get that equipment is about R1 billion.”

The Minister of Water and Sanitation said the department had already made R241 million available for the Vaal River rehabilitation programme, however, more than R6-7 million was still needed to complete the programme.

Minister Nkwinti further said his department is working with other sectors in Government to fund the R1 billion-Vaal River Rehabilitation Project. He added that the funding intervention is receiving urgent attention.

In addition, Minister Nkwinti said Government is also focusing on a skills programme that will empower the community and ensure that water purification systems are protected when soldiers leaves the area. He continued: “The Government will recruit 2 000 young people for a skills programme so they can be trained to ensure that when the SANDF leave after 12 months, the pump stations would be secure.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula commended that there is a need to educate communities about keeping their environment clean and to look after the community’s properties. The Minister further noted that the problem of sewage running right through some homes on her last visit had been resolved.

The Minister said: “We are now interacting with the community, giving a report back on what has been done, but equally listening to their own experiences of the presence of the SANDF.”

Members of the community who were affected by the sewage were also given the opportunity to air their experiences with the SANDF since its involvement to the Vaal River Rehabilitation Project. Many expressed endless gratitude and appreciation to the SANDF for stopping the spillages of raw sewage flowing into their homes, some for over a year.

Mpho Medupi, one of the women whose family was victim to this experience, said she is glad that the children can now play in the yard without contaminated mud.

The project leader, Col Andries Mahapa, reporting on the successes and challenges of the Vaal River Rehabilitation Progress to the delegation including the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Gugile Nkwinti, and the inter-governmental task team.
The Gunners’ Association immortalised four fallen Umkhonto weSizwe gunners

For our tomorrows, they gave their today and they served and gave their lives for the cause of freedom, liberty and peace. The Gunners’ Association recently immortalised four fallen gunners of the Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), who died during the Battle of Mutale River, and added their names to the Wall of

**RIGHT:** Lt Gen Phillip du Preez (Ret), the National President of the Gunners’ Association, addressing the guests during the Gunners’ Memorial Service.

**Lt Gen Barney Hlatshwayo, Chief of Joint Operations, laying a wreath on behalf of the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke.**

**Mr Bennet Velaphi, brother of the late Mr Mlungiseleli Velaphi, laying a wreath to honour those who died in the service of their country.**
The Gunners’ Association recently immortalised four fallen gunners of the Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), who died during the Battle of Mutale River, and added their names to the Wall of Remembrance.

Mr Nkosi, Mr Velaphi, Mr Nkabinde and Mr Lukhele, as well as a Venda Defence Force member, were shot dead. Subsequent to this, Mr Abram Moroe was tracked down to a nearby village area and shot dead on 17 April 1988.

Their bodies were buried as paupers in the Mbaleni cemetery in Thohoyandou. The families of the deceased members were given the incorrect remains by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1998. The Missing Persons Task Team located and exhumed the correct remains, which were identified through DNA tests, from the Mbaleni Cemetery during 2006 and 2007. In June 2013 Mr Moroe was buried in the Crystal Park Cemetery in Benoni, while Mr Nkabinde, Mr Lukhele and Mr Nkosi were reburied in Tembisa, whereas Mr Velaphi was reburied in Mdantsane in 2014.

The aim of the Gunners’ Memorial Service is to preserve and honour the legacy of all fallen gunners and provide healing to the families through commemorative events. This memorial site was consecrated on 16 May 1952 in memory of gunners, who lost their lives in World War I and World War II. For the memorial to be inclusive of all war fought before and after democracy, the memorial site was re-consecrated on 19 April 1998 in memory of all gunners who laid down their lives for South Africa.

Lt Gen Phillip du Preez (Ret), the National President of the Gunners’ Association, said that these fallen gunners were not immortalised, because their names had not been known at the time. However, it was brought to the attention of the Gunners’ Association by the General of the Gunners and the Chief of Logistics, Lt Gen Jabulani Mbili.

Lt Gen Mbili uncovered the identities of these four members of MK, who died in the line of duty, giving their lives for freedom. He said: “It was highly important to remember and embrace the bold veterans who had given their lives to a vision without any reservations. These fallen heroes may be gone, but they would not be forgotten for having paid the ultimate price.”

Speaking to SA Soldier, Lt Gen Mbili said that this was done to keep the legacy of the fallen gunners alive so that generations would know the people who had fought for freedom. Lt Gen Mbili said: “These fighters played an instrumental role in the liberation struggle of this country. The coming generations must know how the struggle for freedom came about and uphold the principles of the fallen leaders.”

He further said their names had been written in the annals of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and would forever be etched in the hearts of South Africans, especially of those who had served with them in the struggle. Quoting the following passage from the Bible: “The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them.” (John 15: 13), Lt Gen Mbili said there was no more profound way to express love for your fellow comrade than by giving your life for them.

SA Soldier also conversed with family members of the four fallen gunners, who were all appreciative of the honour bestowed by the Gunners’ Association to their loved ones. Mr Bennet Velaphi, brother of Mr Mlungiseleli Velaphi, said that his brother left the country when he was 16 years old to serve in the ranks of MK. He said he was happy because his brother died fulfilled in his quest to serve his nation. Furthermore, Mr Bennet Velaphi said what happened on that fateful day in March 1988 still resonates today.

Mr Bennet Velaphi said: “These fallen members have left our families bereaved and affected. It is time for all of us to reflect on the destruction of wars, not only from the fallen, but for the families as well. These members did not ask for any special recognition, but it is important we keep them in our thoughts and never forget their sacrifices.”
Accreditation of Military Attachés and Advisory Corps members

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

As our country and the rest of the continent are observing in anticipation Africa Day in a bid to foster unity, Defence Foreign Relations (DFR) recently hosted an accreditation ceremony for 17 newly appointed Military Attachés and Advisory Corps (MAAC) members from different countries at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane.

The ceremony also served as the official launch of the 2019 edition of the MAAC Course. Representatives of various countries residing in South Africa were among the dignitaries who attended this ceremony.

According to the Dean of the MAAC community, Brig Gen Norman Matuvhunye from the Embassy of Zimbabwe, the MAAC Course will expose the contingent of foreign military attachés to the functions of defence foreign relations, and defence diplomacy and courtesy. He added that the Course also stands to reconnect, strengthen and consolidate the strategic and historical bilateral relations our government has established with the respective foreign countries.

Following the customary way of opening such an event, the occasion commenced with a short outdoor ceremony during which the incoming MAAC members were welcomed and greeted by means of a general salute by the National Ceremonial Guard.

Brig Gen Matuvhunye said the MAAC is the community with rules and regulations, always looking forward to impart critical useable skills and knowledge to benefit the representatives of foreign countries on completion of this course.

The Chief Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe, who officiated at this event, remarked that in their history books, there is no military culture that better articulates a commitment to multilateral relations than the MAAC community. He said: “Our commitment to entrust the best of our officers to the hands of another nation not only serves the role of solidifying existing cordial relations, but it also communicates our nation’s trust.”

Lt Gen Nyembe added: “As Defence Attachés and members of the Defence Advisory Corps you have been sent to our country to continue in strengthening the already existing bilateral and multilateral agreements that we have concluded over the years.”

Having said that, Lt Gen Nyembe had no doubt that the representatives would find their stay in our country informative, pleasant and exciting, especially on account of the warm welcoming nature and friendliness of our beautiful land. He remarked: “Your deployment here will further assist in not only facilitating and implementing the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding with your
countries, but will also further advance better formalisation and cooperation for the greater good and better welfare of our countries.”

Lt Gen Nyembe further indicated that the representatives had been appointed by their government’s defence forces to conduct Military Diplomacy with our country. Speaking to nominees he said: “You are representatives and protectors of the interests of your nations that have established very productive relations with our country. As a nation, we continue to pursue the goal of cementing our role as influential global participants. Therefore, interactions such as these become very vital to enable us to play a meaningful role in global issues in tandem with those countries that share our objectives.”

