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From the Editor’s desk

SANDF women catalysts for peacekeeping

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United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial Capabilities and Performance Conference

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The sharp end of the SANDF airborne capability

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Lt Dimakatso Maila interviewing the bystanders through her interpreter who is fluent in Swahili. (Photo by Lt (SAN) Obed Medupe, RSA Battalion: Public Information Officer)

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from the editor’s desk

For the first time in the history of the country the tradition of hosting the Presidential Inauguration at the Union Buildings was broken when Mr Cyril Ramaphosa was sworn in as President of the Republic of South Africa at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria on 25 May 2019.

Following Mr Ramaphosa’s swearing-in as President, he reviewed a full battalion of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) on parade, assuming his position as the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF. The SANDF battalion comprised of our men and women in uniform from all four Services of the SANDF, namely the SA Army, the SA Air Force, the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service, led by the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG). Since 1994, former democratically elected presidents have reviewed the military strength of South Africa only on dedicated SANDF days.

The spectators at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium - About 32 000 in total - were stunned by the spectacular flypast consisting of every type of aircraft of the SA Air Force. A women fighter pilot, Maj Mandisa Mfeka, flew one of the Hawks as part of the Hawk formation air display at the Presidential Inauguration (see article on pages 16 and 17.) The South African Airways (SAA) also participated in the flypast with its Airbus A340 passenger aircraft formation. This particular flypast took one back in time, remembering the “Madiba moment” when SAA did a flypast at the 1995 Rugby World Cup Finals. The flypast and 21-gun salute heralded Mr Ramaphosa’s first term as President-elect.

More than 40 heads of state and eminent leaders witnessed this historical occasion on the theme of: “Together Celebrating Democracy: Renewal and Growth for a Better South Africa”.

This momentous and proud day coincided with Africa Day, the day on which the continent celebrated the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity, which later evolved to become the African Union.

The pomp and ceremony of the Presidential Inauguration took place in the same year as the SANDF’s celebration of 25 years of proud service to the citizens of our country. The Presidential Inauguration not only symbolises the breaking of a new dawn, but has also taken place when South Africans are celebrating 25 years of freedom and democracy. (Be sure to also read the article on the participation of the SANDF in the Presidential Inauguration from pages 6 to 8.)

May God bless our Commander-in-Chief, President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Nelda Pienaar
Editor SA Soldier

A bvaho kha dafulani ya munwaleli

wa u thoma kha divha-zwakale ya Afirika Tshipembe mushumo ya u vhe Afuresidennde wa shango u tshi farelw ya Phuresidennde wa Loftus Versfeld nga 25 Shundathule 2019. Usa farelw uyu mushumo ngei Union Buildings zwo thomiwa nga vho-Cyril Ramaphosa.

Musi vho-Ramaphosa vhono vheva sa Phuresidennde ya shango vho ndo toela batalinani ya mmbi ya vhupileli ya Afirika Tshipembe (SANDF), izwi ndi musi vhono newa vhumo ha u vha muranga phanda wa SANDF. Batalinani yiyo yova yo itwa nga vhano na vhafumakadzi mmbi ya Afirika Tshipembe vha mmbi (SA Army), muyeni (SA Air Force), mmbi ya madini (SA Navy) na mmbi ya tshumelo ya mutakalo (SAMHS). Zwipinda zwa mmbi idzi nna vho vha ranga phanda nga vha National Ceremonial Guard (NCG).

Ubva nga 1994 Phuresidennde wa shango vho nanguwa nga demokirasi vho vha tshi tola mmbi ya vhupileli ya Afirika Tshipembe nga madafuna o tou tiwaho.

Vhathu vhaswikako 32 000 vhe vhavha vhe mudavhini wa Lofts Versfeld vho takadzwa na u magadzwa nga mabufho othe o fhambaho a mmbi ya muyeni ya Afirika Tshipembe (SAAF). MufuHifisi wa bupo la ndnda wa mufumazadi, Maj Mandisa Mfeka o vha u tshi khou fhufhisa Hawk haka misumbedzo ya u fhufha ya aya mabufho. Vhalani nga ha uvhewa ha vho-Ramaphosa sa Phuresidennde ya Afirika Tshipembe kwa masiatari 16 na 17. Na South African Airways (SAA) yo shela muledzhe kwa miseduzo ya mabufho nga Airbus A340. Iyi misumbedzo ya mabufho nga SAA i nkumbudza khaphu ya limfhasi ya Rugby nga 1995 musi SAA ithi resha na u losha nga bufho. U resha na u losha nga bufho o fhambanano na u thuthiwa ha nganuni lwa 21 zwo vha u atu athena ha u vhuso ha vho-Ramaphosa.

Vharingaphanda vha mashango, vhadiivhaele na madendele vha fhiraho 40 vho vhona na itwa ha divhazwakale ye ya vha ina thesis ya uri “Ri pembelala demokirasi rothe: mvasuludzo na nyalowo u kwinifhadza Afirika Tshipembe.”

Dvhuva la u vheva ha vho-Ramaphosa lo vha li dlvhuva li hulwane le la line ra dinhada ngalo ili dvhuva lovha letangana na dvhuva u pembela u tumbulwa ha dzangano la pfano kwa khou dzhanga la Afirika (Organisation of African Unity) ye vho fhedza i African Union. Uyu mushumo wono farwa ng mwahe uno SANDF yavha i khou pembela minwaha ya 25 ya u shumela vhathu vha shango lino. U vheva ha Phuresidennde ndi tsambo ya zwifhi zwiwisa na u aluwa ha demokirasi na mbhofholo ya vhazulapo vho Afirika Tshipembe (vhalani na ngaha u shela maledzhe ha SANDF kwa vho u vheva ha Phuresidennde nga masiatari 6 u swika 8)

Mudzimu u shundhuzadze muranga phanda washu Phuresidennde vho-Cyril Ramaphosa.

Nelda Pienaar
Munwaleli SA Soldier

*Translation into TshiVenda by Mr Lufuno Netshirembe.
SANDF women are catalysts for peacekeeping

By Lt [SAN] Obed Medupe, RSA Battalion: Public Information Officer

Affectionately known as “Dimakatso” by the community members of Mayi Moya, Lt Maila is the only female Platoon Commander in the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). The entire United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) does not have women in the frontline except South Africa. Although MONUSCO countries have few women in their forces, none of them have been combative in vulnerable areas of responsibility.

Lt Maila leads her Platoon from the front as she conducts day and night foot patrols in the village of Mayi Moya, which had been wrecked by violence and human rights violations. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) government soldiers have been attacked incessantly in this village and in the process have lost members in different camps or bases around Mayi Moya. South African soldiers themselves have been shot at and have even been repelling ambushes.

Such occurrences could not deter Lt Maila from leading her Platoon into the villages to search for the armed groups and force them out. She has become popular with the villagers. She routinely conducts interactive patrols, moving into all houses and making enquiries with regard to the whereabouts of the armed groups.

This interaction is currently very effective and might have forced the armed groups out of the village as they feared contact with the South African Peacekeepers. A huge number of villagers who once left their houses due to violence have since returned and Mayi Moya is peaceful. Bravo Zulu to a peace catalyst of 7 SA Infantry Battalion’s Alpha Company, Lt Maila and her Platoon members.
The SANDF participates in the Presidential Inauguration

In accordance with the South African Constitution, the President of South Africa becomes the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) immediately after being sworn in by the Chief Justice of the country. The President, as the Commander-in-Chief, is the highest authority for sending the SANDF on missions and operations to uphold its constitutional mandate and the sovereignty of the State.

The Union Buildings in Pretoria were always used for the swearing in of the President and Commander-in-Chief, but this year's event took place at Loftus Versfeld Stadium. Since the advent of democracy, three presidents have been inaugurated at the Union Buildings. The first Commander-in-Chief, Mr. Nelson Mandela, was sworn in on 10 May 1994, followed by Mr. Thabo Mbeki on 14 June 1999 and Mr. Jacob Zuma on 9 May 2009.

For the first time in the history of South Africa, the tradition of hosting the Presidential Inauguration at the Union Buildings was broken when President Cyril Ramaphosa was sworn in on 25 May 2019. Symbolising the breaking of a new dawn, the prestigious event was held at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium. This was done to ensure that more people were granted access to the Presidential inauguration. For the first time South Africa witnessed an SANDF parade with all Services represented during the inauguration. Normally, it is only the National Ceremonial Guard (NCG) component that takes part in the Presidential Inaugurations. In a brilliant show of force the SANDF battalion, consisting of the NCG, the SA Army, the SA Air Force (SAAF), the SA Navy and the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS), saluted the President.

In a show of air power the SAAF paid homage to the new Commander-in-Chief in a flypast. The salute flypast formation was conducted by three helicopters flying two South African flag and the SANDF flag. The helicopters that performed this flypast were the Agusta A109, the Super Lynx 300 and the Oryx helicopters. The flypast also included the following...
formation flights: A heritage helicopter formation - The Alouette 2, Alouette 3 and the Puma helicopters; operational helicopter formation - Augusta A109, Super Lynx, Oryx, Rooivalk and BK117; heritage aircraft formation (light aircraft) - the Cessna C185, the Bosbok and the Kudu; heritage aircraft formation (training aircraft) – Harvard; heritage aircraft formation (combat aircraft) - the Vampire fighter aircraft; transport aircraft formation – PC12, King Air 200, Cessna C208, Casa 212 and C130; basic flying training aircraft formation – PC7 MK 2; Inkwazi formation – VVIP Boeing Business Jet (BBJ), Falcon 900 and Falcon 50; Hawk formation – the Hawk Mk 120; Gripen formation - Gripen fighter aircraft and the South African Airways formation – Airbus A340 passenger aircraft.

In an unprecedented move, and to the amazement of the people, SANDF paratroopers landed at the Stadium for the first time during the inaugural ceremony to hand over the preamble of the Constitution to the President. This move informs the Commander-in-Chief, President Ramaphosa, that the SANDF accepts his commandship in protecting the Constitution and its sovereignty.

In his inaugural speech, President Ramaphosa indicated that he was committed to peace in Africa and to silence the guns and let peace and harmony reign. The President said: "To build the Africa that we Africans all want. To forge a free trade area that stretches from Cape Town to Cairo, bringing growth and opportunity to all African countries. To silence the guns and let peace and harmony reign. Today, we declare that our progress as South Africa depends on - and cannot be separated from – the onward march of our beloved continent Africa.” This vision bolsters the SANDF’s peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

The Presidential Inauguration was attended by no less than 43 eminent leaders and heads of state.

