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The Force Intervention Brigade Commander, Brig Gen Njabulo Dube, having a talk with Lt Masego Bogatso, the female Platoon Commander deployed to Simulike COB North Kivu Province. (Photo by Capt Deon Fiellies, Public Information Officer RSA Battalion)

In memoriam of Chester Williams

SA National Defence Force Rugby Championships

The value of women through hope, faith and joy

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from the editor’s desk

This editions’ Editor’s note focuses on gender based violence (GBV). It is rather prudent to address this issue in this platform because GBV is a scourge that affects us all as the people of South Africa. Certainly it affects men and women in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) uniform.

Of late South Africa has been engulfed by a spate of what is generally termed GBV. It is speculated that South Africa has one of the world’s highest GBV rates in the world, some experts have even gone on to say it is comparable to countries that are at war. South Africa is becoming an increasingly unsafe place for women to live in. The crime against women in South Africa report by Statistics SA shows that GBV is 5 times higher than the global average. This means that in South Africa, women are 5 times more likely to be killed due to their gender.

The latter paints a grim picture of South African men in general as perpetrators of abuse. First and foremost we need to unpack and define what this type of violence is in order to naturally comprehend its impact on various levels. Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply entrenched in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. It is violence directed against a person because of that individual’s gender or sexual orientation. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls.

GBV and violence against women and girls are terms that are often used interchangeably as it has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, using the ‘gender-based’ aspect is important as it highlights the fact that many forms of violence against women are rooted in power inequalities between women and men.

Intimate partner violence
IPV is the most common form of GBV and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by a current or former intimate partner or spouse, and can occur in heterosexual or same-sex couples.

Domestic violence
DV refers to violence which is carried out by partners or family members. As such, DV can include IPV, but also encompasses violence against children or other family members.

Sexual violence
SV is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.

Catalysts of GBV
Catalysts of GBV are the factors which trigger and perpetuate GBV. Gendered power inequality rooted in patriarchy ultimately is the primary trigger of GBV. Intimate partner violence is more prevalent in societies where there is a culture of violence, and where male superiority is seen as normal. A belief in male superiority can manifest in men feeling entitled to sex with women, strict reinforcement of gender roles and hierarchy (and punishment of transgressions), women having low social value and power, and associating masculinity with control of women.

The above, interrelate with a number of other factors such as social values (religious or cultural norms), low levels of women’s empowerment, lack of social support, socio-economic inequality, and substance abuse.

Violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, intersex people
People of all genders or sexual orientation can be subjected to GBV. Cases have been reported where GBV is experienced by people who are viewed as not conforming to their assigned gender roles, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex people.

Impact of gender-based violence
GBV is a serious human rights violation with dire social and developmental impact for survivors of violence, as well as their families, communities and society more broadly.

On an individual level, GBV leads to psychological trauma, and can have psychological, behavioural and physical consequences for survivors. Families and loved ones of survivors can also experience indirect trauma, and many do not know how to provide effective support.

Violence also has significant economic consequences. The high rate of GBV places a heavy burden on the health and criminal justice systems, as well as rendering many survivors unable to work or otherwise move freely in society. The SANDF has long put measures against GBV with the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula declaring there will be dire punitive measures taken against those found guilty of perpetuating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and GBV. The Military Command Council (MCC) has recently made a pronouncement that any form of violence with special emphasis on GBV will not be tolerated in the SANDF.

It is time for all men in SANDF uniform to rise against the scourge of GBV, to unequivocally declare that such atrocities will not be perpetrated in their name.

Lufuno Netsherembe  
News Editor SA Soldier  

SA Soldier
MESSAGE

2019 VOL 26 NO 8 SA SOLDIER
THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

SAYS NO TO GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
The positive impact of SANDF’s efforts on the broader Government response to international disasters

In 1994 the new democratic dispensation brought with it the development of a reformed SA National Defence Force (SANDEF) devoid of bias and brutality. It has moved away from being a non-inclusive organisation to one that places great emphasis on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, community development and interdepartmental collaboration.

In democracies military forces are trained to do rescue work in times of disaster such as train crashes, earthquakes and large-scale flooding. The SANDEF has played a vital role on the continent and beyond in this regard. In celebration of 25 years of defence in democracy, it is perhaps an opportune moment to examine the role of the SANDEF within South Africa’s Constitutional democracy in terms of the role they have played in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief since the dawn of democracy.