Lt Gen Nyembe added that South Africa, through the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), strived to promote a better and more enhanced association with fellow defence forces on the continent.

The ultimate assignment of military diplomats necessitated, above all tasks, that they should provide an early warning mechanism to their principals.

The Dean of the Military Attachés and Advisory Corps (MAAC) community, Brig Gen Norman Matuvhunye from the Embassy of Zimbabwe, (front row, forth from left), and the Chief Defence Intelligence, Lt Gen Jeremiah Nyembe (front row, middle), with the newly appointed MAAC members.

WARM AND CORDIAL TIES OF FRIENDSHIP: The newly appointed Military Attachés and Advisory Corps members were welcomed to South Africa at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane.
The SANDF impresses crowds at the Rand Show

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

The sound of a Gripen fighter jet over the NASREC Show grounds and explosion of smoke grenades as fast as ropers hit the ground, marked the opening ceremony of the 125th Rand Show at the NASREC Expo Centre south of Johannesburg at which the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, recently officiated.

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) became one of the biggest exhibitors at this eye catching event. As always, the Rand Show crowd was overawed by the SANDF live demonstrations, which ran for the first four days after the opening.

Addressing the attendees at the opening, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “The platform that the Rand Show affords the SANDF is key to exposing the citizens of Gauteng and the country at large to the capabilities, state-of-the-art technologies and the career opportunities that abound within our national defence force.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula mentioned, without any fear of contradiction, that there is no career you will not find in the SANDF. This includes pilots, engineers, health professionals, divers, navigators, intelligence personnel, chefs, scientists, accountants, administrators, communicators and ICT specialists.

The Minister further explained that our soldiers have been patriotically exhibiting and showcasing their capabilities at this crowd-pulling event without fail since 2011 and have endeared themselves to visitors from all walks of life, educating our people about the military’s role in society and

The SANDF impresses crowds with its capabilities during the Rand Show.
towards the defence of our constitutional dispensation. Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added: “It is through the participation of the SANDF in events such as this one that the aspirations of young men and women from Eldorado Park, Soweto, Tembisa, Diepsloot, Bryanston, Alexandra and Dainfern - in fact throughout the country, ignite them to serve the country.”

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said she expected 400 000 visitors to attend the show, giving the SANDF an opportunity also to educate them about the military’s role in safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of South Africa.

This includes helping to oversee the National Elections, assisting Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe following Cyclone Idai, and rehabilitating the Vaal Water Treatment System. “The People’s National Defence Force is also involved in Matatiele to build bridges between cut-off villages and safely connect learners to their places of learning,” the Minister said, adding that: “There is so much good that our National Defence Force is doing, albeit on a limited budget.”

Following the Minister’s speech was a two- to three-hour-long arena programme. The programme began with a simulated ambush of SA Army soldiers by a hostile force and one Gripen fighter pilot evacuating the fighter jet with his parachute. After the hostiles had been beaten back, soldiers demonstrated a wide variety of capabilities, including bridge assembly, dog handling, martial arts, gun-run and firing and disassembly and reassembly of a Land Rover in under ten minutes.

Different Services performed precision drills while soldiers showcased their skills on motorcycles, including jumping through a wall of fire. The live demonstrations ended with a mock kidnapping of the “Defence Minister” and rescue by the Military Police.

Aside from the Gripen fighter jet, five Pilatus PC-7 Turbo Trainers with the Silver Falcons aerobatic display team performed their routine for show-goers on the opening day. An A109 Agusta helicopter was on static display, alongside equipment from all Services of the SANDF, including those of the Military Police. The military once again occupied several thousand square metres of the show grounds with its exhibits. Static displays featured Olifant main battle tanks, Ratel and Rooikat armoured vehicles and many weapons in use by the SANDF from the R4/R5 rifles through to the G6 self-propelled gun.
The National Ceremonial Guard welcoming the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, during the opening of the Rand Show.

A fly-past by the Silver Falcons during the opening ceremony of the Rand Show.

Action-ready members of 1 Parachute Battalion parading with pride at the opening ceremony of the Rand Show.

RIGHT: Engineers of the SA Army showcasing their capabilities by assembling a bridge in less than ten minutes.
Gunners take top honours at the Ermelo Highveld Show

By Lt Lebone Manaka, Communications Officer
Air Defence Artillery School
Photos by Gnr Ofentse Letswalo

Air Defence Artillery School (ADA School) was crowned the best overall exhibitor at this year’s Ermelo Highveld Show held at the showgrounds of this small Mpumalanga town. Known for its role as a Centre of Excellence for ground-based air defence artillery gunners in the SA Army, ADA School has been endearing itself to the communities of Ermelo and surrounding towns ever since its relocation to Mpumalanga from the Northern Cape.

ADA School participated in the Ermelo Highveld Show for the second consecutive year, building on its success at the show in 2018 when it also scooped the top prize for exhibitions and displays. The gunners of Gert Sibande have also participated in the Piet Retief Air Show where they wowed visitors with their state-of-the-art military hardware and gunnery demonstrations and displays.

The gunners had on display their trusted Prime Mission Equipment combination of two 35mm MK V towed twin-barrelled anti-aircraft guns supported by two self-propelled 23mm Bosvark twin-barrelled system and a Command Ratel. To complete ADA School’s exhibition at the Ermelo Highveld Show, which recently took place, was a sixteen by sixteen tent, fully set up with a soldier’s basic inspection kit inside displaying the gunners’ way of life to the public.

The Ermelo Highveld Show started in 1973 at the Ermelo showgrounds after the district had allocated 11.7 hectares of land specifically for the show. It has been growing in leaps and bounds with the event’s committee introducing new activities each year. The involvement of ADA School has also generated much needed interest in the show with visitors eagerly looking forward to having a touch-and-feel of the military hardware on display.

Besides the participation of ADA School, there were other activities taking place at the show, which included horse riding, bull leaping, car racing and fun rides for children and adults, including a wide range of clothing and food stalls. Through its corporate communication office, ADA School strives to project a positive corporate image of the SA Army, SA Army ADA Formation and all its gunners to the public and its local stakeholders in Ermelo, hence its participation in this year’s show to educate the public about the role of the military in a democracy. The School also aims to actively support the SA Army’s contribution to the socio-economic development and upliftment of the communities where ADA bases are located.

With the growing interest that the unit has drawn at the Ermelo Highveld Show this year and the previous one, ADA School will be looking forward to use platforms such as these to expand its footprint and to reach out to the local communities and its other stakeholders.

ADA School has found its new home in Ermelo and the Unit is settling in nicely in this small community. Ermelo is the birthtown of stalwart, anti-apartheid activist and 1956 Treason Trialist, Gert Sibande, affectionately known as the Lion of the East for his activism in Mpumalanga.
Military Hospital has expanded its medical services to support the treatment of cancer. The Oncology Department marked their first anniversary ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February.

The unit was established in 2012 after some period of outsourcing the treatment of cancer. Treatment at 1 Military Hospital has been fully operational since February 2017 and they have started with chemotherapy.

An oncology pharmacist, Ms Marthie Hendricksz, is preparing chemotherapy medication in a Bio Hazardous Safety Cabinet in the mixing room.

An oncologist at 1 Military Hospital, Dr Lesiba Khalo, says they need to curb overspending on outsourcing cancer treatment to private hospitals.

Dr Lesiba Khalo, an oncologist at 1 Military Hospital, said they had made plans to curb overspending on the aspect of outsourcing. He said: “We needed to save money while treating cancer patients at 1 Military Hospital. After some research and cost analysis to develop this unit, we started training nurses in cancer treatment and so far, we have five nurses, one other consulting doctor and myself as an oncologist.