SA Soldier spoke to two Non-Commissioned Officers to hear their views regarding their participation in the Presidential Inauguration. Cpl Molefi Lefatsa and Cpl Tshepo Mofokeng, both from National Ceremonial Guard, said it was a rigorous exercise and rehearsal because the day of the execution had to be perfect. We woke up early and it actually gave us a sense of the seriousness of the event. Cpl Mofokeng said: “It
was indeed a great honour and a rare privilege that I will forever cherish.” Cpl Lefatsa indicated that for him the day meant acceptance of the “marching orders” by the Commander-in-Chief.

“When one is so closely involved in making such an event a success, one cannot avoid feeling excited and marvel at the growth of our democracy. I am proud to have been part of this day knowing that I did what I was supposed to do to the best of my ability and as expected from me. Owing to the SANDF’s outstanding execution of this task, I am pleased that the day was successful,” Cpl Lefatsa confirmed.

Cpl Lefatsa and Cpl Mofokeng were unequivocally in agreement that, looking at the event in retrospect, the effort they have put in and the time spent during rehearsal were all worthy and indeed for a noble cause.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, addressing the nation during the Presidential Inauguration.
**Batho Pele**

**PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST**

**PRINCIPLES**

**Consultation**
Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

**Service Standards**
Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

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All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled.

**Courtesy**
Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

**Information**
Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

**Openness and transparency**
Citizens should be told how national and provincial departments are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.

**Redress**
If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

**Value for money**
Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

**Website to visit:** www.dpsa.gov.za/batho-pele

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*Designed and Issued by Department of Public Service and Administration*
The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, together with government ministers from all around the world, recently attended the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Ministerial: Uniformed Capabilities, Performance and Protection Conference at the UN Headquarters in New York.

The event provided an opportunity for delegates to collectively generate the specialised capabilities necessary for contemporary UN peacekeeping, as requested in the UN Peacekeeping Uniformed Capability Requirements Paper, with the specific focus on increasing the role of women in peacekeeping.

The meeting built on the ongoing effort to strengthen peacekeeping operations through the initiative of the Secretary General of the UN Action for Peacekeeping and the previous peacekeeping ministerial meetings and summits in New York (2014), the Leaders’ Summit on Peacekeeping in New York (2015), Paris (2016), London (2016), and Vancouver (2017).

Ministers were also expected to report on progress made by Member States with regard to the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations signed during the previous Action for Peacekeeping High-level Meeting.

Speaking at this event, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said South Africa supported the initiative of the Secretary General of the UN, Mr António Guterres, to ensure that peacekeeping operations were more effective and responsive to the ever-changing and evolving peacekeeping environment.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula highlighted: “The nature of the conflict we face demands dynamic responses in the manner in which we conduct peacekeeping operations.”

The Minister mentioned that South Africa was committed to the comprehensive measures regarding all aspects of mediation, peacekeeping, the protection of civilians, post-conflict recovery and peace building, all underpinned by political solutions to any conflict situation.

The Defence Minister said:
“For us to meet the high standards of performance and effectiveness we have set ourselves that uniformed training and capacity building should take precedence to ensure that our peacekeeping efforts are more effective. Capacity building should be seen as a key element of the preparation of peacekeepers.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added: “We are committed to have well-trained peacekeepers that are aware of the conduct and discipline required for any situation, while providing them with relevant training and capacity building skills that will ensure their protection.

“Referring to the women in uniform and the peace and security agenda, the Defence Minister proudly said: “South Africa has for a long time now recognised the important role women can play in all facets of the military.

“We have a proud record of senior women commanders in peacekeeping missions to give expression to the practical efforts to establish security. One of our highlights is that the current contingent deployed in the Northern Kivu Region as part of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) is led by a woman, Lt Col Tiisetso Sekgobela.”

In addition, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula remarked that MONUSCO RSABATT boasted the largest number of women deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Furthermore, the Capital Liaison Officer based in Uganda is a senior women officer with the rank of a Colonel. Women are found in many environments, including those previously dominated by men, and continue to serve as role models in mission areas.

Guided by the Constitution of the Republic, the Defence Act and the new, recently approved defence policy, and the South African Defence Review 2015, there has been a deliberate effort since 1994 to make sure that women are encouraged to follow career paths in all musterings and occupational spheres, including the combat environment, the Defence Minister said enthusiastically.

In conclusion Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said: “Having started with one woman Major General, we now have six women Major Generals who were appointed between 1996 and 2018. This is against the overall figure of 40 Major Generals and of the 172 members appointed at the level of Brigadier Generals - 46 are women. The numbers are slightly better at the level of junior officers. The unique environment of the military should be taken into consideration in the effort to reach the equity target of 30% women, especially in the combat and technical environments.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula added: “I wish to see the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) commit itself to appointing more women commanders and staff officers across the Services and Divisions.”
SANDF commemorates the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

They paid the ultimate price so that the world can be a better place to live in. Members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) who died during the various United Nations (UN) missions were honoured during International UN Peacekeepers Day recently held at the Department of Defence (DOD).

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, acknowledging the salute during the commemoration of International United Nations Peacekeepers Day.

The Chief of the SANDF said: “Were it not for the sacrifices of these peacekeepers, the people who needed urgent support in the most difficult and dangerous environments would have experienced greater suffering.” Speaking about the true cost of peacekeeping, Gen Shoke said that our fallen heroes and heroines were united in their efforts to help the UN attain its most important objective of saving future generations from the scourge of war.

General Shoke further said that the SANDF had played a significant role of its members carry out their duties with professionalism and pride, often under challenging and dangerous circumstances.

Since 2003, the SANDF has lost 55 members who have paid the ultimate price under the auspices of the UN. The event afforded the SANDF the opportunity to pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and courage of all men and women currently serving in peacekeeping operations.

Addressing the audience, which included families, friends and colleagues of the fallen heroes and heroines, the Chief of the SANDF, Gen Solly Shoke, said that peacekeeping was a role of the SANDF and the vast majority

The Wall of Remembrance at the Department of Defence Mobilisation Centre at De Brug near Bloemfontein.

Mobilisation Centre at De Brug near Bloemfontein. Their sacrifice and bravery are the reasons we continue to live in a country of freedom and opportunity.

Article and photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole
in regional and continental efforts to maintain and uphold the rule of law, and is today regarded by the international community as an honest and reliable peace broker. Additionally, Gen Shoke said the SANDF had contributed towards the realisation of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa by creating an enabling environment through its support of peace missions and peace efforts on the continent.

A UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Ms Nardos Bekele-Thomas, commended SANDF for its peacekeeping efforts. She praised the SANDF peacekeepers for their sincerity, dutifulness and professional attitudes in performing their duties. She said great strides had been made since the first deployment of the SANDF to bring about peace and stability on the continent.

Ms Bekele-Thomas said that South Africa was playing a major role in peacekeeping in Africa as it was the eleventh largest troop contributing country on the continent and the seventeenth largest overall. The UN highly appreciates South Africa’s peacekeeping, as well as disaster relief contributions.

Ms Nozuko Ngaleka told SA Soldier that she lost her husband, Pte Vusimuzi Ngaleka, in 2017.
Since then, life has not been the same for her and her family, but she finds solace in the fact that her husband died as a hero and she will tell that to her children when they grow up. She wants them to take pride in the man their father has been.

These South African heroes and heroines dedicated their lives to serve the nation. They lived to make a difference, and died as they lived, safeguarding our nation, defending our freedom and preserving our liberty. They were true professionals, bound by a common vocation, which was more than a job, a career or a profession.

These soldiers work in hazardous conditions and put their lives at risk for the greater good of humanity. They have helped to build relations in many troubled parts of the continent in support of the Government’s foreign policy. Admittedly, some of the soldiers could not return home as they had fallen in the line of duty while contributing to international conflict resolution. Such is the tale of the SANDF’s UN and the African Union (AU) peacekeeping operations.

So far, South Africa has participated in fourteen peace missions since 1999. The SANDF has served in UN and in AU missions, Burundi, the Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Sudan, South Sudan, the Comoros, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), among others.
The SANDF sends soldiers in high spirits to the Democratic Republic of Congo

Members of 2 SA Infantry Battalion bound for deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were in high spirits during the recent visit by the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, to the Department of Defence (DOD) Mobilisation Centre at De Brug just outside Bloemfontein. Members of the Military Command Council accompanied the Defence Chief.

This courtesy visit provided a platform for the SANDF senior cadre to deliver a goodwill message to all members awaiting deployment. These members will be deployed to the DRC as part of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) with the responsibility of ensuring stability in the DRC and to help restore peace and economic development.

Sending off members in high spirit epitomise the significance of their contribution in creating a better Africa. It was also an opportunity for the Chief of the SANDF to acknowledge the valued contributions made by the SANDF members in pursuit of peace and stability on the continent.

Addressing the soldiers, Gen Shoke expressed his greatest appreciation to men and women of the SANDF who continue to put their lives at risk for the sake of peace on the continent. Gen Shoke said: “Your sacrifices have strengthened the commitment of the United Nations to protecting civilians in harm’s way, promoting human rights and the rule of law, advancing negotiations and securing a better future for the Congolese people.”

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, addressing members of 2 SA Infantry Battalion bound for deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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

The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, accompanied by the Warrant Officer of the SANDF, MCWO Mothusi Kgaladi, visiting the soldiers bound for deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo.
Female fighter pilot flies a Hawk at the Presidential inauguration

By L Cpl Tshimolloyabotshele Matsha and Ms Molebogeng Mogajane, journalists at Ad Astra
Photos supplied by Maj Mandisa Mfeka

During the recently held inauguration of South Africa’s fifth President and our Commander-in-Chief, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, at Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria, Maj Mandisa Mfeka (29), a fighter pilot in the SA Air Force, took to the skies as part of the Hawks formation display during this historical event.

Maj Mandisa Mfeka who hails from Ntuzuma in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) joined the SA Air Force for Basic Military Training at Air Force Base (AFB) Valhalla in May 2008 and later did her Officers’ Formative at the SA Air Force College. In 2009, she spent a year at the Military Academy doing subjects such as Military Science, Aeronautical Science, Physical Science and Mathematics.

She received her wings in 2011, after she had completed training on the AB Initio on the Cessna C172, which was followed by the Pilots’ Wing Course at Central Flying School, AFB Langebaanweg.