Humanitarian assistance and disaster response are core DOD capabilities, but they are always conducted in a supporting role to assist other State departments and agencies. SANDEF has the assets and the experience to deploy necessary relief personnel and resources to all corners of the globe at a moment’s notice – there is no actor better prepared to respond in times of crises. We have seen...
Members of the medical team assisting a patient out of an Oryx helicopter. Operation LOAPI.

the positive impact of SANDF’s efforts on the broader Government response to international disasters in a number of cases:

**OPERATION HULDHA**

In response to the flood disaster, which wreaked havoc in the Inhambane district of Mozambique, the Joint SANDF Task Force, which included two Oryx helicopters, three light fixed wing aircraft and two C130 Hercules aircraft, air and ground crews, Mobile Air Operations and Medical teams, were deployed. A reconnaissance flight by fixed-wing aircraft provided much needed information on the task at hand. More than 150 tons of food was distributed during the operation that lasted until 17 March 1999.

**OPERATION LITCHI I**

Following unusually heavy rains in the northern and eastern parts of Southern Africa for more than two weeks during January and February 2000, the Limpopo, Sabie and Nkomati rivers burst their banks flooding vast areas. The worst hit were the provinces of Sofala, Inhambane, Gaza and Maputo in Mozambique.

The Mozambique Government estimated that approximately 300 000 people were affected by the floods with many already cut off from dry land and many trapped on the roofs of their houses and in desperate need of food and other basic services. The Mozambique Government requested assistance from the then South African Department of Foreign Affairs. A reconnaissance of the possible area of operation was conducted on 09 February 2000 and the deployment started on 10 February 2000.

The initial deployment was for a period of 10 days and included the deployment of three Oryx helicopters, two BK 117 helicopters, two C-208 fixed-wing aircraft, Mobile Air Operations Teams, a Field Engineer Troop, 15 Inflatable boats, two Water purification plants and medical support.

Working with the Mozambique National Disaster Committee, the SANDF launched operation LITCHI with the deployment to Beira and Maputo. During the first week, more than 3 000 people were airlifted to safety.

With water levels subsiding, the next phase of the operation was the distribution of food to those in need. With food, tents and medical equipment arriving in Mozambique in large quantities, a second Mobile Air Operations Team and helicopters redeployed to Maputo to assist. Within approximately two weeks, helicopters from the SANDF delivered about 450 tons of aid to stranded people.

With more rain falling in the various catchment areas, the Limpopo River once again burst its banks and the village of Chokwe was once again under water. Five helicopters were deployed to the area and immediately started with rescue operations. With the international media everywhere, it was not long before video footage of the rescues was sent across the world resulting in huge praise for the helicopter crews of the SANDF from the international community. The deployment was extended a number of times and finally demobilised over the period 20 April to 02 May 2000.

**OPERATION MINARET**

During Operation LITCHI I, a number of foreign Air Forces deployed aircraft to render assistance with the distribution of humanitarian and emergency aid. These included France, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Air Force Bases Hoedspruit and Waterkloof provided logistic support to the aircraft of the Spanish, United Kingdom and United States of America under Operation LITCHI until 03 March 2000. Support to these aircraft was then provided under Operation MINARET over the period 04 to 31 March 2000.

**ANTARCTIC SUPPORT**

Two specially prepared Oryx helicopters joined the Antarctic vessel, SA Agulhas, on 14 June 2002 for a humanitarian assistance operation to the ice-bound Magdala Oldendorff that was stuck in the ice with its crew and 89 Russian scientists on board. The operation included the transfer of the scientists by helicopter to the SA Agulhas and the transfer of food and emergency equipment to the skeleton crew that would remain on board the Magdala Oldendorff until the ship could be freed from the ice. The operation was successfully executed.

**OPERATION INKUNZI**

A severe earthquake struck Algeria on 21 May 2003 causing widespread destruction, killing more than 1 000 people and leaving thousands homeless. The then Department of Foreign Affairs requested South Africa to send a team of experts to render assistance. A South African Team comprising members of the SA Army Engineer Corps, SA Military Health Service, SA Police Service (including three search dogs), Rescue South Africa and Global Relief deployed under Operation INKUNZI.

The advance team of Engineers, Intelligence and Command Management Information Systems constructed temporary facilities at the Olympic Stadium in Boumerdès. The South African Team departed on board an SA Air Force Boeing 707 aircraft on 25 May 2003. The objectives of the South African Team were to find and rescue people trapped, render medical assistance and retrieve bodies from the rubble. Apart from the personnel on board, the cargo...
included bottled water, medical and rescue equipment.