“When we presented to the Surgeon General and the General Officer Commanding, our projection on cost-saving measures amounted to more than R23 million annually from all the outsourcing we had to do.”

Dr Khalo said the numbers were low when they started with about 48 patients.

They have now increased since they no longer send patients to private hospitals for cancer treatment, but are able to provide it themselves. The unit seeks to expand its space to accommodate the number of patients who have increased slightly in volumes. On average, over 150 to 200 patients are consulted in a month with about 120 patients on active treatment.

Oncology is a specialised medical field and various professionals are involved, which include physicians and neurosurgeons, among others. Dr Khalo said: “It is a huge unit in terms of intake as it involves all medical specialists and health care facilities such as sick bays and hospices. It is also quite a resource intensive medical discipline.

“The screening and prevention start at sick bays, and then patients are referred to hospitals for further treatment by a specialist. If a patient cannot be treated further, they are referred to hospices for supportive care and quality of life.”
Common treatment for cancer includes chemotherapy that is administered through a drip and radiation machine which is used to burn cancer cells. However, the unit is operating at 70% to 80% capacity as they still need to acquire the radiation machine.

The unit also has a dedicated pharmacist in the Oncology Department, who is responsible for ordering, mixing and managing cancer medication. Dr Khalo said cancer drugs are complicated and as such, they have a mixing room to prepare medication for patients.

Dr Khalo added: “This is to ensure that patients get the right dosages for their treatment. The doctors issue prescriptions for medication based on the patient’s weight and height. The treatment for each patient is individualised so it is important to use the correct dosage for the correct patient in a timely manner.”

Dr Khalo said their success is measured according to the outcome of each patient and he is proud to indicate that more than 90% of their patients are survivors. He added: “Unfortunately, due to the nature of the disease, some cancers are detected after having advanced in stages. The 10% would likely be in that category. We have an average mortality rate of 0.1% to 1% and about 6% to 8% would be in a hospice for supportive care. However, 90% of the patients respond positively to the treatment.”

He said that they wished to develop a fully-fledged cancer clinic that would have a radiation machine. He added that they also needed space for a ward and to train more nurses. Dr Khalo affirmed: “We will continue to engage in more research and training to keep abreast of the developments in the treatment of cancer.”

These developments come against the backdrop of World Cancer Day - an initiative of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), which is observed on 4 February annually. It aims to reduce premature cancer deaths by 25% and those due to non-communicable diseases by 2025, through awareness initiatives such as World Cancer Day.

It stated that there are currently just over 43 million people alive within five years of a cancer diagnosis. The UICC is committed to its “Treatment for All” campaign that rests on five pillars, which enable high quality data and research; early detection and diagnosis; timely and accurate treatment and improved supportive and palliative care for cancer patients.
FREEDOM AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON
You have a right to be free from all forms of violence and not to be detained without trial.

EQUALITY
Everyone is equal before the law and may not be discriminated against unfairly.

HUMAN DIGNITY
Everyone has inherent human dignity which must be respected.

PRIVACY
Your right to privacy includes your body, home and possessions.

LIFE
Everyone has the right to life.

SLAVERY, SERVITUDE AND FORCED LABOUR
You may not be subjected to slavery or forced labour.

ASSEMBLY, DEMONSTRATION, PICKET AND PETITION
You have the right to peacefully assemble, demonstrate and protest.

CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNITIES
You have the right to form, join and maintain cultural, linguistic and or religious groupings of your own choice.

FREEDOM OF TRADE, OCCUPATION AND PROFESSION
You have the right to choose any legal trade or occupation freely.

ACCESS TO COURTS
You have the right to resolve your legal disputes in a court or another impartial tribunal.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was signed into law by former President Nelson Mandela on 10 December 1996. Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights which provides for the following rights:

The rights in the Bill of Rights may be limited. The limitation must be reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

LABOUR RELATIONS
Every worker and employer has the right to organise and negotiate to further their aims.

ENVIRONMENT
You have the right to live in a safe, healthy environment.

PROPERTY
No-one may be deprived of property, except in terms of law of general application.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION
You have the right to associate with anyone.

HOUSING
You have the right to have access to adequate housing.

HEALTH CARE, FOOD, WATER AND SOCIAL SECURITY
You have the right to have access to healthcare, adequate food, water and social security.

CHILDREN
Every child has the right to a name, nationality and protection from abuse and exploitation.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION, BELIEF AND OPINION
You have the right to think, believe in and belong to a religion of your choice.

POLITICAL RIGHTS
You may form a political party, run for office and vote for any party in free and fair elections.

CITIZENSHIP
No citizen may be deprived of citizenship.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND RESIDENCE
You have the right to enter and leave the Republic at will.

EDUCATION
You have the right to receive basic education in the official language of your choice where that education is reasonably practicable.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
You have the right to use the language of your choice and practice your own culture.

ARRESTED, DETAINED AND ACCUSED PERSONS
When arrested, you have the right to remain silent, to be brought before a court within 48 hours and the right to legal representation.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION
You may access any information held by the state for the protection of your rights.

JUST ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION
You have the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair.
Defence plays a huge role to ensure our human rights are upheld

By Ms Esethu Sodo
Photos by Timothy Makhubele

It is 25 years since 21 March has been proclaimed as Human Rights Day by the first Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), the former President of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), Mr Nelson Mandela.

The Constitution of the RSA was adopted by former South African President Nelson Mandela on 10 December 1996.

RIGHT: Ms Vivian Sebeho, Assistant Director Civilian Education, Training and Development, testifies that human rights do exist in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). She came to the SANDF as a secretary and now she is a qualified teacher.

Chapter 2 of the Constitution contains the Bill of Rights.

This was to remind people of the massacre that took place at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. On that day, some of the people, who were gathering peacefully to protest against the pass laws, were injured or brutally killed by the police. As a result, that date serves as a reminder of the price that has been paid for our treasured human rights.

It also serves to inform us that human rights are fundamental to every human being simply because they are human regardless of their nationality. In fact, the Government went further to preserve these rights in the Constitution of South Africa, making it hard for anyone (including the Government) to take away these rights even if they wanted to. The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) plays a huge role in making sure these rights are upheld.

Expressing his opinion, Cpl Mbekeni Thwala, a logistics clerk at the Command and Management Information Systems (CMIS) Division, said:

“The SANDF makes sure that this democracy we have today is enjoyed by everybody without being disturbed. The SANDF protects our borders.”
Supporting this, Lt Col Jason du Toit, SO1 Military Labour Relations, said: “The SANDF is there to protect the citizens of the country, its territorial integrity, as well as to uphold the principles of the Constitution - the Constitution emphasises the protection of human rights.”

Lt Col Du Toit added that the SANDF is also active in supporting our communities. Some of the human rights that the SANDF assist to preserve are to provide assistance in times of need, when so instructed, for instance health care, food, water, shelter and sanitation.

For example the SANDF helped in the hospitals in the North West Province by providing health officials when they were required. The SANDF also assisted hospitals in Soweto when workers were on strike and there was a backlog in the mortuary. This is also visible in the current on-going Vaal Project, where SA Army engineers are cleaning the Vaal Water Plant preserving human rights to clean water.

Lt Col Du Toit explained: “The SANDF is also involved in helping Mozambique with the after effects of the cyclone. So, the SANDF is not only involved in internal, but also in external military operations and assisting other countries in promoting and preserving human rights; be it such with shelter, building bridges and providing support.”

While the good works of the SANDF were highlighted by Lt Col Du Toit; S Sgt Joseph Ntobeng, a Logistic Clerk at Chief Directorate Transformation Management, commended the military on maintaining the right to equality. He said that in the past, owing to the role of the SANDF, women who joined the SANDF were mainly employed in supporting roles rather than in combat. Today, there are women in commanding positions which, according to S Sgt Ntobeng, shows growth in equality in the SANDF.