Maj Mfeka is currently based at 85 Combat Flying School. She flies the Hawk Mk120 Lead in Fighter Trainer by British Aerospace Systems. She explained her role as a combat pilot: “The combat line is considered to be the sharp point of the spear, meaning that it is engaged in identifying and neutralising enemy forces that may enter our airspace.” She further explained: “The combat line upholds the integrity of our airspace by protecting the borders of South Africa.”

Growing up in Ntuzuma in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), her parents were not confined to the tradition of mechanistic parenting. They separated when she was seven years old, but they were keen on academics, an attitude which also set off a spark within her. She explains that she was brought up in a “liberal way”, based on the schooling demands she had while constantly moving between her parents.

She never thought that joining this profession was possible for someone like her. Her grandmother used to take her to air shows, but they could not afford the tickets and so they would watch the aircraft that flew outside Virginia Airport, Durban.

Until the age of 16, she, like most girls, had dreamed of becoming a doctor. Her father wanted the best possible future for her. She later followed her own intuition and stopped listening to other people’s efforts to influence her. She did research of her own and came across Aeronautical Engineering.

Moreover, if she had not joined the SA Air Force to become a pilot, she said: “I would have pursued a career as an Aeronautical Engineer and not a doctor.”

Maj Mfeka says: “There are certain tools with which society do not necessarily equip us, especially women: how to be assertive without feeling that you are compromising respect, how to be comfortable with your own body, the way you are shaped, not feeling like it infringes on what you can do. I can run, I can carry heavy things, fly aeronautics at map 120 and I can fly to nations.”

When asked about the women she looks up to, she had this to say: “My mother, Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey. They all shine the
FOCUS ON WOMEN

SA Air Force hails female fighter pilot - Maj Mandisa Mfeka.

beacon on what education can mean in a woman’s life”. Women like the ones she follows can shape an individual, and so the Major has now become a hero, leader and hope to young women of South Africa.

When asked what kind of leader she considered herself to be, she had this to say: “I am still discovering that. I am a hands-on person, so that generally always comes through in my leadership. However, I am always open to new ideas because I believe that the solution to a problem will sometimes come from the unlikeliest of places, so I like to keep an open mind.”

The Officer Commanding 85 Combat Flying School, Lt Col Craig Lesson, had this to say about Maj Mfeka: “Maj Mfeka arrived at 85 Combat Flying School in late 2017 to begin her Hawk Mk120 Conversion course and immediately made an impression on me with her positive attitude and charismatic personality. She quickly went about making herself a valuable asset to the unit with her 100% participation in all tasks given to her and all the additional jobs she took on voluntarily.

“She is a respected and a well-liked officer here and she passed the difficult Hawk Conversion on schedule, which allowed me to recommend her for more advanced Fighting Training. Once she and her five course mates successfully complete the Hawk Operational Training Course, they will be fully qualified Combat Wingmen and allowed to be deployed operationally.”

Another recent memorable moment she shared was flying in formation with two Gripens over Grahamstown for the Freedom Day Flypast in Port Elizabeth on 27 April 2019. “I remember looking at the Gripens and thinking how majestic it was,” she added. Being in the SA Air Force, Maj Mfeka takes pride in all her experiences and feels humbled by the realisation that she has a long way to go.

With her favourite colours being blue and gold, we can say she truly belongs to the SA Air Force. She also loves dogs, reading books, cycling, running and swimming. Most of the time she writes for her blog: Winged Spanner.

Maj Mfeka represents women fighter pilots and had paved the way for new young women who wish to follow her career path. She further added that she never got the opportunity to interact with a pilot at air shows, but the SA Air Force gave her an opportunity to interact with pilots at the Institute of Aviation Medicine during the selection process.

Living by her mantra, “The Sky is the Baseline,” meaning: “The excellence bar that you achieved and pushed today should be your starting point tomorrow”, she added. Maj Mfeka is passionate about mentoring and developing the youth as well as women empowerment. At air shows, she comes across children who show the strength and resilience needed in the SA Air Force. Maj Mfeka said: “A growth mind set is necessary for any individual who wishes to make a success out of their lives.”
Keep sharpening the spear for academic enhancement

By Ms Maeshela Kekana
Photos by Ms Tumisang Potelo

It has always been the norm that after Grade 12, one was bound to go to university or college and then get a job. Well, not anymore, these days young people choose to further their studies while working.

A person is never too old to study, nor is it too late to consider doing so. We see many young SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members who not only rely on basic military training and waiting for the standard two to three years to move up in the ranks.

Rather as the former South African President, the late Mr Nelson Mandela, said: “Young people must take it upon themselves to ensure that they receive the highest education possible so that they can represent us in the future as leaders”. Most young people say academic enhancement is the new way of showing off one’s presence around one’s peers, the further one studies the more serious one is considered to be about life.

As we approach Youth Month, many people have taken time off to study, most of whom are junior members in the SANDF. It takes hard work and determination for a person to be able to study and work at the same time. However, it influences one’s ability to be a leader.

Every now and again things change, and with time one’s skills and knowledge need to be refreshed. Field-related expertise in the SANDF may seem to be static, but for the sake of diversity the Organisation needs individuals who are keen to develop themselves.

Maj Mahlodi Phasha, a mother, wife and student, who works as the SO2 Service Benefits at Directorate Human Resource Service Systems (DHRSS), is one of the busiest offices in the Organisation. She joined the SANDF straight after finishing matric, with the aim to grow in her field of work and to be reliable, taking into consideration the fact that the workplace is a changing environment that needs well-informed individuals.

It is an advantage and an opportunity for possible career advancement, an added benefit to the organisation and an investment which will also help the personal development of the individual. The Organisation needs a skilled and educated workforce that is determined, goal-oriented and motivated. Individuals are encouraged to empower themselves by furthering their studies at states expense with the Organisation’s assistance. Maj Phasha is studying Applied Professional Psychology to enhance her expertise.
FOCUS ON YOUTH

but in her case leadership skills are needed, as well as knowledge of the post and functional experience.

As a young officer, Maj Phasha, said: “I would love to grow in the Human Resources environment. I also understand the importance of teamwork and the hierarchical system to accomplish a common goal. One learns how to prioritise tasks and apply time management skills while studying.”

Using the old school way of drawing up a study timetable, helps her set aside time for specific tasks throughout the week to focus on things such as assisting her children with their homework, laundry and exercising at the gym.

Major Phasha added a few tips for fellow colleagues: “Avoid multi-tasking, exercise regularly, eat healthy, always take time to relax and read other material than only study material to broaden your general knowledge”.

Capt Kopano Sebapo, SO3 Engineering Support at Directorate Combat Systems, joined the SANDF with a post-matric qualification. He is currently busy with his Masters’ degree in Engineering Management to enhance his knowledge in his field of work.

Although it is sometimes difficult to balance his part-time studies and work, he is passionate about studying as it helps him to get a better understanding of his day’s work.

“Proper planning and time management help me to achieve my goal of being more than just a soldier with a degree, but a leader with pivotal knowledge to build a stronger generation of young leaders”.

Another group that caught our interest was of Reserve Force members who are studying for self-development to improve their chances of employment and following their passion. Most of them joined the SANDF with only a matric certificate as the highest qualification.

The SANDF trains its members to have the necessary military expertise that they need for specific missions when required. A well-developed employee is an asset to the Organisation and for that reason the SANDF supports promotional and developmental courses.

Although it is hectic to always be on top of everything at the same time, one must remember to keep a firm footing to prosper. Maintain self-discipline, create and stick to your study plan to avoid set-backs and manage time strategically. Reasonable time frames for social-, self- and family time should be maintained; otherwise you will burn yourself out.

CO Tshepiso Mantjane, SO3 Visits and Events Peak Support at Defence Corporate Communication, “a village girl” from Ga-Mphahlele Seleteng in Limpopo, a single mother and a student, who holds the sharp end of the knife, already had a Diploma in Public Relations when she joined the SANDF in 2012.

“I want to be more educated and knowledgeable; hence I work in a corresponding field with my studies, and I chose to face the challenge of taking on a BA Communication Science,” said CO Mantjane with a smile.

She is a Reserve Force member who strives for her achievements by paying her own fees. Although most of her work requires a great deal of travelling, she seems to be focused enough to create time for everything.

CO Mantjane emphasised that: “When you really want something in life, you have to pull all the stops to get it.” Faced with compulsory annual work events, she has a lot on her plate, as she also has to deal with the pressures of parenting and academic and social participation.

One of the most valuable messages for the upcoming work force is never to take your work home, rather knock off late, learn to prioritise your responsibilities and give yourself time to rest and focus.
The SANDF plays a part in educating its youth

By Ms Esethu Sodo
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano

The South African educational system has come a long way since the Soweto Uprising of 1976 that changed the socio-political landscape of South Africa.

Ms Dono Nkosi, a senior administration officer at Directorate Conventional Arms Control at Defence Headquarters.

Ms Dono Nkosi, a senior administration officer at Directorate Conventional Arms Control at Defence Headquarters. (Photo by Mr Timothy Makhubele)

Ms Mooradi Dlamini, a Human Resource administration clerk at the Ministry, remarked that the youth must unite to take our country forward. (Photo by Mr Timothy Makhubele)

Learners from numerous Sowetan schools began to protest in the streets of Soweto in response to the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in schools. On the morning of 16 June 1976 between 10 000 and 20 000 black learners walked from their schools to Orlando Stadium for a rally against Afrikaans that was made compulsory as the medium of instruction in schools.

The event triggered violence across the whole country leaving many learners dead and others feeling unsafe, thus opening an opportunity for young men and women to be recruited to go for military training.

Today, 16 June marks National Youth Day. This is the day South Africa reflects on the massacre of learners in Soweto and other areas during the Students’ Uprising of 1976, not only to remember the fallen heroes of this tragic day, but also to be thankful of the change and opportunities it has brought to our educational system.

Ms Dono Nkosi, a senior administration officer at Directorate Conventional Arms Control, is of the opinion that:

“heroes who were killed had to suffer for the youth of today to be liberated and to have a quality education so as to access any professional career they aspire to achieve.”

Ms Mooradi Dlamini, a Human Resource administration clerk at the Ministry, agrees with this opinion. She says the education system has changed since then allowing equal access to education regardless of race and gender.

She continues to say that presently students have the choice to learn in languages that they understand which are taught by qualified teachers.

It gets even better when you are part of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF). The SANDF does not only focus on basic education of its members but took the extra step of giving them the opportunity to further their studies.

S Sgt Jocelyn van Wyk, a senior clerk in career management at Defence Headquarters Unit, stated that the SANDF youth have numerous opportunities. She highlighted: “The door is open for us to study and pursue our dreams so we can become whatever we want. Everything is possible through the SANDF.”