Very soon the South African team was involved in attempts to rescue or recover bodies from collapsed buildings. In some cases the team worked with teams from Russia and Hungary. Medical staff provided medical assistance to the inhabitants of Simmouri. The South African team returned to South Africa on 29 May 2003 leaving behind all consumables, including all the water.

OPERATION BLUE ANGEL

The realisation of the African Renaissance received another boost when nine Southern African Development Community member states embarked on a joint relief operation in Zambia. Operation BLUE ANGEL was an operation based at Mfuwe International Airport over the period 14 to 24 August 2003.

This operation, aimed at distributing humanitarian relief aid in the form of bags of maize to poverty-stricken villages in and around Zambia, was not only a combined operation with the stamp of approval from the Southern African Development Community member states, but was also used as an exercise to test Africa’s readiness to provide much needed relief aid should the need arise, as it has before. In the absence of Mozambique, nine of the initial ten countries participated in the operation with Tanzania as an observer.

A total number of 2 900 bags of maize, with each bag weighing 50 kg, had to be flown by both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft to their distribution points. At first, this appeared to be a demanding task for all involved, but the thought that after all was done, a family somewhere in the village would have food on the table was motivation enough for a more than patriotic performance.

This task was made difficult by the weight of the bags and the fact that they had to cross crocodile- and hippo-infested rivers and at times had to wait until it was safe to cross. This could take anything up to four days on the banks of the river. Operation BLUE ANGEL flew a total of 1 092 bags of maize to the various distribution points within nine hours of the first day of operation, and results were imminent.

IRAN DISASTER

Following a devastating earthquake in Iran, it was decided to deploy a team from Rescue South Africa to the city of Bam in Iran. Assistance to the Department of Foreign Affairs was provided in the form of air transport of the South African Team and humanitarian aid (blankets and water purification) to Iran over the period 28 to 29 December 2003.

OPERATION UKUSINDISA

During March 2004, Madagascar was struck by a cyclone causing severe damage to infrastructure and services. The Government of Madagascar requested urgent disaster relief assistance from South Africa. The Department of Foreign Affairs requested the SANDF to render the required assistance. An advance group deployed on 22 March 2004. The main force comprising fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, flying and ground crews, medical teams and a protection element deployed to Madagascar on 23 March 2004. Operating from Sambava and Majunga, the distribution of food commenced on 25 March 2004. During the deployment that ended on 04 April 2004, more than 215 tons of food was delivered.

OPERATION LITCHI II

The northern region of Mozambique (Zambezi River Basin) suffered from severe flooding during the second half of February 2007. During a South African ministerial visit, the Mozambique Government requested relief assistance from South Africa. The assistance focused on transport for the Mozambican National Institute of Disaster Management with the provision of food aid and water. Following a technical reconnaissance visit over the period 04 to 05 March 2007 two Oryx helicopters, one Agusta A-109 helicopter, one CASA 212 transport aircraft and Engineer Troop with two Buffel Water Purification plants, supported by members of the Military Health Service, deployed over the period 05 March to 16 April 2007. During the operation, approximately 630 metric tons of food and other relief aid were delivered while 2,5
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA

The SANDF partnered with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Non-Governmental Organisation, Gift of the Givers, in responding to a United Nations appeal for humanitarian assistance to drought-stricken Somalia. On 16 August 2011 the SA Air Force provided a transport aircraft, which airlifted 18 tons of humanitarian aid to Mogadishu. Over the next two weeks the SA Air Force delivered more than 112 tons of aid. This initial humanitarian support was followed by a further request towards the end of August 2011 from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation requesting assistance from the Department of Defence and Military Veterans to deliver more humanitarian aid, collected by various Non-Governmental Organisations, to Somalia.

OPERATION CHARIOT

Following heavy rains in neighbouring countries, the Limpopo River burst its banks causing severe flooding and damage to infrastructure in parts of Mozambique. The SANDF was requested to assist the National Disaster Management Centre, National Institute of Disaster Management and the Joint Operations Command of Mozambique with humanitarian assistance.

The area between Xai-Xai and Chokwe were identified as priority and a forward operating base was established at Chibuto from where search and rescue operations were launched utilising deployed fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft. In addition, relief aid was transported to aid and accommodation centres in the Limpopo basin while water purification assistance was rendered to the aid and accommodation centres.

A request from the non-governmental organisation, Gift of the Givers, for the SA National Defence Force to transport emergency supplies from Johannesburg to Chokwe/Xihakelani in Mozambique before 31 January 2013 was approved. The emergency supplies were transported by road over the period 30 to 31 January 2013.