S Sgt Ntobeng added: “Bringing many women in the SANDF and making them grow in the ranks is not child’s play, but now most of them are officers commanding. The highest that we have right now is Maj Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, who is Deputy Chief Human Resources. We still need to move a step further and it is up to the leaders to trust them to be Sergeant Majors or Chiefs of the SANDF.”

Undeniably, women seemed to have an opportunity to grow in the SANDF whether they are uniformed members or civilians, especially when their right to education is being recognised. Assistant Director Civilian Education, Training and Development, Ms Vivian Sebeho, acknowledged this as one of the major changes the human rights have brought to the organisation.

Ms Sebeho claimed that in the past civilians were forced to study towards what they were doing, but now they have the flexibility to venture into any direction they want their career path to go. On top of that, they are offered courses that ensure that even if they were to leave the SANDF, they could still be employable by the public and the private sector.

Sgt Kgauqelo Makafane, a Senior Personnel Clerk, affirmed this testimony: “Now we are free to pursue what we want to pursue. Our choices are no longer dictated by someone else. I am free to think whatever I want to think. We can apply where we want to work without any restrictions. Now everything is within our reach.”

She continued by saying that women are given opportunities ranging from technicians to engineers, and men are allowed to become nurses and chefs - gender no longer restricts anyone.

Hearing the opinions of Defence members, it is clear that human rights are very visible in the SANDF and play a huge role in bettering the lives of its members.

In his closing remarks, Lt Col Du Toit said: “We are very fortunate in the SANDF because we are very diverse. We have people from different backgrounds, cultures and languages and I think that is a good thing. The SANDF reflects the demographics of the country. Nevertheless, the Parliament of South Africa still encourages citizens to reflect on their rights, to protect their rights and the rights of all people from violation, irrespective of race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Whether or not they are foreign nationals, human rights apply to everyone equally.”
Reskilling of the Reserves - a high priority for the SANDF

In an effort to address the challenges of economic growth, unemployment, inequality in education and poverty alleviation faced by the country and to align the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) with the National Development Plan, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, has launched a massive initiative known as Project KOBA-TLALA. The project was approved by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, through which the SANDF will use its footprint in rural and semi-rural areas, namely units, land and utilisation of resources, to augment rural development initiatives in conjunction with local communities, rural areas, town, provincial government and other stakeholders. This will provide nodal points or hubs for community engagement, stakeholder coordination and structural requirements towards creating viable, sustainable local economies.

Project KOBA-TLALA is aligned with the country’s developmental agenda, particularly in the agricultural sector. The project is focused on boosting small-scale and emerging farmers, and the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise Sector (SMMEs) as part of the value chain. This initiative will have a footprint in all rural provinces.

According to the Project Director of KOBA-TLALA, Brig Gen Gerhard Kamffer, the intention is to create greater job prospects for the youth and to provide for the reskilling and education of Reserve Force members.

He is of the opinion that young people, specifically young soldiers (predominantly unemployed Reserves), have a big role to play in the South African agricultural sector. He further said the project is designed to contribute to a
vibrant, equitable and sustainable economy in support of food security.

Brig Gen Kamffer said reskilling and education in an Updated Reserve Force System dispensation was a high priority for the SANDF. Unemployed Reserve Force members will be equipped with occupational skills that will empower them to contribute to the country and their own communities. He said: “Initiatives must be developed to ensure a structured, orderly and humane exit strategy for Reserves who no longer meet the SANDF deployability requirements.”

Some pilot reskilling initiatives have been launched. Various training opportunities have been offered through which Reserve members have been empowered in terms of specific skills such as water purification, animal health, project management, planning, community development and liaison to contribute to the national and rural development plan.

This training intervention through Project KOBA-TLALA equips soldiers to be competent and effective in community interventions, specifically against the backdrop of the National Developmental initiative of the SANDF. A total of 473 Reserve Force members have received SA Qualification Authority-accredited reskilling training during the last ten months, which goes a long way to achieving one of the deliverables of the Updated Reserve Force Service System.

This pilot model entails that trained military instructors use military infrastructure and the established military course managements systems to present training to Reserve members. The recent innovative training model has just undergone its first test when a course in hybrid hydroponics was presented to eighteen students from Regiment President Steyn and Regiment Bloemspruit.

Post-course evaluations will now be done to determine the suitability of the model. If proven successful, this model could be rolled out to other centres in the country where the SANDF has a footprint and similar facilities to those at Regiment President Steyn. During the pilot hybrid hydroponics course, the students were taught how to establish a vegetable garden using the principles of hybrid hydroponics. As a result of the training, these members can now return home, start their own gardens and so families, and even communities, can become self-sufficient.

During the recently held graduation ceremony at Regiment President Steyn, the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, said that Project KOBA-TLALA was geared towards promoting economic growth and creating employment, particularly in the poorest areas of the country. He said the Government was committed to constructing a democratic developmental state capable of addressing all challenges ranging from economic growth, unemployment, inequality, safety and security to poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, Lt Gen Yam said the SANDF was particularly well positioned to achieve these aims without negatively impacting on its core functions and able to use its inherent collateral utility to contribute to Government’s developmental agenda. According to him, the success of the project has been overwhelming.

The Chief of the SA Army said there was a collective commitment by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SANDF to work towards this goal. To achieve this, the Department has put in place several strategies to address challenges faced by the country.

Lt Gen Yam said higher mobility in education meant better development. He said: “Countries with high mobility in education are better placed to generate future growth, as well as reduce poverty and inequality. Project KOBA-TLALA continues to become a role player in a strategic alliance to the economic growth and sustainable development of SMMEs. Through this project, a platform was created for various sector programmes to develop into sustainable businesses.” Lt Gen Yam commended the commitment of all learners on course and the instructors for a job well done.

Speaking to SA Soldier about the hybrid hydroponics and African Grower, Mr Louis-Gillis Janse van Rensburg from Fresh Life Produce, who partnered with Project KOBA-TLALA in the reskilling of the Reserves, said their aim was to have a product that was easy transportable and could be used anywhere. He said they wanted to show that there was an alternative to the thinking that they needed to have a few large-scale producers to feed households and entire cities.

Mr Janse Van Rensburg further said the system use 90% less water
than any gravel system, but the products produced grow at least three times faster than in a traditional system. He said: “The African Grower Tower Garden is a high-density growing system for urban households. The Garden is manually operated, productive, sustainable and highly water efficient. The Tower grows 48 to 50 plants in a single column, which occupies less than a square metre. With the HiGro segmented column one could grow leafy greens, peas, beans, strawberries, flowers and more.

Pte Thakane Moloi, a learner on the course, said this was such a cool concept. The best features for her were the 80 to 90% water saving efficiency and chemical-free fresh produce. She said she learnt a lot and was looking forward to the future to produce her own organically-grown vegetables to eat at home.

Pte Joyce Molefi echoed the same sentiments as her fellow learner and said that the possibilities were endless and very exciting for the future. She further said her father was old and had his own garden, but she would introduce this African Grower to him as it was much easier to maintain than the traditional garden.

This pilot project is also earmarked to be rolled out to the SA Army Spouses Forum. The focus areas of the Spouses Forum include, among others, poverty alleviation, business opportunities, support to SA Army spouses and children, skills development and women empowerment. According to Brig Gen John Thys, leader of the Implementation Project Team (IPT), responsible for revamping the SA Army Spouses Forum said this would be the skills development course presented to the SA Army Spouses Forum.

Brig Gen John Thys said the Chief of the SA Army started the process to revamp the SA Army Spouses Forum on returning from his visit to the Nigerian Army by incorporating ideas from the well-developed Nigerian Spouses Forum, which is a philanthropic and non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Brig Gen John Thys informed SA Soldier that Department of Defence (DOD) land has been identified for small-scale farming. This will be the first point of entry for the SA Army Spouses Forum. The project will provide goods through Project KOBATLALA. These emerging farmers will then be linked to commercial markets in the long term.
The SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) is responsible for providing military health services to the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). Other than providing healthcare to the SANDF, SAMHS is currently working on a prototype to convert the Mamba Mk 2 into a combat ambulance to be able to render medical support. This project is expected to come to fruition upon and by the Military Command before the end of 2019.