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FOCUS ON YOUTH

A great example of this is Maj Bongani Mafeto, the young Acting Officer Commanding at the MOD Signal Unit. He testifies that he joined the SANDF as a young 18-year-old man, and 15 years later he has gone up in the ranks of the SANDF using the study opportunities offered.

Maj Mafeto said: “I dropped out of college to join the SANDF, but my dream did not go to waste. I had an opportunity to study at the Military Academy and completed my three-year diploma. I then worked at various battalions as an infanteer. After that I went to the signals and now I am here working as the Acting Officer Commanding at the MOD Signal Unit.”

Even more grateful to be part of the youth of the SANDF is Sgt Anneke Cronjé, a HR Manager at MOD Signal Unit. She explained that despite being a young person, she was in a senior post. This means that the SANDF was paving the way for young people to take up managerial positions.

She continued by saying as a HR Manager she sees many young officers applying to further their studies and to grow in their careers.

“The Department of Defence (DOD) is promoting education for the youth to empower us and enable us to be better soldiers. The youth of today is going to be the management of tomorrow - we are going to be stronger future leaders,” said the Sergeant.

The Major mentioned that he was not the only one; there are many other young artisans in career fields such as electricians and IT specialists. Maj Mafeto also emphasised that there is an equal chance of education for both the military members and the Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP).

With all of this being said, it is heart-warming to see that the massacre of 16 June 1976 was not in vain. Today’s youth acknowledges the sacrifices that had been made for them to have a better future.
The Defence Force Service Commission gives a voice to the soldiers

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photo by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

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ANDF members should view the Defence Force Service Commission (DFSC) as a mechanism that seeks to make a difference in the improvement of their conditions of service. One of the ways the commission does that is to conduct research, undertake consultative visits to the units and having interaction and interviews with the soldiers at ground level," explained the Head of the DFSC Secretariat, Mr Philemon Motsepe.

He is the Head of Secretariat, and directs the Secretariat that provides research, administrative, logistical and technical support to the Commission.

Mr Motsepe said the commissioners are appointed by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans on a five-year term, either on a full-time or part-time basis. The secretariat members are appointed on a permanent basis.

The DFSC was established in 2009 as a ministerial advisory body responsible for making recommendations to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans with regard to the improvement of the condition of service for uniformed members.

Its establishment emanated against the background of the unfortunate incident that took place at the Union Buildings in 2009, where some SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members raised concerns about their conditions of service.

Mr Motsepe said: "Its mandate is to make recommendations to the Minister of Defence in terms of section 62B of the Defence Amendment Act 22 of 2010."

He indicated that during consultative visits, the Commission has an opportunity to listen and note the concerns raised by the members. Mr Motsepe said that in as much as they raise their concerns, they also bring up proposals or suggestions on how situations or conditions can be improved.

Mr Motsepe said: "Upon consolidation of those findings, the Commission generates reports with recommendations and submits them to the Minister."

The Commission interacts with parliamentary bodies such as the Portfolio Committee on Defence, where it has the ability to brief them on some of the findings made. The Commission has contributed immensely in the conception of the Defence Review.

It also heard the regulations which were promulgated and gazetted that govern the commission. Mr Motsepe said the manner in which they were able to visit the military units and deployment areas and the amount of reports that have been generated was an insurmountable task for the Commission.

Mr Motsepe said: "We have noted that in some of the units that we have visited there have been specific changes that have been made with respect to the inputs the Commission had identified."

Although the Minister may approve the recommendations, there are other considerations, especially when they have financial implications. Challenges posed by budgetary constraints for the Department, often become an impediment in the implementation of the recommendations.

Mr Motsepe said for continuity purposes, the Commission will carry on with the same mandate. However, as they go along there will be other focal areas for the new commissioners. They will be taking cue from the previous commissioners to complete and enhance the work, which had been started.

He added: "When a recommendation is made, it must be a quality recommendation that can be justified and implementable. Two of the most common issues during the interactions with the SANDF members, are not limited to, the state of accommodation in the military units and the quality of the uniform supplied to the members."
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 operation.

- 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

The banking details are as follows:

| Name: SANDF Education Trust |
| Bank: Nedbank |
| Type: Business Account |
| Account No.: 1134917252 |
| Reference: SANDFEDUTRUST / Donor Name |

For further enquiries and to obtain application forms please contact:

Tel: +27 (12) 355 5107  Fax: +27 (12) 355 5882
Email: sandfedutrust@gmail.com

We believe in heroes, we hope you do too.

Together we move South Africa Forward
The SA Army writing competition winner

By Lt Col Annelize Rademeyer, SA Army SO1 Corp Com
Photos by S Sgt Elias Mahuma

The SA Army Writing Competition is presented by the Directorate Army Strategic Direction on an annual basis. The theme for the entries was “Sustainment”. The winning paper in the Officers Category was written by Maj Candice van der Spuy from the SA Army Intelligence Formation on the topic “Combat Service Support in Urban Operations for the SA Army: Nulli Secundus.”

Major Candice van der Spuy receiving the First Prize in the Officers Category of the SA Army Writing Competition at the Chief of the SA Army Award Ceremony and Gala Evening, fltr: the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, Maj Van der Spuy, the Executive Director at the CSIR, Dr Motodi Maserumule, and the General Manager of SA Army Foundation, Mr Angel Ramphele.

Can one say that you love writing and research?

One must definitely have a passion for writing and conducting research. The reason I say this is because writing an academic paper is not an easy task. It takes up a great amount of time and takes considerable effort if done correctly. It is not the same as writing an essay or a script expressing your own opinion. It requires you to research a vast number of sources to substantiate what it is that you want to say.

In your opinion, how can the SA Army improve in this environment?

The SA Army can incorporate writing modules in their various
courses to develop members in writing skills. Currently this is done on senior courses such as the Junior Command and Staff Duties Course. The various SA Army Formations could develop their own writing competitions in which they can focus on topics related to their corps business, which may inspire more members to write.

Do you have an academic mentor?

When I studied at the Military Academy, Lt Col Abel Esterhuyse inspired me to write and he also provided his students with excellent guidelines on how to write academic articles. I still utilise his advice to this day.

What will your advice be to the members who are considering entering the competition in 2019?

Members who want to enter the competition will be able to find the topic and closing date easily on the intranet. It is advisable to start as soon as possible due to the fact that it takes a lot of time to prepare and this will allow one to acquire sufficient sources and work through them in order to ensure a quality product.

You are not only good at academic writing, but you are also a marathon athlete?

Yes, I started running seriously in 2011. I ran my first marathon in 2014 and then I ran the Comrades Marathon in 2016. I will be running my fourth Comrades Marathon this year.

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**SA Army Writing Competition 2019**

**There are Four Categories, namely:**

- Candidate Officers to Colonels
- Warrant Officers (WO1 and WO2)
- Non-commissioned Officers
- Privates

**Each category has three prizes:**

First Prize: R10 000  
Second Prize: R5 000  
Third Prize: R2 500

**Theme:** “The Landward Component as Part of a Joint, Interdepartmental, Interagency and Multinational (J2IM) Force”

**Maximum words:**  
Between 2 000 and 4 000

**Closing date for entries is:**  
30 September 2019

*Enquiries can be directed to Lt Col Laurel Thatcher on 012 355 1213 or Maj Angel Masebe on 012 355 1163.

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**Competition Format - 4 Categories, each with 3 prizes**

**Category 1:** Candidate Officers to Colonel  
**Category 2:** Warrant Officers (WO1 & WO2)  
**Category 3:** NCOs  
**Category 4:** Privates

**Theme:** The Landward Component as Part of a Joint, Interdepartmental, Interagency and Multinational (J2IM) Force

The theme for the 2019 SA Army Writing Competition is “The Landward Component as Part of a Joint, Interdepartmental, Interagency and Multinational (J2IM) Force.”

Members entering the competition are encouraged to generate their own topic within the confines of the theme. They are free to discuss their choice of topic with the organisers in order to confirm its relevance.

Adjudicators are not aware of the identities of the authors of the papers they mark. All marking is done following a double blind system and all entries received will be acknowledged by e-mail.

All papers should have a title page with the following information of the entrant:

- Title of paper  
- Unit  
- Force number  
- Appointment  
- Rank and name  
- Mobile number  
- Force telephone number  
- Work fax number  
- Postal address

See the SA Army Intranet for further details or contact Lt Col L. Thatcher at 012 355 1213.

Each identified category will have a first, second and third place winner.

**Closing date:** 30 September 2019

All entries must be addressed by e-mail to:  
2019saarmywritingcompetition@dod.mil.za  
or by Lotus Notes to:  
2019saarmywritingcompetition
Wellness Day supports healthy living

Employee wellness and healthy living are important for productivity in the workplace. International Wellness Day has become the highlight among activities that ensure health monitoring standards for society.

The day seeks to raise awareness about living well and increase motivation. First celebrated in 2012, International Wellness Day was established in Turkey as the “first” day dedicated to living well, and has now been accepted worldwide. Reflecting its success, International Wellness Day was celebrated simultaneously in 130 countries at 5 000 different locations in 2018.

Defence Headquarters took part in this global initiative. “We are here for the Wellness Day, which is an internationally recognised day. We as medical professionals came out of our offices to provide information on health. We understand that people have got work and not everybody actually has time free to come and see us,” said Maj Sarah Voyiya, a Social Worker of Area Military Health Unit Gauteng, who renders a service at Defence Headquarters.

Maj Voyiya said that SA National Defence Force (SANDF) members consult them only when they have developed a serious health condition. She believes that through this initiative, they are setting a platform where members will learn and screen themselves if they have got underlying health conditions.

“[We are sensitising] people to underlying health conditions and we are screening and giving information that people would like to know about, especially if they suspect signs and symptoms,” she said.

Maj Voyiya explained that the purpose of the Wellness Day is to pass on health information in a more fun and relaxed atmosphere and to screen people’s health status. She said the initiative will help them, especially those who may not know that they have got health conditions.

A Social Worker, Maj Sarah Voyiya, said that they are sensitising people about underlying health conditions.

A Nurse, Capt Delisile Semenya, conducting a regular vital check-up on a patient during Wellness Day.

A Nurse, Capt Delisile Semenya, conducting a regular vital check-up on a patient during Wellness Day.

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela and Ms Esethu Sodo
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano
issues and prepare them for consultation and early treatment.