OPERATION METAAL

When a building accommodating followers of the Synagogue Church of All Nations collapsed in Lagos, Nigeria on 12 September 2014, it was reported that a number of South Africans were killed or seriously injured. The South African Government promised assistance to the South Africans and a team of experts was sent to assess the situation. Following the return of the assessment team, the appointed ministerial committee decided to repatriate injured South Africans to South Africa as a matter of urgency. For this the SANDF (SA Air Force) converted a C-130 Hercules aircraft into a mass casualty air ambulance and with members of the SA Military Health Service collected the South Africans over the period 22 to 23 September 2014.

Phase two of the operation involved the repatriation of the mortal remains of South Africans killed during the collapse of the building. A Joint Interdepartmental Advance Team departed for Lagos, Nigeria, on 04 November 2014 to facilitate the repatriation of these mortal remains. They arrived back in South Africa on board a chartered aircraft on 09 November 2014. On 02 February 2015 an SA Air Force C-130 Hercules departed for Lagos to collect the last mortal remains of South Africans. The aircraft returned to South Africa on 05 February 2015.

OPERATION LOAPI

Following heavy rains in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe during January 2015, Mozambique experienced severe flooding in the Zambezi Province and was in urgent need of assistance. Following a request from the Government of Mozambique to South Africa for assistance, the SANDF were tasked to deploy to Quelimane in the Mocuba District of the Zambezi Province of Mozambique to conduct flood relief and humanitarian assistance operations.

The force comprised three Oryx helicopters, one A 109 helicopter, Mobile Air Operations Team, an Operational Diving team from the SA Navy and SA Military Health Service medical teams. Daily tasks included the distribution of food, medical aid and other humanitarian assistance. During the deployment, some 74 tons of food and medical supplies were delivered while ten medical evacuation flights took place. Deployed forces returned to South Africa on 31 January 2015.

million litres of water was purified and supplied to the displaced people.
SA Army Engineers assist in the reconstruction of bridges in Zimbabwe

By Sgt Zwenjani Wisani, 3 Electronic Workshop
Photos by Sgt Eulanda Leshaba, Photographer
Engineer Terrain Intelligence Regiment

In the aftermath of Cyclone Idai that struck Zimbabwe, in particular the Chimanimani and Chipinge districts, the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has approved the deployment of SA Army Engineers to help in the reconstruction of bridges in Kopa in fulfillment of a pledge. The pledge to assist in the reconstruction of Cyclone Idai-affected areas was made by South Africa’s former Minister of International relations and Cooperation, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu.

Cyclone Idai ravaged Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi between 14 and 15 March 2019, leaving more than 1000 people dead, thousands missing and homes and infrastructure completely destroyed. Communities have been displaced and are in great need of support at personal and communal level. Roads and bridges were destroyed. The area was completely cut off from access, making it difficult for humanitarian actors to quickly provide aid.

On our arrival in the district of Chimanimani at Kopa in Zimbabwe, one could see the physical damage caused by Cyclone Idai without asking anyone from the community. The area bore the brunt of Cyclone Idai as roads, bridges and other infrastructure were swept away, homes reduced to rubble and lives lost.

Men and women in uniform, with the support of the Zimbabwe Defence Force.

Members of SA Army Engineers preparing the ground where the bridge is going to be built.

SA Army Engineers in progress on the reconstruction of bridges in Kopa.
The area of Chimanimani can be described as the economic hub of Zimbabwe owing to its agricultural activities and abundance of minerals. Commodities available include sugar cane, oranges, avocados, pineapples, bananas, tomatoes among others. Our presence here in this area has brought back hope to the community after the catastrophic event which left hundreds of people missing and others misplaced.

Our mission is to build two Bailey Bridges so that day-to-day activities can be easily accessible even during the rainy season. Not only is the community excited, but the farmers as well, because they will be able to transport their goods easily to different markets around Zimbabwe. The community nevertheless still upholds its African tradition throughout the area. A special quality this community has is love and respect, a quality which we experienced on our arrival. Make no mistake, those values are the ones keeping this community going forward with the aim of prospering in the future. As part of community development we are starting to engage with the youth and the community at large via different sporting codes in our spare time. Our wish is to make sure that they have at least a sporting code like soccer and netball to keep them busy, especially the youth. We concentrate on school level children as it forms part of their building blocks.