The Mamba is a South African armoured personnel carrier that is utilised by the SA Army during external deployments and military operations. It is an agile, lightweight vehicle, which enhances mobility and can be transported by a C130 aircraft.

The decision to adopt the Mamba has been a discussion point for a long time. The project started with extensive research that explored possible options, including the latest technology and comparison with other military vehicles on the African terrain.

The research included expert advice from Armscor and Denel with the United Nations’ requirements in mind.

The Integrated Project Team (IPT) behind this project is a multidisciplinary team of clinical personnel, including doctors, trauma and emergency nurses, military paramedics, operational emergency care practitioners and technical personnel.

A private company would have cost the SAMHS millions of rands in order to design the Mamba ambulance. It is against this background that the technical team, led by Maj Gen Lesley Ford, the Chief Director Military Health Force Support, decided to utilise the SAMHS members with the knowledge and skills to design the prototype ambulance.

The Integrated Project Team was assisted by Technical Service Unit (TSU) members, who are welders, painters and carpenters, to build the prototype. Lt Col Mathe emphasised that this project is not in any way to replace the Mfezi; all the combat vehicles are designed for a specific purpose and terrain.

The Mamba ambulance prototype.
Save a life - Donate blood!

When it comes to sustaining life, there is one vital liquid without which human beings cannot survive, namely blood. Blood is a precious resource that anyone can give to someone in need. According to the SA National Blood Service (SANBS), a minimum of three lives can be saved with each donated unit of blood because it can be separated into red blood cells, plasma and platelets.

When one donates blood, it does not only help people during disasters, but also during surgery, fighting cancer and giving birth. Blood donations are used to save thousands of lives per day. A lot of medical care we take for granted would not exist without blood donations. Thousands of patients would die daily if there was insufficient quality blood in stock. When one donates blood, patients are given a gift money cannot buy or science cannot create.

According to information from the SANBS, less than 1% of South Africans are active blood donors. A unit of blood only lasts for 42 days after donation and for this reason, it is important for blood donors to donate regularly. Donors can give blood as often as every eight weeks.

Mr Donald Makitla from the SANBS said that most South Africans would need a blood transfusion at some point in their lives. He said reserves in South Africa are at critically low levels and those who are not able to go to private hospitals suffer the most. In addition, he said the SANBS aims to collect 3 000 units of blood per day to ensure a safe and sufficient blood supply in the health care system. Mr Makitla said: “It is through planned, sustainable blood drives at companies, organisations and institutions that we are able to achieve this collective target.”

The SA Army Artillery Formation recently partnered with the SANBS to host a blood drive in an effort to maintain a general supply of quality blood in response to the critical shortage experienced by the SANBS.

Speaking to SA Soldier during the event, Col Tiaan Krugel, Senior Staff Officer Capability Management SA Army Artillery Formation and Acting Chief of Staff SA Army Artillery Formation, said that they were thrilled to support this initiative and encouraged citizens to make regular blood donations their responsibility.

Colonel Krugel said: “Blood drives save lives. They are also a great way to bring people from the office and community together to support a common cause. As part of our community outreach programme, we decided to support this noble cause and donate blood. It is one of the most common ways people choose to give back to their communities. The blood you donate gives someone another chance at life. One day that someone may be a close relative, a friend, a loved one or even you.”

Maj Lizette Lombard, SO2 Communication at SA Army Artillery Formation, is one of those committed donors, who has donated blood more than 80 times - a lifelong commitment. Her motivation is to help others. For Maj Lombard, who donated blood for the first time when she was 16 years old, said her fondest memory of donating blood were the conversations with staff...
members. The worse part of donating blood is the pricking of one’s finger!

She said: “I thank God for my good health. I encourage all people to donate blood, whether it is their first, second or third time.” She further said while she was working at Wonderboom Military Base, she ran a blood donation clinic for 12 years and when she was transferred to SA Army Artillery Formation, she decided to host a blood donation drive to raise awareness among the members at the Formation, reminding them about the importance of blood donation. Maj Lombard said that the unit members were complaining that they had to drive far to donate blood. This was the motivation for her to request for the necessary permission to start a Blood Donation Drive at the unit. From now onwards this Blood Donation Drive will be held every 56 days at the unit.

Maj Lombard said the idea was to encourage as many staff members, visitors and other members of the public as possible to do their bit for the country through donating blood. Maj Lombard added that there was no more profound way to express care for your fellow South Africans than by sharing your lifeblood.

Mr Werner van der Westhuizen, the Layout Manager at Defence Corporate Communication, has been a regular and committed donor since he was 17 years old. Mr van der Westhuizen has donated blood more than 200 times. He has been donating blood for four decades and may have saved approximately 600 lives through blood donations over the years. Later this year, he will be recognised and honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award for this milestone accomplishment. It is the highest honour reserved for blood donors, who have made more than 200 donations in their lifetime.

He said that as a humanitarian at heart he saw the need to give back to the community by donating blood. He further said by donating blood one made a big difference in the lives of others. Mr Van der Westhuizen said: “Donating blood is not simply about relinquishing a unit of the precious, life-saving fluid. It is also very much about that life after it has been saved.” He hoped that more people would take the opportunity to become part of something incredible and excellent by donating blood.

His motivation: “It is because one can do so much for so many people with such little effort.” Mr Van der Westhuizen recently donated blood at the Armscor Building as part of his passion to save lives. He is a true inspiration to all of us. At Defence Headquarters, we are fortunate to have Mr Van der Westhuizen, a veteran champion and true blood donation veteran, who is cheering on the efforts of the SANBS to donate blood.

Who can donate blood to this worthy cause?

The universal access to safe blood is the lifeline for the healthcare system of any nation. As South Africans, we can all be proud of our dedicated and selfless voluntary donors, who regularly donate blood to save the lives of thousands of our people every year.

Minimum requirements to be a blood donor:

- You should be between the ages of 16 and 75 years for first-time donors.
- You should weigh a minimum of 50 kg (and for platelets a minimum of 55 kg).
- You should be in good health.
- Your pulse should be between 50-100 regular beats per minute.
- Your blood pressure should be below 180 systolic (first number) and below 100 diastolic (second number) (180/100mmHg) and above 100 systolic (first number) and above 60 diastolic (second number) (100/60mmHg).
- Your haemoglobin level should be 12.5 g/dL or above.
- You should lead a low-risk lifestyle.
- You should consider your blood to be safe for transfusion.
- You should have had a balanced meal within four hours of donating blood.
- You should not have donated blood in the last 56 days (and platelets in the last 14 days.)
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding your baby.
- You are on medication such as antibiotics.
- You are from or have travelled to a malaria area.
- You have cancer, heart disease, epilepsy, a bleeding disorder or any other chronic medical condition.

Please ask for more information if:

- You have had surgery in the last six months or are due for an operation within the next six weeks.

Ms Leonie Steenberg with Mr Werner van der Westhuizen, the Layout Manager at Defence Corporate Communication, after he received a life time achievement award for donating blood 200 times.
Living with a child with Autism

By Maj Rayline Nathan and Maj Tamlyn Jekels from the Mental Health Research and Development Department: Military Psychology Institute (MPI)

“...it is never too late to expand the mind of a person on the autism spectrum” Dr Temple Grandin. This article provides a basic overview to give advice to parents, family and friends on how to manage autism.

Parents or caregivers normally realise that the development of their child is different, often delayed, from that of children their age. Autism affects boys four times more than girls and it is usually diagnosed by the age of three and continues through to adulthood.