She added: “It is a day on which we as medical professionals from different practices screen people to determine if they have any health conditions. The issue is that many people do not have the opportunity to consult in our offices because of work commitments and may sometimes present themselves when they are very sick.

“We bring these services to them on International Wellness Day and to provide them with information on health. We have realised that not all people are aware of their health, but with this initiative, a platform is created for them to find out before their condition could worsen, if any found.”

She said the programme was targeted at society at large. However, organisations seem determined to conduct their own wellness days. Maj Voyiya said the programme may include what is called Employee Assistance Programmes that are offered by social workers and psychologists.

Maj Voyiya added: “It is good for people to know their health status because they will take precautionary measures once they start knowing. We have opened the door through which we can allow as many people who work here as possible to screen themselves, including Public Service Act Personnel (PSAP).

“We have a social worker, psychologist and a chaplain for spiritual health. We also have a biokineticist, a dietician, our nurses from the sickbay and aerobics instructors from Virgin Active, who support the day. Since it is the first time we have planned for Wellness Day, we expect the support and numbers to increase from next year on and we think this initiative will have a more positive impact on the wellbeing of our members.”

Medical screening by health professionals

“For me as a clinical psychologist, Maj Wendy Kethlaetse, I can educate our members a lot about psychological issues. You may have noticed that there is a lot we have been hearing about depression in the news lately. Many people do not know what depression is. Today, we have preventative programmes where we teach people what depression is. We also do a screen test so that people know if they have signs of stress or not.

“Stress is one of the health issues that people suffer from without really knowing about it themselves. It has a negative impact on your mental health because it can cause you to have a stroke or a heart problem. When you are in a working environment, it is important to know how you feel emotionally, because if you do not take care of your mental health, it can lead to other complications.”

A Dietician, Capt Malebo Mashishi, said: “We as dieticians were just offering advice on healthy eating because a healthy eating plan is very important. It is very important to keep a healthy diet because in that way you get to avoid illnesses. If you are healthy, then there is a better chance that you will avoid chronic diseases.”

A Nurse, Capt Delisile Semenyia, said: “We have organised this Wellness Day so that we can make our clients aware of their health issues. We are providing information on their mental and psychological health, among others. The aim was mostly to draw their attention to their wellness because sometimes they do not get the time to come to the sickbay to measure their blood glucose or blood pressure.

“We also attend to family issues, relationships and personal issues for the wellbeing of the people. We are trying to help our members to deal with their problems in such a way that it will not affect their productivity.”

A Biokineticist, Maj Michelle Fogwill, said: “We are helping with prevention and rehabilitation. For example, if you have a back injury or a knee injury, you can come to us and we can help you with that to enable you to walk normally without limitations.”
A Medical Officer in Urology is driven by passion

By Mr Lufuno Netshirembe

Photos supplied by Capt (Dr) Ludrish Shikwambani

“It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine; that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another”. With these words from the late President Nelson Mandela, allow me to introduce you to the son of a miner, Capt (Dr) Ludrish Shikwambani, a Medical Officer in Urology at 1 Military Hospital.

A modest Capt (Dr) Shikwambani was born into a family as part of nine siblings in the village of Ga-Sekororo in Phalaborwa in the Limpopo Province where his father worked at the Phalaborwa mine and his mother was a cleaner at the local hospital. “By any measure I did not have everything or the best things in life growing up. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. When you have nine siblings and you had parents like mine, you better be a hard worker like I was. Growing up with a disadvantaged background made me resilient and instilled the feeling of wanting better things for myself. From a young age I have always had it in me that regardless of my circumstances I am heading for great things in life. I believed in myself not my situation. I wanted to be a Doctor from a very young age. I was neither the smartest nor the most intelligent child in school, I was just average, but that did not deter me. I was quite a focused child. Nothing came easily for me. Success during such hardships was dependent on my zeal and zest and the resilience to sustain the zeal long enough to get to my dreams,” said the young Doctor.

Being the average child that he was, Doctor Shikwambani’s lucky break came in 2001 when the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) came to his school for a career exhibition and recruitment. It was during this time that he became aware of all the careers that exist in the SANDF. His perception of the military changed from seeing soldiers as being uneducated to being highly trained, specialised and skilled people. The SANDF opened a whole new world of possibilities to him. His dreams of becoming a doctor became clearer and more attainable than he had initially thought. Reinforced by the stories from his grandfather who fought in World War II, the thought of joining the SANDF in pursuance of his dreams was a no-brainer. Even though his challenge was the fact that academically he was not doing well enough to qualify to study medicine, the SANDF gave him an opportunity that he would otherwise not have achieved through the normal civilian channels.

The young Ludrish was introduced to the Department of Defence Youth Training Foundation Programme, a programme aimed at the development of the youth from previously disadvantaged communities. The programme focused on the improvement of matriculation results by providing a positive and stimulating learning environment in which learners could reach their full potential. Ludrish benefitted from this programme when he was enrolled at Denel through the SANDF. There he studied for 12 months to improve his marks in mathematics and science to augment his matric results so that he could qualify to study medicine. After completing his Military Skills Development System (MSDS) in 2004, he was unfortunately selected to study nursing due
to stiff competition and limited slots for studying medicine. Though nursing was not his dream, his determination did not allow him to give up his dream of becoming a doctor. Instead, he took this as a means of achieving his goal. His desire to be a doctor never dissipated. On completion of his four-year nursing diploma, he applied for further studies in medicine. The SANDF again gave him a chance to study further and he qualified as a Doctor in 2011.

Being a soldier and a Doctor in the SANDF is something that Capt (Dr) Shikwambani finds inspiring. It is something that drives him to encourage other young South Africans, with the same background as his, to realise their dreams. He finds this passion for sharing his experiences in the SANDF invigorating as it gives him the opportunity to give back to the disadvantaged youth. Capt (Dr) Shikwambani finds talking to the youth about the SANDF very fulfilling in that he still sees himself in so many young South Africans, a fact which makes him eternally grateful to the SANDF.

Capt (Dr) Shikwambani is never too busy to miss an opportunity to address the youth. He represented the SANDF at a Career Expo recently held in the Phalaborwa Namakgale Phosphate Hall, where he informed approximately 600 Grade 12 (matric) learners about the career prospects in the SANDF and the opportunities he had had. In his quest to empower the youth, he uses his talk sessions to encourage them and also to make them realise that it is not their background that prevents them from realising their dreams, but it is their attitude that determines their altitude. In many ways he shows the youth that if they have a dream, they can live it. Even though these words may sound like a cliché, they certainly have a profound meaning and they became his mantra. These words are his driving force, which he endeavours to apply practically to his everyday life.

The enthusiastic son of a miner said: “Making it in life is not about being the cleverest, but about having the tenacity to want to achieve your dreams against all odds. It is not where you start your race that is important, but how you overcome all the hurdles to reach your destiny that really counts. You have got to have the unquenchable and unambiguous desire to turn your trials into your positive life’s testimony.” “Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do” – Mr Nelson Mandela.

“The by any measure I did not have everything or the best things in life growing up. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. When you have nine siblings and you had parents like mine, you better be a hard worker like I was.”

Grade 12 learners at Phalaborwa listening to Capt (Dr) Ludrish Shikwambani, a Medical Officer in Urology at 1 Military Hospital, informing them about career opportunities in the SA National Defence Force.
An Officer in the Military Police obtains his PhD degree

By S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole
Photo courtesy Maj (Dr) Esewu Mathebula

After years of hard work and determination, a military police officer, Maj (Dr) Esewu Mathebula, obtained his PhD in Policing from the University of South Africa (Unisa) earlier this month. His willingness to succeed in life and in his career prompted him to further his studies, but he never thought he would reach this level.

A PhD is a postgraduate degree awarded to students, who complete an original thesis offering a significant new contribution to knowledge in the subject, and is normally the highest academic qualification a person can achieve. For many people, who attained these accolades, it had taken dedication and determination.

It was easy for Maj Mathebula to choose the topics for both his Master’s and PhD theses because he did his research on things that he sees almost every day. The title of his PhD thesis was: “A Critical Analysis of the Crime Prevention Role of the Military Police Division in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF)”.

In his thesis, he finds that the Military Police Division must be capacitated in terms of human resources and training so that they would be able to deal effectively with crime in the SANDF. In an effort to address crime within the SANDF, he proposes a model that supports interaction between various components in crime prevention such as Defence Intelligence, Department of Defence (DOD) Anti-Criminality, Inspector General DOD and others. The model is based on an integrated approach that allows all role players to work together seamlessly towards a common goal, namely a crime-free SANDF.

Maj Mathebula’s academic path was characterised by commitment and passion. It is no coincidence then that he believes these are vital ingredients in a successful military police officer. He said: “Good military police officers are committed and passionate. Commitment is what keeps you going when it gets tough, and it is tough a lot of the times. Passion is what brings excitement when you get a task, and the two are symbiotic. When you as a military police officer are passionate, it becomes easier to commit and stay focused.”

He added: “As a result, my academic path involved a series of events and interactions with various mentors, during which I discovered an unexpected passion that helped me grow.”

His journey started 23 years ago when he joined the SANDF in 1996 through the Voluntary Military Service System. Despite his qualification, you will find him out in full uniform performing his daily duties as a Unit Planning Officer at the Regional Works Unit Mpumalanga, but he is no ordinary soldier.

Maj Mathebula, an accomplished scholar, holds a series of degrees. In 2003 he obtained his National Diploma in Policing, after which he completed his Bachelor of Technology in Policing in 2009. He obtained his Master of Technology in Policing in 2014 and recently attained his PhD. All his qualifications were obtained from Unisa.

The journey to success was not always smooth sailing and has been a long one for Maj Mathebula, who, like many of his fellow South Africans students, had to interrupt his studies to earn money to continue his education. When one examines the dates, one will notice that the completion of his National Diploma in Policing and his Bachelor of Technology in Policing was put on hold for four years.

He said: “I personally financed
my National Diploma in Policing, and the SANDF paid for both my Bachelor of Technology in Policing and Master of Technology in Policing. I received a bursary from Unisa for a doctoral degree. The road to my success was always full of twists and turns, my road was also full of many challenges. That is why I had to take a break from 2004 to 2008 because of a lack of funds. During this break I deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to make some extra money, because the Government only pays the tuition fees and not the extras, which makes it difficult at times.”

Nevertheless, he believes that everyone can achieve anything they want in life. He said challenges along the way should propel you to keep going and not discourage you. Maj Mathebula said: “If I could influence more people to study further, then I would be the happiest person. I hope to use my PhD as a motivation to those who come from the same environment as mine.”