It is our wish that the youth are channeled in the right direction because they are the people who will lead this community in the future. As I mentioned, this district is buzzing with agricultural activity, but one major setback is the road infrastructure. Travelling from Kopa to Chipinge can take one almost two hours. During the rainy season, movement becomes impossible because the road is muddy and slippery. For the delivery trucks it is even worse when the surface is wet.

The economy of the area is badly affected during the rainy season. SA Army Engineers are deployed to the area because of their capabilities, dedication and professionalism. Sappers have made sure that they mobilise the most powerful earthmoving machines for use in Operation UKUWELA. Rest assured that the flag of RSA will be raised higher after the completion of this operation. Men and women in uniform, with the support of the Zimbabwe Defence Force, are already hands on. Our wish is to see the completion of the work and community enjoying the new infrastructure.
United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 implementation becomes a reality

By Col Marie Venter; SSO Gender
Photo by Cpl Jonathan Mogano

A group of over 200 South African representatives from the Security Cluster, government departments, Chapter 9 Institutions and Civil Society Organisations, including the private sector, converged at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation recently. The purpose of this meeting was to present the draft Action Plan for validation by all parties; enhance partnership and collaboration; confirm coordinating mechanisms with respect to the implementation of the plan; budgeting, including monitoring and evaluation, and solicit endorsement of the draft plan by Executive authorities in order to initiate the Cabinet approval process.

The meeting kick-started with background information by Ambassador Mathu Joyini, the Head of the International Diplomatic and scene setting by Ms Charlotte Lobe, Chief Director Gender Transformation at DIRCO. Prof Cheryl Hendricks presented the draft plan, which was endorsed by Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, Dr Naledi Pandor Minister of DIRCO, Ms Mahite Nkoane-Mashabane, Minister of Department of Women, Youth and people with Disability.

Messages of support were succinctly articulated by Ms Tamara Matebula, Chairperson of the Gender Equality Commission, Ms Nardos Bekela-Thomas the UN Resident Coordinator in SA, Ms Astrid Emilie Hele, Norway Ambassador, Mr Nigel Casey, UK High Commissioner, and Ms Victoria Moloka, Acting Director Women Gender and Development in the African Union representing Me Benita Diop – African Union, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

In contextualising the National Action Plan in the South African context, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the country’s Constitution adopted in 1996 has institutionalised key mechanisms to advance gender equality. Hence, the Department’s policies stance since the advent of democracy envisages an “RSA that benefits from a Defence Posture and approach as informed by both women and men equality in terms of decisions, tasks and operations in addressing national, continental and international human security.”

Therefore, when the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000, it was embraced by the DOD as an effective instrument that supports South Africa’s endeavors at International level with respect to the deployment of women peacekeepers. This Resolution was the first formal and legal document from the United Nations Security Council that required parties in conflict to prevent violations of
women's rights, to support women's participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction in addition to protecting women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict.

South Africa subsequently became one of the Troop Contributing countries that deploys a significant number of women in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and is thus under legal obligation to compile a National Action Plan to implement UNSCR 1325 and other supporting resolutions during peacekeeping operations. The resolutions, applied holistically, call for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in a manner that is all encompassing.

Noteworthy is the fact that our Commander-in-Chief, President Cyril Ramaphosa, re-emphasised during the State of the Nation Address on 20 June 2019 that South Africa would continue to play an active role in international relations in the quest for global peace and security, people-centred development and prosperity for all. The Commander-in-Chief further stressed South Africa’s determination to work in concert with the international community to preserve and protect the rules-based multilateral system with the United Nations at the head.

However, at domestic level, our country needs to do more to consolidate these gains as well as promote women's peace and security concerns. This includes developing high-impact human security interventions that would ensure the protection of women within communities at all times. South Africa acknowledges that women's human security is not threatened or violated only in times of war (armed conflicts) but that women and girls are also confronted with threats to and violation of their security in their daily lives in both public and private spheres.

Although currently not a country in armed conflict, there is a range of chronic threats and crimes that impedes women's safety and human security, which emanates from criminal activities such as robbery, violent protests, gender-based violence, gangsterism, femicide, xenophobia, transnational organised crime in the form of trafficking in drugs, firearms, cybercrimes and trafficking in persons (human trafficking). Women are also disproportionately affected by poverty, inequalities and climate change, which exacerbate their state of insecurity. Hence, priority number five of the sixth democratically elected Parliament underscores Social Cohesion and Safety in communities.

The Department of Defence, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities and Department of International Relations and Cooperation were appointed as the three key national government departments charged with the responsibility to drive the process of developing a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in South Africa in compliance with UNSCR 1325.