Some children's symptoms are milder while others are more serious. These symptoms include:

- You are involved in a “hazardous” occupation or sport, e.g. operating heavy machinery, flying a plane, scuba diving, working at heights.

What is high-risk exposure?

- Having sex with, or working as, a commercial sex worker.
- Having sex with multiple sex partners.
- Having sex with someone who has multiple sex partners.
- Injecting yourself with drugs or being injected by someone other than your doctor or health care worker.
- Having sex with a sex worker or anyone taking money, goods or favours in exchange for sex.

Please refrain from donating blood if:

- You have tested positive for HIV.
- There is any chance that you may have been exposed to HIV and AIDS; or if you are donating blood only to be tested for HIV and AIDS.
- You are being treated for a sexually transmitted infection (STI).

*For more information on blood donation or wishing to host a blood drive, kindly visit the SANBS website at https://sanbs.or.za

Maj Lizette Lombard, SO2 Corporate Communication at SA Army Artillery Formation, donating blood with Mr John Mkwanazi from the SA National Blood Service.
difficulties in social contact, verbal and nonverbal communication, behaviour that is different from that of other children and sensory understanding. The following case of “Sipho” is an example which will help you to understand Autism better.

“Little Sipho” as an example

As a baby, little Sipho did not like to be picked up or hugged by anyone. He never made eye contact with anyone nor smiled when happy. At the age of three Sipho had still not spoken and would use hand signals to communicate yet his hearing was normal.

Sipho had no interest to play with other children and preferred sitting in the corner spinning the wheels of his car over and over. Whenever he was upset he would rock himself back and forth to help himself calm down.

He really hated loud noises and bright flashing lights. Sipho only ate certain types of food and refused to add anything else to his diet. He does not like a disturbance in his routine.

Whenever his routine is disrupted, it upsets him to the point of an anger outburst. Sometimes Sipho will pull his skin and bang his head on objects which might lead to injury.”

Diagnosis

Before an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnosis can be made, developmental screening needs to be conducted by a medical doctor. Receiving a diagnosis of ASD can be a scary experience for parents, yet can also provide direction for appropriate interventions at home.

Dealing with a child with Autism

Parenting is often challenging, and not enough information is provided to prepare one to raise a child, let alone a child diagnosed with ASD. When you have a child with a developmental disorder like ASD, parenting becomes even more complicated.

Developing a good social support system is vital to help parents along the journey of caring and raising a child diagnosed with ASD. It is advised that you develop a long-standing relationship with a professional (e.g. medical doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist) who can monitor your child’s development over time and answer your questions as you go along.

Tips for parents

Helpful suggestions for parents would be to recognise that you are not alone, take care of yourself and seek guidance from other parents. Gather information about ASD and inform yourself about effective interventions.

Early detection of Autism is the most effective way to reduce the impact of Autism on your child’s life. Do not be scared of medical professionals, they are there to help and guide you. Stay positive and become an expert at your child.

Take everything one day at a time, do not be afraid to show emotion and remember there are support groups to join and help you through this process.

Websites where one can gather more information:

- www.aut2know.co.za - contact number: 011 484 9909
- autism.lovetoknow.com
- http://carolgraysocialstories.com
- https://www.facebook.com/AutismSouthAfrica/

References


Commandership and the celebration of building a legacy

By CO Tebogo Kekana, journalist at Ad Astra
Photos by Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye

Meet SA Air Force’s women Wing Commander - Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye – best known to younger airmen and recruits, as the new SO1 Visits and Events at Directorate Corporate Staff Services. She stepped into this role around much hype and interest. However, beside this role, she can fit into any role that required her leadership prowess.

For those who have watched the evolution of her career, Lt Col Mathye captured our attention and our interest when she was the Battalion Commander at most prominent funerals this year.

Lt Col Mathye is a woman who embodies the success of the here and now, particularly in the training environment. She is a celebrated military driller, disciplinarian and a matriarch. Walking her own distinct path, she has, like a river, led us to new seas through her work and impact in the Wing Commander’s office, and on and off the parade ground.

In this article, we get to know what drives her, what inspires her to continue shaking up the training experience. We invite you to enjoy this maiden voyage with us, and begin to look upon combat readiness as your own – a space to learn. Be inspired, be challenged; and we invite you to challenge your limits.

What a woman - the success and fitness of Lt Col Mathye

The first time I saw her was in 2009 when I had just moved to the Air Command Building to start my “big time” media career as a military writer. I was peeking over our newsroom cubicle, hoping to catch a glimpse of the face that matched the voice I already knew so well: Lt Col Mathye strode past my desk on her way to see another journalist.

The next time I would see her was a brief meeting before we sat down for our interview after one of the Candidate Officers’ Parades. At 06:30, as she set foot in the Air Force College; instead of a formal question and answer session, we sat down and had a conversation. I was told I had just fifteen minutes, after all, the Wing Commander was a busy woman.

New voyage

When we sat down to talk about the Officers’ Forming Wing, I was curious as to how she made sense of the new journey. Lt Col Mathye explained: “If you had asked me about that ten years ago, I would have given a very different answer; now, for me the success marker is about my personal development, how at peace I feel, how aligned I feel or in flow with my Creator, my purpose, my mission. Now my success is benchmarked against my state of mind and my state of peace.”

This brief and poignant insight shifted our conversation fundamentally, and it quickly gained the texture of Oprah’s now-famous Super Soul Sundays. What became clear was that Lt Col Mathye’s career journey has drawn her deeper into herself rather than further out into the public world – where commanders and mentors so often dine on and devour their favourite moments before their passing-out parade.

While her tenure as the Wing Commander seems to all of us like the axis upon which her career chapter spun, it is a manifestation of a more important mission at hand. She worked with celebrated icons in her career, but while she was at the Foreign Relations Desk, still in that realm of bilaterals and multilaterals, she maintained her consciousness and mindfulness as a serving leader in uniform.

Lt Col Mathye starts her day with a guided meditation and unlike many of her colleagues, ditched running for the quiet of a yoga studio, especially now that she is nursing an injury. Self-care is more a form of medicine for her.

Self-care - she defines as an ancient wisdom for modern times

Lt Col Mathye shared candidly: “Things can get very manic, and that is what it was like, and then you realise ‘I actually do not feel great’.”

In the midst of this serious moment, which should be all about her, she switches gears into Mom mode,
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 fundraising 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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Email: sandfedutrust@gmail.com

We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.

Together we move South Africa Forward
The theatre of training cannot be limited to men only, because at Ditholo during winter 2018 Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye was the women in command.

fixing my hair and removing a piece of lint from my uniform trousers. This small gesture typifies her warmth and awareness of others – despite everything on her plate.

This is where things get interesting. In an exposé on so-called “knowledge workers” (those who use cognitive and practical skills to produce and analyse knowledge), an investigation by The New Yorker showed that increased technological connectivity, greater public visibility and high stress had a significantly positive impact on career prospects, and a significantly negative impact on self-esteem.

For Lt Col Mathye, whose career presence has spanned almost every major communication office in the SA Air Force, this logic seems to ring true, but she is now actively working to navigate the interplay of career noise and personal stillness.

Lt Col Mathye said: “I lean on African traditional values and practices; I also lean on Asian practices. Whatever allows me to feel that heightened sense, or that connected sense. The military is a unique environment where one needs to always have a third eye, for thoroughness and precision. I am a perfectionist so I have seven senses, one for those days where I need to crack the whip.”

Despite her zen approach to her state of mind and a passionate belief in a higher power, she did not pull punches when it came to talking through some misguided moves on the parade – and her struggle to let go of structure and strategy of how the Officers should move to the other side of the Generals’ House where refreshments were served.

Trust her gut: When to stay, when to move on: Lt Col Mathye has been the darling of both the training and office environment, with an arsenal of accolades to arguably rival any other young woman working in the military today.