His passion for education and skills development was eminent during this interview. He said the importance of education could never be underestimated. He said: “The late Mr Nelson Mandela once said: “Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become head of the mine and that a child of farmworkers can become president of a great nation.”

Maj Mathebula lives by this motto: “Never give up, no matter what”. He said people should understand that one does not have to be an A-student to reach one’s level. His career aspirations and wish are to be part of the greater academic world and to make a meaningful contribution, hopefully in one of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

He wishes are to continue working hard to fulfil his career aspirations, not just for himself, but also for other soldiers to follow his example and continue to further their tertiary studies.

“HE INCONTAMINABLE HERO”

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The Infectious Disease Clinic TB Focal Department at 1 Military Hospital has launched an awareness campaign. Capt Thembuhluwo Mamavhi, a nurse at the clinic, said they needed to tackle the challenge to close the gap caused by a knowledge deficit on TB.

It is estimated that when a Tuberculosis-infected person speaks or sneezes over 1 000 Mycobacteria are spread around through the air and will remain alive for at least four hours. This makes Tuberculosis (TB) one of the highly infectious diseases and a cause for concern.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched

TB clinic aims to roll out awareness campaigns

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by L Cpl Paul Mpangala

The Infectious Disease Clinic TB Focal Department at 1 Military Hospital has launched an awareness campaign. Capt Thembuhluwo Mamavhi, a nurse at the clinic, said they needed to tackle the challenge to close the gap caused by a knowledge deficit on TB.

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched

Dr Lana Naudé is a Medical Officer at the ID Clinic TB Focal Department at 1 Military Hospital, who specialises in infectious diseases especially Tuberculosis.
a joint initiative called “Find. Treat. All. #EndTB” with the Global Fund and Stop TB Partnership, which aims to accelerate the response to TB and ensure access to care in line with WHO’s overall drive towards Universal Health Coverage.

Capt Mamavhi said: “This year we started with medical professionals at the Area Military Health Units by reminding them about TB programmes and screening. We plan to speak with the commanders at Services and Divisions to conduct awareness programmes during courses, as some of the members are reported to have TB symptoms. This may be due to members living in close proximity to one another. Health care providers themselves must be screened for TB every six months.”

He said one of the challenges the clinic faced included the late presentation of a patient. This is when the disease is already in an advance stage, thus resulting in the late detection of TB. He attributes this to poor management by both health care workers and patients in terms of detection and treatment.

Capt Mamavhi added: “When a person has been diagnosed with TB, they need to start with the medication right away because the infection is easily spread. We need to improve how we do contact tracing. This simply means identifying people who had been in contact with a person, who presented themselves with TB infection. A person should be screened for TB if they have had persistent coughing for more than two weeks, rapid weight loss of over 1.5 kg, drenching night sweat, swelling of the lymph nodes and exposure to someone who has TB.”

Dr Lana Naudé, who specialises in infectious diseases especially TB, said it was curable if the treatment was given correctly. However, complications arise if patients do not come for follow-up treatment for medication. This may develop from normal TB to a drug-resistant TB. The clinic measures its success rate in terms of treatment, which ranges between 80 and 85 percent. The problem is that there are cases of missing patients and Reserve Force members, who are untraceable.

She indicated that the types of patients they consult differ slightly in terms of demographics as opposed to public health care facilities. Dr Naudé said patients, who are presented with TB symptoms, might be from the same unit, together on deployment or living in close proximity to one another.

Dr Naudé added: “That makes our risks a bit higher. Although we do not have a higher number of patients than public hospitals, we do see all types of TB patients, from normal drug-sensitive to drug-resistant patients. We have what I called Pulmonary TB, which is in the lungs, and extra-pulmonary TB, which is in other parts of the body in any other organ. It mostly starts with the lungs and may spread to the bones, spines or lymph nodes.”

Each year, the WHO commemorates World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on 24 March to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.

TB remains the world’s deadliest infectious killer. WHO estimates indicate that each day nearly 4 500 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30 000 people fell ill with this preventable and curable disease. Global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 54 million lives since the year 2000 and reduced the TB mortality rate by 42%. To accelerate the TB response in countries to reach targets, heads of state came together and made a strong commitment to end TB at the first-ever, high-level meeting of the United Nations (UN) in September 2018.
The elite medical unit

The elite medical unit known as 7 Medical Battalion Group is a specialist airborne medical unit of the SA Military Health Service situated in Lyttleton, Pretoria.

This is a specialist airborne military health unit, which is combat ready to support all special operations. The medical unit’s mission is to prepare and provide specialised military health services to specific operational force elements.

Capt Mbelenhle Zondi from 7 Medical Battalion Unit.

On day one, the programme kicks off with a 3.2 km run wearing full battledress with men and women having to cover the distance in 18 minutes. The 1.8 m high wall and rope climbing with boots and helmet exercise upper body strength. They have to climb onto the roof of the hangar using a 5 cm thick, 50 m long rope that hangs 30 m above the floor.

They must use their hands, legs and feet to climb all the way to the top before sliding down the rope.

The second day of the parachute selection programme includes a 4.6 km run that has to be covered in 40 minutes wearing battledress and carrying 84 mm ammunition containers. After the run, the students have to do boxing (to test their general aggressiveness) and a field obstacle course wearing overalls and boots.

During the last 24 hours of the programme, the remaining students are to finish off the selections with a 15 km speed march, which they have to complete in a time of 2 hours and 45 minutes while carrying an additional load of 26 kg worth of equipment with them. The final task is a stretcher run. Students are to carry a stretcher weighing 75 kg by hand. Each group consists of seven members, with four people carrying at a time and three travelling alongside to release them, covering a distance of 12 km in 2 hours and 15 minutes. Should the stretcher touch the ground at any stage during the run, the entire team will be eliminated.

After having endured so much pain, the students have to join the mustering of their choice at the end of the course. These include Airborne Search and Rescue, Medical Doctor, Ops Medic, and Aviation Medicine.

Medical Officers, often known as Chief Medical Officers, are physicians who are typically in charge at hospitals or in the operational area. Capt Mbelenhle Zondi, who is a medical officer at 7 Medical Battalion Unit, is responsible for any medical emergency within the Unit. She is also involved in the planning, preparation and readiness for external deployment and operation of the Unit and for their clients’ needs.

Capt Zondi said being a medical officer in a unit where men’s fingers are more dominant than women’s was quite difficult, because of the physical strength needed when performing tasks. However, she said she had to work hard to increase her physical strength and the correct application of skills to match her male counterparts.

Members of 7 Medical Battalion Unit warming-up for the fitness test.

They provide combat-ready personnel in support of airborne forces, such as the Special Forces, 44 Parachute Regiment, 6 SA Infantry Battalion (6 SAI Bn) and 9 SAI Bn. They also provide a defensive chemical and biological warfare capability to the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) and the country as a whole.

In order to provide support to other units, they also have to be physically and mentally equipped. They are trained to become qualified paratroopers by 44 Parachute Brigade.

In their quest for wings, men and women are driven beyond their limits for 72 hours, undergoing a countless series of mental and physical tests. The purpose of the selection programme is to draw the student closer towards becoming a respectable paratrooper worthy of wearing the badge (Wings) on his or her chest.

Having progressed through all their tests for the selection, each student is issued with a number which he or she must wear for the duration of the selection process. This wrist band is a symbol of their endurance and to lose it would mean losing everything. Should a student fail a certain test, his or her wrist band is taken away.
Let us all protect children to move South Africa forward

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

South Africa’s Constitution states that every child has the right to be protected against maltreatment, neglect, abuse and deprivation. It is obligatory for all South Africans to play a role in protecting our children and creating a safe and secure environment for them to live in.

Research in South Africa suggests that one in four girls and one in 20 boys report experiencing childhood sexual abuse. Moreover, one in five children in our country falls victim to a form of child abuse before their eighteenth birthday.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can be hard to recognise and happens when someone harms a child’s body, emotional health, development and well-being. A child who has been abused or may be experiencing abuse may show behavioural, emotional or physical signs of stress or abuse. There are four different types of child abuse that can lead to harm:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

Child abuse can be a single event or it can be a number of different incidents that take place over time. It is always necessary to be observant and note any changes in children, because children are often abused by people they know, most often a parent or carer.

Signs of child abuse

It is important to keep a close eye on the behaviour of children as most children have not developed the ability to express how they feel when a traumatic incident happens to them.
When a child is a victim of abuse or neglect, it can have a devastating effect on their psychological well-being. Each child responds differently to trauma that they are faced with, and while some signs can be due to many other reasons, it is always best to be overly careful.

A list of signs one could look out for

- Having difficulty sleeping at night
- Having bad dreams
- Poor school performance after the traumatic incident
- Wetting or pooing themselves (if this was never a problem before)
- Anxiety or feeling sad
- Withdrawal from friends and family (wants to be left alone)
- Low self-esteem (talking badly about themselves)
- Hurting other children and animals
- Anger or fighting
- Afraid of the parent or caregiver that is abusing them
- Change in eating habits
- Hurting themselves or talking about suicide

Child abuse can be prevented and it is our duty as parents and responsible citizens to safeguard children and to teach them skills to be safe.

How to help your child

- **Step up:** Responsible parents assume an active role in their children’s lives. Form open and strong bonds with your children and ensure that their home and school environment is safe. Do not leave your child unsupervised or near hazards that may cause harm. Teach them which forms of behaviour are acceptable and which are not. Pay attention to your child’s behaviour and look out for warning signs of abuse.

- **Speak up:** Parenting is not easy and it is ok to ask for help. If you are concerned about your child’s safety and well-being or require help, contact your local sickbay—there are resources available to assist you or a loved one. Remember, you are not alone!

- **Stand up:** If you witness violence or abuse or know of someone who is under great stress, refer them for help or report the abuse. You can also support child abuse campaigns by making a donation.

For more information, contact your unit registered counsellor, psychologist, social worker or chaplain.

Remember to **STEP UP, SPEAK UP and STAND UP** because there is no excuse for child abuse!

**References**


Major Apollis commands the air and the sea

By CO Tebogo Kekana, Ad Astra Magazine
Photos by Maurite van Wyk

In the world of aviation that is often seen as a male-dominated industry, the SA Air Force (SAAF) prides itself in having trained the first coloured Lynx Maritime-qualified pilot, who says she stands out because fear is her propeller.