In her address at the Validation Meeting, which took place on the 2nd August 2019, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation emphasised the fact that the leadership role started at home with the family and then worldwide. She further called upon civil society organisations to partner with Government in building a caring and equal society. On the other hand, the Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities called upon all South Africans to be shameful of what is taking place in our country due to the re-emergence of the scourge of domestic violence, homicide and femicide. This situation therefore requires new ways of thinking and doing because women, girls and the vulnerable groups must be protected at all times. Minister Nkoane-Mashabane concluded her speech by stating that as much as women are not a homogenous group, they must still be united in their quest for peace. During her keynote address, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans pointed out that the military cannot and will not be the ultimate solution to the conflicts raging through the continent and the world. She stated that there was a need for a multiplicity of players that have to come to the fore for the effective implementation of UNSCR 1325.

After receiving strategic guidelines from the Executive Authorities, additional inputs to the draft document were made during the plenary session. It became apparent that a multi-pronged approach is required in endeavours to design effective strategies and interventions that will galvanise women and youth as agents of change for the restoration of order, including building of social cohesion and sustainable peace. Minister Mapisa-Ngcakula ended off her address by committing to ensure the promotion of human rights and meaningful participation of women in all peace processes.

As a society we have to put our collective shoulders to the wheel in the creation of an environment that is without want, fear or indignity for women, men, girls and boys; at national, continental and international level. The theme of South Africa’s National Plan of Action is “Peace and Security for Women in all their Diversity.”

In her closing remarks Maj Gen Memela-Motumi recapped the meeting’s proceedings and also acknowledged the inspirational messages of support received from strategic partners, including the go-ahead given by the three Executive Authorities with respect to the implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda. In addition, she encouraged everyone to heed Dr Pandor’s call for an investigation into the reasons for the protracted drafting of the National Action Plan. This was important to ensure that this process does not experience any additional bottlenecks moving forward.

The stakeholders were also commended for their resilience, having reached the finishing line. The General expressed her excitement about the endorsement of the first draft by three cabinet members - Stakeholders were encouraged to customise the National Action Plan to their respective environments and to ensure that their objectives are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant to the country’s current challenges.

Lastly, Maj Gen Memela-Motumi underscored the importance of locating the National Action Plan within the identified MTEF priorities and in pursuit thereof she propose that Priority no 5, which talks to Social Cohesion and Safety in Communities, served as the rallying point. Her parting shot was a reference to Leonardo da Vinci’s words: “we must be impressed with the urgency of doing; knowing is not enough, we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do.”

The National Action Plan will be launched at Military Facilities after Cabinet approval before end of October 2019.
SA SOLDIER EVENTS

SANDF parade honours our warrior women in uniform

By CD Ally Rakoma
Photos by S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

A warrior’s strength is measured by the size of her heart. She is respectfully humble, she will stand with honour, she will fight with love.

In the face of adversity and for the ones she love, she will be a voice and a shield. She will be a beacon to light the way, she will gently make way for the young. A warrior woman is a sister, mother, daughter and grandmother.

Every year, in August our country marks Women’s Month to pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who took a stand against apartheid pass laws on August 9, 1956. As the month of August draws to an end, the Department of Defence/SANDF deemed it fit to end off Women’s Month in a prestigious manner by presenting the annual Chief of the SANDF Women’s Parade at the Pretoria Military Sports Club in Thaba Tshwane.

This year’s celebration of the DOD Women’s Parade glows under the theme: “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change”. The all-woman parade was commanded by Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye from the SA Air Force.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, delivered a keynote address. A moment of silence was observed in recognition of the selfless sacrifices of all the fallen lionesses who paid the ultimate price, the late Hon Col (Dr) Thandi Ndlovu and all other South African women who had died. Speaking at the parade, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula said that the DOD must be proud and celebrate the women who improved the lives of those in the SANDF and were essential to the organisation’s output without seeking recognition or rewards for what they did.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, delivering the keynote address, while Brig Gen Zuziwe Maso, the SA Military Health Service Director Nursing observe.

Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye, Battalion Commander at the Chief of the SANDF Women’s Day Parade.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, inspecting the parade with Lt Col Nthabeleng Mathye, the Battalion Commander.
Encouraging women to take courage from the fearless women of 1956, she remarked that for generations to come, 9th August shall remain the cornerstone that carries through the perpetual struggle of women of South Africa. She said: “It was on this day that over 20 000 women activists, armed with no weapons or technology, demonstrated the spirit of lioness against the unjust system that sought to devide and destroy their families through apartheid laws”.