While she could wrap things up today, the lure of the next challenge (more personal than professional now) is still a massive driving force. She explained: “The resignation of my husband to pursue business interests was an important turning point. Despite its difficulties and successes, a new chapter was calling and he had to heed it.”

Lt Col Mathye said: “Coming back to facilitating at the helm of events, I feel like I want to be part of the driving dialogue in the country, conversations that are steering, and I could not do that on the parade ground, you know? Change is inevitable.”

While all was great at the Training Wing, she could not deny the restlessness she felt there. A tailored life: Joy and enjoyment there is no doubt that Lt Col Mathye has a busy life packed with career and family obligations, but that has not impacted on her sense of wonder and joy.

Defence Television shot her in three breathtaking looks as a “Woman in the Military”, and she made each her own – balancing the lady and whimsical with the strong and decisive.

I guess that is the unique Mathye magic – a quiet and timeless stillness that shakes things up, inspires and elevates, without saying a word. She moves gracefully and deliberately, as if she is not carrying decades of success with her – never mind the hopes of every aspiring women commander and leader.

It was a marvellous thing for me to watch as a woman. We are so often taught to enter a room apologetically, to stand in the background or not to be so loud that someone recognises the power within us.

Not Lt Col Mathye - she has stood and continues to stand the test of time. She embodies the message Maya Angelou once shared with Oprah: “I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand.” 🌸
"It is much better than the old one" - the new Patrol Ration Pack

By Maj (Dr) Danielle Bester (Arendse), Research Psychologist at the Military Psychological Institute
Photo by Col Elria van der Westhuizen

The Patrol Ration Pack was created for deploying soldiers to be used in circumstances in which fresh rations could not be prepared and has been available for decades.

Previous research on the Patrol Ration Pack prompted some changes to be made to the Patrol Ration Pack. The new Patrol Ration Pack was introduced in April 2018 and was influenced by international military standards that have started to use retort pouches instead of tinned food.

Some of the benefits of using a retort pouch are:

• Allows more variety in food options, e.g. stews, pastas, pizzas.
• The pouch is made of material that transfers heat faster to reach the critical temperature of 128°C.
• Reheating the food in the pouch saves 50% on time and fuel.
• Better food quality is ensured because of better retention of heat-sensitive nutrients.
• Takes up less disposal space.
• Is environmentally friendly.

Main findings on the new Patrol Ration Pack

Research on how soldiers have experienced the Patrol Ration Pack was requested owing to the changes made to the current Patrol Ration Pack.

The main findings on the new addition of the ready-to-eat meals in the retort pouches showed that chicken breyani, mutton stew, pilchards and beef curry, and vegetables were the most eaten and enjoyed ready-to-eat meals.

The comments included: “They taste better and they are enjoyable”; “nice meals and saves preparation time”; “because you do not struggle to open tins and you just open and eat” and at least compared to the old one, it’s the best.”

The findings on the ready-to-eat meals indicated that the same food items were enjoyed across the two studies conducted. It should, however, be kept in mind that the findings of this study are only true for the people who participated in the study.

About the study

The latest data collection took place at Lohatlha in the Northern Cape with 198 members completing questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used as only deployed soldiers in deploying units were asked to complete the surveys.

The members in the study were asked to complete an informed consent document and a newly designed Patrol Ration Pack Questionnaire. Initial research was conducted and it was recommended that more data collection be done to ascertain whether the preliminary findings could be confirmed.

These members consisted of men and women and were aged between 20 and 59 years, with an average age of 31. There were 66% African, 22% Coloured, 7% White, and 1% Indian with 93% SA Army and 1% SA Military Health Service members.

Most of these members were from the Northern Cape and Free State Provinces. The deployment of the members indicated that 37% had deployed internally, 12% externally and 7% both internally and externally.

The dietary requirements of the members were as follows: 63% no dietary requirements, 10% Halaal, 2% Kosher, 2% Vegetarian and 3% other.
Meet our own International Badminton Line Judge

Growing up in Elsies River on the Cape Flats I watched the Wimbledon Tennis Championships on television, but was never afforded the chance to take up tennis. In high school I was introduced to badminton and fell in love with the game. I was selected to play in the school’s girls’ team and played in the team until I finished matric in 2001. The team won the Western Cape High School’s League every year,” replied S Sgt Megan Plaatjies when asked where her love for badminton had started.

In 2006 she joined the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Wynberg Badminton Club where she was selected to participate in the SANDF Badminton Championship. She received her SANDF Colours and was selected to participate in the..

In 2012 she qualified as a South Africa Technical Official in badminton, which was when her career as a technical official started. S Sgt Plaatjies indicated that she was committed to the sport and dedicated a lot of time to it. Wednesdays’ sports time is utilised for badminton training. Thursday evenings are official badminton club practice, including physical training. League games take place on either Tuesday or Wednesday evenings.

International Line Judges who officiated at the Li-ning Badminton World Federation World Junior Championships in Canada in 2018, fltr: Mr Francois Meston (France), Mr Sommat Nualkaw (Thailand), Mr Sankalp Bhatnagar (Australia), Mr Pedro Garcia (USA), S Sgt Megan Plaatjies (South Africa) and Mr Vinay Joshi (India).

(Photo supplied by S Sgt Megan Plaatjies)
S Sgt Megan Plaatjies officiated as an International Line Judge at the Li-ning Badminton World Federation World Junior Championships in Markham, Canada, 2018. The player represented China. (Photo supplied by S Sgt Megan Plaatjies)

Participation in regional tournaments is part of badminton training. Most of the training and participation take place after hours.

S Sgt Plaatjies makes use of PT periods on Tuesdays and Thursdays for physical training as well as after hours. S Sgt Plaatjies tries to practice a minimum of three times a week and if circumstances allow, up to five times a week. Regarding technical official training, officiating at tournaments throughout the year is her training and preparation for major tournaments.

Although she does not follow a special diet, she tends to eat healthy, drinks lots of water and tries to avoid too much junk food, including unhealthy beverages. As a badminton player her motivation is always to improve her physical fitness to avoid injuries and other health issues. Physical fitness and badminton training are beneficial to the sporting code.

Her advice to young people is to make use of the opportunity at school to get involved in sport. She said that she believes that school is the ideal platform for laying the foundation to excel in sport in the future. S Sgt Plaatjies remarked: “Doing sport is beneficial in many ways. It enhances good health; improves mental vitality, physical fitness, motor development; and it is a great way to have fun.

“Sport allows you to meet new people, make new friends, meet your favourite sport stars and see the world. Make use of the opportunity at hand and persevere.” She added that one always has to strive to give one’s best on court or on the sports field and that respect goes a long way; thus young people have to respect themselves and others. They need to train well and eat healthy. She urged youngsters to be cool and stay in school!

Her motto is to aim for the moon so that even if you do not reach it, you will land among the stars. When receiving the 2018 SA Army Sportswoman of the Year Award, S Sgt Plaatjies said: “I am sincerely honoured to have received this award. I give God all the glory because it is through His grace that I have achieved my accomplishments.”

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Other accomplishments

S Sgt Plaatjies participated in the SANDBadminton Championships where she obtained two Bronze Medals and was selected for the SANDBadminton team to represent the SANDBadminton at the South African Woodroffe Cup in October 2018. She was also chosen as the 2018 Sport Personality at the SA Army Signal Formation.