Air Force Base Ysterplaat’s 30-year-old Maj Chi-Earl Apollis hails from Wellington in the Boland of the Western Cape. She said that her organised approach to building a career for herself in aviation started when she did some job shadowing at the South African Airways. That was short-lived because I knew that I wanted some success and to render a critical service. That should explain why she put in an application with the Air Force and as they say, the rest is aligned by the universe.

Maj Apollis said: “After my Basic Military Training in 2007, I opened myself up to maximise the opportunity to pursue what the SAAF is about, the industry that makes sure that the aerial space is safe at all times. I was not only taught to be a leading airman, I was entrusted with the skills that make me stand confidently wherever I am and be forever ready to oblige without blurring my life’s direction.

“I wanted to fly the Gripen, but as an open-minded person who is not only about speed, I thought of an aircraft that will put me in close proximity to humanitarian aid and the operational theatre.”

It had not been long before word got out in the community that she was flying for the SAAF, but that had already won her a host of admirers. With her infectious energy, teachable spirit, unrestrained wit and genuineness, it is not hard to be bowled over by the meaning of her distinctive name and her personality.

“I have the potential to be a very good role model for my peers, but that does not make me any wiser than them, it is just that I do the best whenever given the chance,” she said.

Her first solo experience flying the Astra was rather epic she said. With loads of studying that she had to do and still has, her accomplishments thus far as a military pilot seem to have revitalised her commitment to maritime aviation. She felt as though she had been born for this, hence her call-sign: Calypso - Sea Goddess.

Although well established in uniform, she is still aiming to break gender stereotyping as she continues on her path to self-discovery into her 30s.

Maj Apollis explained: “Gender equality starts at home: what happens at home informs our behaviour at work. My parents never compromised the basic doctrines when my siblings and I were growing up; we were equal before their eyes. So, I did not actively pursue to be referred to as ‘the first’ anything in life, I just value professionalism and learning with a bit of fun.”

Perhaps this kind of honesty is a reflection of the strength she has when she said: “You have to be open to the world, never let your mind have barbed wire fencing all around it, surrender your own intellectual borders in order to learn and grow into something bigger than yesterday.

“It is my wish to see a larger pool of maritime pilots in the SAAF. The most challenging and gut-wrenching thing to do is to hover above the water in that aircraft.
Getting it right was my point of reference that I am in the right place.

“The cherry on top of course has to be landing on a ship, a moving platform that needs focus and accuracy.”

On being asked why she has such absolute commitment to her military career, she said: “I did not come here privileged, it was so important that I had to choose a career that would relieve my family from paying my tuition fees. Many people are deterred from their dreams because of financial constraints, but I saw it with me, my Maths and Science gave me an all-stamped passport to the world through this organisation.

My mom, Pauline, always says there is a time for everything. My father will tell you lovingly never to bring the frailty of your emotions to work, get to that work’s door and commit to teamwork and respect people.”

She says that people often criticise those with a voracious hunger for success, but that is my propeller. It is like when one high school learner asked me one day when we went on a Base outreach programme, he asked, “Can you fly your aeroplane upside down?”

I then told him that technically it was possible, but like anything in life, there were rules to safety, but everything was possible.

On being asked if there was anything else for her to do when she was not studying and flying, she mentioned that: “My mind is always working on a few ideas, I am all about grateful moments, ego is not at the forefront of anything that I do in my life; I am always ready to deploy should the call come in, when I put on that helmet, it is Haak Kaapstad!”
Meet the first SA Navy female submarine officer

Lt (SAN) Gillian Malouw recently qualified as the first SA Navy female submarine officer.

A proud Officiating Officer in the Flag Officer Fleet, R Adm Bubhele Mhlana, said: “This talks to our vision of building a Navy that is capable of sustaining itself through the development of skills and knowledge.”

One of the proudest moments in a submariner’s life is when they are awarded a submarine badge number. Lt Malouw received both a badge number and the symbolic leather jacket, only worn by those who are submarine certified. “She is the most humble and unassuming person,” said the Officer Commanding SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I, Cdr Russel Beattie, during the qualification ceremony.

Lt Malouw was born in Schauderville, Port Elizabeth on 30 November 1990. “I was raised in a house with my mother, grandmother and three siblings,” she said. She has had a love for the life of a sailor since she was young. “I joined the Sea Cadets when I was in Grade 7 after my aunt suggested this to my mother.” Her aunt’s children, Lt Cdr Leverne Nsibande, and the late AB Reece Benjamin, had already been SA Navy members for a while and they enjoyed it.

The Sea Cadets is an institution that progressively moulds a new generation of sailors by instilling qualities, such as leadership, discipline and overall confidence. The Cadets are required to undergo training and complete courses in order to progress through an established ranking system much like in the SA Navy. Lt Malouw said: “We were taught about the SA Navy and other careers in the maritime industry. I thus made lasting friendships and remained a member until I completed Grade 12.”

By Grade 9, Lt Malouw had already decided on her future career and even intended on becoming a combat officer, which she believed to be an exciting path. She joined the SA Navy in 2010 and started basic training. By April that year she started her nine-month course as a combat officer candidate. She said: “Throughout the year, we had various members of the fleet presenting topics related to the SA Navy, but the one about submarines interested me the most.”

In January 2011, she started studying full-time at the Military Academy towards a Bachelor’s Degree in Technology and Defence Management. Between June and July the following year, she was among eight selected students to spend time at the Submarine Training Centre in Simon’s Town.

Lt Malouw said: “I was so excited. We spent 24 hours at sea on board the SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I. It was the best 24 hours of my career.” She subsequently graduated in December 2013.

The following year she completed her Combat Officer Qualifying Part 1 course and began the General Submarine Knowledge (GSK) course in January 2015. She also completed the Submarine Warfare course later in the same year.

Not only is the newly qualified Lt Malouw able to handle herself on submarines, she also spent time on surface ships. She completed her Bridge Watchkeeping qualification while on board the SAS SPIOENKOP. During her time on board the frigate she was deployed on the multinational exercise, Exercise IBSAMAR V. She said: “The standards of training,
Lt (SAN) Gillian Malouw, the first SA Navy female submarine officer.

especially in terms of combat/operational teams, were very high. We may not have the latest high-tech equipment; however, we have great knowledge of our environment. Our combat operators are well trained, and our commanders have good tactical and operational knowledge.”

She also spent time in the Mine Counter Measures Branch on board the SAS UMHLOTI where she received her Officer of the Day certificate. During that time, Cdr Zimasa Mabela was doing circuits and bumps for taking command of a ship.

Lt Malouw said: “To me, she became a mentor. I think it is easy for any of her subordinates to look up to her as she is stern, yet also has a nurturing side. I spent about four months under her command and she really believed in me. I therefore strive to make her proud of me.” Cdr Mabela took command of the SAS UMHLOTI on 26 August 2015, succeeding Cdr Brian Short. She was also named one of the British Broadcasting Corporation’s 100 Women of the Year in 2016.

In March of the same year, Lt Malouw was drafted to the SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I. She was included in an initiative to assist members qualifying in different roles by means of a mentorship programme. Lt Cdr Graham Mountifield (Ret) and WO1 Keith Marthinus were assigned as mentors for Combat Officers.

Lt Malouw said: “They formed an integral part of my training. Owing to their guidance, I passed the Type Endorsement Board in 2017. This meant that I could now stand my own watches on board our submarines.” Her latest achievements occurred in 2018 when she passed her Harbour Watchkeeping Qualification (Duty Technical Rating) Board in July and Officer of the Day in December.

In order to obtain this qualification, she says she sacrificed family time as well as her social life. Lt Malouw said: “Most of my time was spent on board in order to gain as much exposure to the systems and qualified personnel, who could assist me.” Lt Malouw does not have an engineering or technical background. In order to qualify, she put her nose to the grindstone in order to understand certain concepts pertaining to the operation of systems on board. She said: “Qualified members of the crew and in the submarine squadron were a great help.”

Lt Malouw has achieved much in her short time as a Naval Officer. What makes her qualification special is the fact that for the first time in the history of the South African submarine service, there is a woman in a leadership position. She is also in line to potentially command a submarine someday.

Furthermore, she now belongs to a very small group of women around the world who have qualified in the combat branch of submarines. Lt Malouw said: “It just feels good knowing that I have endured and that my sacrifices were not in vain. It also feels great that I am able to contribute to a change in how women are viewed in society. Maybe I can help a few people understand that we truly have the potential to be anything we want, and that we should not be limited by society’s preconceived ideas of what women, or even men for that matter, should be like.”

When asked what she plans on doing next, Lt Malouw answered without hesitation: “I will work my way up through the ranks in the Submarine Squadron and eventually become an Officer Commanding. While our ability to carry out efficient patrol and protection of our waters is hampered by financial constraints, the fact that we have many qualified and passionate sailors on board our ships and submarines keeps our service afloat. We adapt and learn to get by with the little we have.”

As for those who want to follow in her footsteps, she advised that one has to believe in oneself: “You set a goal and you go for it, no matter what anyone says.”
SANDF exhibitions attract crowds of learners to the Bloem Show

Crowds of learners and students were among the thousands of community members who visited the exhibitions of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) at the Bloem Show held recently.

RIGHT: A group of young learners visiting the stand of the Chaplaincy Service at the Bloem Show.

Learners being informed about the uses of a mobile clinic of the SA Military Health Service.

SA Military Health Service members providing advice regarding oral health at the Bloem Show.

in Bloemfontein. Excited community members stood in amazement, and were filled with a sense of wonder and inspiration as members of the SANDF exposed them to the military environment.

The SANDF used the Bloem Show to reach out to the people of the Free State by showcasing its capabilities. The youth were exposed to wide-ranging career opportunities within the defence environment, and community members were educated about the constitutional role of the SANDF in a democracy. The event was also used to expand the public's
understanding of the function and purpose of the military in society.

The SANDF, as is customary, added a great deal of value by presenting highly professional exhibitions from all four Services. The SA Army displayed military equipment used by units such as 1 Special Service Battalion, 1 SA Tank Regiment, 1 SA Infantry Battalion, 1 Parachute Regiment, Free State Regiment and the SA Armour Museum.

The SA Air Force exhibited technical hardware, survival equipment, aircraft engines, the fire fighter section, weapons and basic military training. The SA Navy held a recruitment drive at the Bloem Show. The SA Military Health Service showcased seven disciplines, namely dentistry, biokinetics, social work, nursing and dietetics, together with ambulances and a mobile clinic.

The presence of the Chaplaincy Service and the educational sessions conducted by Maj Lucky Monaledi from the Military Academy added additional dimensions of the military to the Bloem Show. He shared his expertise in Mathematics and Science with visiting learners by presenting coaching sessions to them.