She said that their courageous and fearless act defined the course of South African women, hence it was important that they dared not forget the day. She further reiterated that the continual efforts to push forward the agenda for the emancipation of women at all levels and the fight for equality remained close to her heart and should remain a focus area in the DOD.

“In victimisation, sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse and gender-based violence are in direct violation of the Constitution”, she said. She emphasised that senior women, generals and admirals to be involved in this process to develop a feasible implementation plan for the DOD and require collective buy-in when presented to the Command Council.

She told the gathering that as the country examines the strides made in women emancipation, across different sectors, it is envisaged that by early September 2019, the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security in South Africa should be endorsed by Cabinet and the official launch to take place before the end of September.

She added that this will place South Africa in a position to table the NAP during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) scheduled for mid-October 2019, being the 25th country on the continent to develop a NAP based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

“In this regard, I wish to take the opportunity to direct that there is research conducted on the state of gender relations within the SANDF. In addition, the outcome of that research will enable the military to design effective strategies for entrenching military discipline, inclusiveness and force cohesions”, she said.

She expressed her gratitude and paid tribute to numerous women in senior SANDF positions for taking leading roles in all Services, from combat battalions, to combat support, pilots, engineers, health professionals across the board. She conveyed her appreciation saying that women have also done several outreach programmes in their areas of deployment, including assisting an orphanage, engagements with the women and starting hygiene training, Ebola prevention, feeding children among other activities-all in the general protection of women and children.

In her speech the Minister, commended SANDF female soldier’s involvement in peace missions on the continent. She praised Lt Col Tisetso Sekgobela, the Officer Commanding of 7 SA Infantry Battalion, for her work in peace enforcement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a United Nations (UN) female battalion commander, as part of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), stating that at times, the action was very robust and she has done well.

“I am very proud that our women have proven themselves to be capable of commanding, to being capable of being peacekeepers, peace enforcers when the need arises and they still rise up to any deployment that is given to them and I think that is something all South Africans should be proud of”. In conclusion she stated that may the women of the SANDF continue to serve with diligence, pride and honour. This year marks the 63rd anniversary of the 1956 march.
The National Development Plan (NDP) views agriculture as critical to food security. It also speaks of the importance of basic services such as social security to support the development of human capital.

Recently, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, hosted the stakeholders’ visit and engagement in the Mpumalanga Province in Mbombela. The event was attended by the provincial business people, agricultural representatives and traditional leaders to foster a harmonious relationship and greater understanding of civil-military relations. The theme for this year is: “Let’s grow South Africa together as we celebrate 25 years of freedom.”

The Chief of the SANDF stakeholder engagement is part of Gen Shoke’s intent to bring the SANDF to the people and seeks to afford the National Defence Force the opportunity to inform, educate and convey its core business, roles and functions at home and abroad for social and economic prosperity.

The visit also aims to interrogate how the Small-, Medium- and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs) can benefit from the available business opportunities in the SANDF in an effort to promote much needed economic growth in our country as contemplated in the National Development Plan (NDP) and also to see local businesses and communities become part of the military supply chain in the form of supplying fresh produce to military
Stakeholders welcomed by a guard of honour at AFB Hoedspruit.

Addressing the invited guests during the gala dinner, Gen Shoke noted that input from stakeholders can play a central role in bridging the civil-military gap. He stressed the strategic importance of rural development as a means of improving the lives of the disadvantaged through Project Koba-Tlala as a driver of social change. He urged them to establish cooperatives and agri-hubs for productive economic activities that will subsequently lead to vibrant local economic development. He said agri-hubs would promote bulk buying. He added that the SANDF was an essential national asset and was like an insurance premium for the country.

Part of the stakeholders’ visit included visits to military installations at AFB Hoedspruit, 5 Special Forces Regiment and Macadamia Military bases for a first-hand experience and to witness SANDF capabilities. They received briefings on the mandate for the border operational deployment, Operation CORONA, SA Navy, Project Koba-Tlala, the SA Army’s Reserve force-driven agri-related skilling projects, as well as the DOD Logistics procurement processes.

The Director of Project Koba-Tlala, Brig Gen Gerhard Kamffer, highlighted the fact that the SANDF had reasons to be proud of its progress made to date through the project. He said that Project Koba-Tlala was endorsed by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula. He outlined that it was also a business opportunity of Defence and Military Veterans.

V Adm Mosiwa Hlongwane, the Chief of the SA Navy (centre), posing with some of the stakeholders.