In addition, S Sgt Plaatjies was appointed as a deputy referee for the South African U/19 National team and also officiated at the South African Melville and National Championships in 2018; the SANDBadminton Championships; the South African Badminton Grand Masters Championship; and the South African Woodroffe Cup.
Turning your dream into reality by passing, shooting and scoring

By Cpl Jonathan Mogano
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

Fulfilling dreams through hard work pays. This requires dedication and focus. The Gauteng Basketball team set a good example through their hard work between 2006 and 2018, which resulted in their taking home the championships. They have set unforgettable records in the books of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). The team has now progressed to National level. They made it to the semifinals in Swaziland. The Gauteng SANDF Basketball team has some National players in its team.
Sport has developed in the SANDF. Every soldier is supposed to be fit to perform his or her duties in the SANDF. The Gauteng SANDF Basketball team also won the bilateral games, which were held at the Glen High School against Serbia, Zimbabwe and other local Pretoria teams in 2018.

Lt Elias Manganye is one of the National players representing the country. He started playing basketball when he was 16 years old with the aim of keeping fit during his high school days. He has become one of the best players in the country. It has been a wonderful experience as he has been to several countries in representing his country.

He said: “I was selected for the Senior National SA Basketball team to participate in Angola.” He had to groom himself because he had no mentor. Lt Manganye added: “I shall win no matter what obstacles I come across.”

Lt Manganye is currently playing for Tshwane Suns, which is one of the best National Basketball Teams in the country. The team has been taking part in the championships from 2013 to 2016. He said: “Basketball is part of my life; it has made me a better person. I can thank the SANDF.”

He spends most of his time at Air Force Base Waterkloof where he is able to practice and learn every day, aided by WO2 Lindon Dace. Sport has a positive impact on most SANDF members. The Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, realises the importance of sport in the organisation by making participation in sport compulsory for every soldier. Hard work and dedication can get you far.
The SA National Defence Force
Easter Church Service

By AB Samuel Ramonyai
Photos by Mr Timothy Makhubele

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Easter Church Service was recently held at the Pretoria Military Sport Club sports grounds at Thaba Tshwane ahead of the Easter long weekend pilgrimage.

Addressing soldiers and members during the Easter Church Service, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, who is a firm believer in strict discipline, urged soldiers to maintain discipline while out on the roads during the Easter holidays.

The General cautioned that the SANDF will not be held to ransom by the mutinous behaviour of soldiers. Gen Shoke added: “I want to put it on record, as the Chief of the SANDF, that we do not take kindly to that type of behaviour, and when anyone misbehaves, we deal with them thoroughly on the spot.” The Chief of the SANDF strongly believes that without discipline, the SANDF cannot function properly. Gen Shoke also asked the members to spare a thought for SANDF soldiers safeguarding the country’s ports of entry and those maintaining the nation’s integrity abroad.

The Chaplain General, Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile, commenced his sermon by expressing deep regret for what happened to the people of Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique following the devastation of Cyclone Idai.

Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile said the greatest impact of the cyclone was the very high winds and storm surge which caused flooding and damage in the central region of Mozambique. Adjacent countries, i.e. Malawi and Zimbabwe, experienced severe rainfall, flooding and damage from the high wind speed. He said that the flooding has left hundreds of thousands of people homeless and displaced across the region while the death toll continued to rise in the week following, and many more were left with no food. Having being there in person, the Chaplain General said that it was not easy for him to witness such a trail of disaster as was left by the deadly cyclone.

However, the Chaplain General said over 80 members of the SA Army, the SA Air Force and the SA Military Health Service were deployed to provide disaster relief to the ravaged countries. The teams have been working tirelessly during those weeks, rescuing more than 400 people.
Despite all the devastation, Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile General said there is still hope in God, no matter what we are going through. Referring to the New Testament, the Chaplain General said there was nothing good about Good Friday. He added: “Good Friday, as you know it today, was a cruel, trying and painful time for our Lord Jesus Christ. Be that as it may, all that pain and suffering was soon forgotten, merely three days later. The Resurrection happened so quickly, even as the enemies of the Lord were still celebrating their temporary victory.”

The Chaplain General also encouraged and advised those facing adversity to hang in there and never lose hope in God. Brig Gen (Rev) Jamangile said: “Most people feel powerless and neglected during hard times (analogous to Good Friday). So my brothers and sisters, the only key to reaping the fruits of your tears and blood is survival and absolute trust in the Lord. Remain committed and close to God and soon He will deliver your Easter.”

The SANDF Mass Choir and other invited groups sang hymns of praise during the Easter Church Service.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqukula, closed the Easter Church Service by thanking the congregation for their attendance and the soldiers for working silently to protect our country. The Minister encouraged them to enjoy the Easter holidays, but at the same time to wear the belt of discipline around the waist.
Resurrection greetings fellow compatriots, we enter a stage within the circle of salvation and redemption which is the zenith of the Christian faith. There we are observing the power of the omniscient and omnipresent God in action through raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

**Homily**

This devotion will be centered on Apostle Paul’s assertion that there is power in Resurrection, which is why he says: “And if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that He raised Christ - whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised” (1 Cor.15:14-15).

What the Resurrection of Jesus Christ promises is that things can always be new again. It is never too late to start again. No betrayal is final. No sin is unforgiven. Every form of death can be overcome. Grief, anger and bitterness can give way to surprise, newness and freshness.

In the Resurrection there are no doors that are eternally closed to us. God always opens another for us. The Resurrection assures us that God never gives up on us even if we give up on ourselves. God writes straight with the crooked lines of our lives. God promises new life to all and we can begin to believe that all will be well in the end, including our own lives.

The challenge to believe in the Resurrection is not just to believe that Jesus Christ risen from the dead. It is also to know that no matter what our mistakes are, we can begin each day afresh, allowing ourselves to be stunned by the newness of it all. No matter what we have done, our future is full of wonderfully new possibilities. Apostle Paul re-emphasises this by writing in 2 Cor.5:17, that being or joined to Christ you become a new being, all this is done by God, why? That we no longer become enemies with God, but we are changed into friends, sons and daughters.

Belief in the Resurrection helps us to see the desires in the very ordinary routine of daily life. We are alerted to the inner beauty of family, friends and the familiar world around us. Resurrection opens our eyes to what is permanently good and beautiful and to the uniqueness of each event in our lives.

The power within Resurrection enables us to hear, understand and see God in salvation (salvific experiences) of our day-to-day lives. And Apostle Paul sums up this message when he says in Phil.3:10-11, that I may know Him, (Christ) and the power of his Resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like Him in his death, if somehow, I may attain the Resurrection from the dead.

The Resurrection proclaims that goodness and truth will always triumph. But this triumph must be waited for patiently, because God only uses love to achieve his aims and the process of love moves slowly. But God’s goodness will always triumph. God continues to lead his people to Resurrection and New Life in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 🙏
SANDF SAYS NO TO RHINO - POACHING
The SANDF:

25 PATRIOTIC YEARS of selflessly rendering SUPPORT to fellow South Africans and other state departments.

From Port St. John’s to Matabele, Mahikeng to the Vaal and beyond our borders, the SANDF is the bearer of hope through the various humanitarian interventions it is engaged in to alleviate the plight of distressed South Africans and other fellow Africans.

Our soldiers reached out with a helping hand during:


The SANDF ensured that the CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT to have the provision of essential services to communities in distress continue unhindered, and that the preservation of life and health is realised.

We remain on standby to assist in disaster areas like the ones during the Port St. John’s and Ethekwini floods.

WE CONNECT COMMUNITIES
We build bridges in Port St. Johns, Matabele and other areas and ensure that children are able to access their places of learning and cut-off communities gain passage to their livelihoods.

WE DEFEND OUR HARD-EARNED DEMOCRACY
We ensure that fellow South Africans exercise their hard-earned right to elect the government of their choice without fear or prejudice.

WE BRING HOPE TO OUR PEOPLE
In emergency or humanitarian relief operations:

We lead search and rescue efforts and Coordinate the provision of relief to fellow Africans in distress like during the Tropical Cyclone Idai devastation in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

THE SANDF SECONDARY MANDATE:
Our soldiers serve in support of other state departments. We support the people of South Africa to achieve socio-economic upliftment and a better life for all.