The marketing and recruitment drive used the show as a springboard to reach out to learners who are seen as future recruits for the SANDF. This drive brought a sense of optimism to many and reached a critical mass of young people who showed their willingness to take up the opportunities presented through the career exhibitions with enormous energy and spirit.

The display inspired some of the youngsters to join the military. Ms Maria Nhleko said that she was fascinated and glad she had visited the show. She said: “I now feel like joining the SANDF and playing my part in the nation. I am so proud of our soldiers.” Mr Thabo Makhale, a Grade 11 learner who visited the Bloem Show, said that he had found the sight of all the military equipment captivating. He said: “I am so thrilled by the level of professionalism and activities that I see here today. I now have adequate knowledge of what the SANDF is all about. I was exposed to various career fields in the SANDF that I was unaware of. I cannot wait to apply, particularly to join the SA Air Force.”
The sharp end of the SANDF airborne capability

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela

The youngest African tandem master and instructor in the airborne environment on the continent is Capt Raymond Mokwena, who has held this status for over six years now. This skill involves parachuting into an operational area carrying a medical specialist or extra equipment.

Capt Mokwena from 5 Special Forces Regiment in Phalaborwa explained with enthusiasm: “The aim of tandem jumping is to bring specialists or ammunition to a scene or into an operational area. For a person to qualify to do a tandem course, one needs to have done 500 free-fall jumps. A tandem master can carry up to 450 kg of weight, which may include a passenger and equipment for both tandem master and passenger.”

Before a person gets to the level at which he or she can do tandem jumping, the person has to go through many stages and levels by starting as an amateur and developing into an experienced combat soldier in the airborne environment. For example, a person starts with a Basic Static Line Course, which is the basic requirement to obtain wings.

Capt Mokwena said you can develop your skills further, enabling you to do an Advanced Static Line Course, which entails moving from a round to a square canopy. This means you are still hooked to the aircraft, but are jumping from a higher altitude, which is used as an operational compliment.

Capt Raymond Mokwena believes that to have skills to do different jumps in the airborne environment one needs to have energy, discipline and fitness among others things to succeed. (Photo by L Cpl Paul Mpangala)

He added: “The static line involves the deployment of airborne forces, which may be a larger group such as a regiment, from point A to point B. They are only brought in as a larger force after the Path Finders or Special Force members have been deployed. The duration of the course is about seven weeks. Aspirant jumpers start with the selection process and then move on to the jump course.

“In the airborne environment, depending on the level of experience, you start with the basic static line, jumping with a round canopy from a height of 1 000 feet. In the case of the advanced static line, a square canopy is used to jump from an altitude of 3 000 feet going up to a height of 13 500 feet above Main Sea Level. From this height you jump without any oxygen supplements.”

An altitude of 13 500 feet is called a stand-off, which allows a person to travel under canopy. Capt Mokwena said for every thousand feet a person covers, it is a kilometre on the ground. Dropping from 13 500 feet, thus means that a person can travel a distance of 13 kilometres to his or her target.

During free fall, a person deploys his or her own canopy and
Capt Raymond Mokwena, a Tandem Master from 5 Special Forces Regiment, performing a free-fall jump during a capability demonstration at the Rand Show. (Photo by Mr Timothy Makhubele)

needs to be perceptive of stability, centre of gravity, among other aspects. This is where a person drops and opens his or her own canopy, unlike the static line where a person is hooked to the aircraft and the parachute opens when the person exits.

Capt Mokwena said: “When you exit, your body needs to be in an arched position so that it does not turn and you are able to open your parachute at a predetermined altitude. You can still free-fall from 13 500 feet and the minimum altitude at which you should open your parachute is 3 500 feet above ground level. You may open at different altitude from a free fall for separation.”

The advanced free-fall is an operational compliment, which requires that a person executes the High Altitude High Opening (HAHO) or High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) jump. This means that the person exits the aircraft and opens his or her parachute at a very high altitude or exits at a very high and opens at a low altitude.

When a paratrooper jumps from 35 000 feet, there is no oxygen, which necessitates the use of a mask and oxygen canister. A member’s “Medicals” must be rated “G1K1V1”, which means an aviation medical assessment was conducted at the Institute for Aviation Medicine. The member needs to have done 100 free-fall jumps to qualify for the advanced free-fall course.

Capt Mokwena further explained: “The advantage of HALO is that you can reach the enemy without being seen. When you are airborne and drop from 35 000 feet, the enemy cannot recognise you. It can take you up to five years to become HALO qualified because you need to accumulate the number of jumps.”

Capt Mokwena has groomed new talent when the first women HALO jumper, Lt Chavonn Malgas, emerged. Lt Malgas is a Platoon Commander at 5 SA Infantry Battalion and said becoming a paratrooper was not easy; starting from the preparations for selection right up until the jump course.

Lt Malgas added: “It is physically and mentally demanding and if you allow your mind to be weak, you will never reach your goal. I qualified as a paratrooper in 2007 and I always wanted to do more. I did not just want to be a basic static line jumper. I was fascinated by how the square canopy was flown; the things people would do when they are in free fall or under canopy.

“I decided to do HALO, also known as advance free-fall, because I wanted to push myself beyond what I have already achieved, but I think I also just wanted to see what the fuss was about.”

She said being the first woman, who has qualified for High Altitude Parachute Operations, makes her feel proud of herself. Lt Malgas added: “Knowing that you are the one who did something that most women are afraid of doing makes me proud. Now they can see that there is nothing to be afraid of and that it is possible, and that women can do whatever she puts her mind to.”
Maj Ronel Viljoen, a racewalker, recently received her SA National Colours in the 5 000m Walk.

Coaching plays a significant role for an athlete, Maj Ronel Viljoen had the privilege of being mentored and coached by Olympic racewalker and coach, Mr Wayne Snyman, who has laid a solid foundation for her racewalking career. Maj Viljoen is currently coached by Mr Carl Meyer, an esteemed coach from Johannesburg, whose strict programme she follows meticulously. She always tries to challenge herself and as proof broke the SA Record in the 10km racewalking event in her category at the LC de Villiers Sports Grounds at Tuks in May last year.

We are proud of and inspired by Maj Viljoen for receiving her SA National Colours. It shows that many years of hard work and determination indeed do pay off, and that a final push of effort, even when the tank is empty, is all worth it.

Coaching also plays a significant role, and previously, Maj Viljoen had the privilege of being mentored and coached by Olympic racewalker and coach, Mr Wayne Snyman, who has laid a solid foundation for her racewalking career. Maj Viljoen is currently coached by Mr Carl Meyer, an esteemed coach from Johannesburg, whose strict programme she follows meticulously. She always tries to challenge herself and as proof broke the SA Record in the 10km racewalking event in her category at the LC de Villiers Sports Grounds at Tuks in May last year.

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A born runner

By Lt Col Annelize Rademeyer,
SA Army SD1 Corp Com

“Running is great! My greatest motivation comes from within. I was born a runner and I have always challenged myself when it comes to running. I always set a weekly target for myself, which pushes me to train even harder. I also get my motivation from my family, friends and colleagues, as well as from local and international athletes.” This was the response from Private Sifiso Nhleko when asked what motivates him to excel in sport.

Private Nhleko started to enjoy doing cross-country in 2000 when he was 11 years old, doing 1km, 2000m track and park runs. He joined running leagues in Durban and started to win and compete internationally in the USA, Germany, Kenya and France from 2008.

His training schedule entails practice before and after working hours, including weekends in all-weather circumstances – six days a week. Pte Nhleko follows a healthy eating plan, which includes a lot of fruit and food without a high fat content. He also drinks a lot of water to keep his body hydrated.

While Pte Nhleko was on deployment on the KwaZulu-Natal/Mozambican border for OPERATION CORONA, between September 2018 and March 2019, he practiced alone and sometimes with fellow soldiers. When he is serving at his home unit, 1 Special Service Battalion in Bloemfontein, he makes use of the indoor training centre at the University of the Free State.

His mentor is his training partner, Pte Ntando Thabethe, a fellow soldier, who also participated with him in the Military Pentathlon during the International Military Sports Council (CISM) Military World Games in South Korea in 2014. His role models are Mohamed Farah from Great Britain and Usain Bolt from Jamaica.

His advice to the youth is: “Sport is life and it promotes a healthy lifestyle. If you are really good, you can even make a living from sport, for example Ms Caster Semenya.”

Private Nhleko is currently preparing for the CISM Military World Games, which will take place in China in October 2019.

Accomplishments

He participated in the Paces International Competition in Pakistan in September 2018, where he received a Silver Medal in the 3,2km.

During the SA Army Fittest Soldier Competition in September 2018 Pte Nhleko obtained six Gold Medals, two Silver Medals and was the Overall Winner.

In the SANDF Fittest Soldier Competition in November 2018 Pte Nhleko obtained four Gold Medals, two Silver Medals and was the Overall Winner.
Failure is the rehearsal to success

By Chaplain Sibusiso Zungu

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” (Gen. 50:20)

The famous architect, Mr Frank Wright, designed many beautiful buildings, homes, and other magnificent structures. Towards the end of his career, a reporter asked him: “Of your many beautiful designs, which one is your favourite?”

Without missing a beat, Mr Wright answered: “My next one”. He understood the principle of stretching, constantly pressing forward regardless of challenges.

Life is unpredictable and things do not always turn out the way we expect. In as much as we always make plans, we should always have alternative options in case things do not work out as planned.

As people, we are not accustomed to failure or to make room for disappointment (even the one planned by individuals different from you), so when things do not work out, we get depressed and lose confidence.

In such circumstances the Bible tells us that “But Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.’” (Gen 50:19-20).

Hindrances and challenges are part of the route which builds up to success. It is our reaction to such challenges which is crucial to how we get to succeed and achieve our most desired outcome. It is either prepared. It takes bravery and strength to keep going.

Weeping and giving up do not aid in the long run; you need to take action and pick up the pieces. When the man of faith, Job, lost all he ever had, he remained positive and never lost his faith in God.

He kept going, and God restored everything that Job had lost. The Bible says Job was wealthier than he had been initially. You may have lost all what you have worked for in the Department of Defence.

When you fail, what you need is a positive attitude – dust yourself off and make a fresh start. Take all the lessons learnt from failure, arm yourself with knowledge and experience, and rise up again!

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN.
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 Mahikeng Healthcare Crisis. Water and Sanitation Crisis at
  Ditsobotla Local Municipality. The Vaal Sewer Water Reticulation
  Crisis.

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. John’s,
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.