R Adm (JG) Willem van Niekerk, the Director Maritime Plans, and R Adm (JG) Musa Nkomonde, the Inspector General of the SA Navy, gave a presentation about the SA Navy and its contribution to the oceans economy. Brig Gen Mbuyiselo Mongo, the Director Procurement, expressed concerns over inappropriate bases.

Stakeholders were briefed about the capabilities of 5 Special Forces Regiment.
procurement issues. He clarified areas of concern about procurement processes, defaulting suppliers and deviations from National Treasury prescripts and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA).

Speaking to SA Soldier, Chief Sandile Ngomane, the Chairperson of the House of Traditional Leaders in Mpumalanga, said that they appreciated the opportunity afforded to them to get a glimpse of the SANDF. He stated that they would support the SANDF in all its endeavours.

"Thanks to Gen Shoke for seeing it fit to come and interact with us. We are thankful for what our military stands for and we will be in a position to make a meaningful contribution to the Project Koba-Tlala initiative, which aims to pave the way for small-scale, communal, commercial and emerging farmers production support, and also aims to stimulate rural economic growth," he said.

Brig Gen Mafi Mgobozi, the Director Defence Corporate Communication, stated that, despite the budgetary constraints, the SANDF is working hard in pursuit of Government strategic goals.

LEFT: Col Martin Gopane, Officer Commanding of Joint Tactical HQ Mpumalanga, briefing guests about the border safety tasking and some of the cross-border crimes at the Lebombo border post between Mpumalanga and Mozambique.
South African woman peacekeeper deployed to Simulike, DRC

Article and photos by Capt Deon Fiellies, Public Information Officer RSA Battalion

South African Peacekeepers from RSA Battalion deployed under the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) is proud to announce that Lt Masego Bogatso from RSA Battalion became the first female Platoon Commander in the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to deploy to Simulike Company Operating Base (COB) located approximately 40 Kilometers to the North Eastern part of Oicha within the North Kivu province. The COB is a formation under the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) and comprise Platoons from RSA Battalion, Malawian Battalion and Tanzanian Battalion under the command of the FIB. A woman has never been deployed to Simulike COB since it was established.

While we incorporate the Gender parity strategy into our everyday work, it is important to highlight the important roles women play in the United Nations peace keeping operations and to acknowledge our military women in action. Previously, only men from the deploying battalion were deployed to Simulike COB but Lt Masego Bogatso decided to break that tradition by becoming the only female Platoon Commander of RSA Battalion to be deployed to Simulike COB.

This paved the way for other female soldiers in deployment, as well as for others yet to come. Lt Bogatso, as a Platoon Commander under command of the FIB, led her platoon as part of a combined company from FIB. Her task is to guard the Simulike Bridge, as well as to provide base security in order to counter the illegal Armed Groupings (IAG) from using the road and the bridge as logistical supply line for their sustainment, which is part of the MONUSCO mandate under FIB.

Before, the base was attacked by those suspected IAGs on different occasions, but under these circumstances, Lt Bogatso still demonstrated professionalism, good command and control of the platoons deployed to Simulike and has experienced no problems to successfully join the forces to operate as one in case of an attack on the base.

The FIB Commander, Brig Gen Njabulo Dube, visited the COB to see the way in which Lt Bogatso operated and was amazed at how she had adapted and was in control, ready for any action. When asked about her experience in Simulike, she said: “Simulike is a mission inside the mission area, which is in the middle of the jungle and for me it is just my normal task as a Platoon Commander. Simulike needs one who must always be vigilant and ready for anything that can happen and one never knows when to expect visitors (Illegal Armed Groupings),” and her advice to other females that will be deploying to Simulike COB: “Stay calm and utilize everything that was taught to you during your training and apply what’s necessary. Take Simulike as your normal task and be a soldier before being a female.”
SA Army firm in its pursuit of its Constitutional mandate

Despite the budget constraints and having to deal with ageing equipment and infrastructure that can no longer handle the pressure to which they are subjected, the

RIGHT: Members of the National Ceremonial Guard welcoming the Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam.

The Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, addresses representatives of the media.

Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, affirmed the SA Army’s deepest commitment to achieving the full spectrum of its mandate in ensuring the successful attainment of its objectives. Lt Gen Yam made this commitment during the recently held media breakfast at the SA Army College in Thaba Tshwane.

While acknowledging the sterling work that members of the SA Army have done since the advent of democracy, the Chief of the SA Army mentioned the challenges and tasks that lay ahead for the SA Army. He pointed out that the SA Army needed to continue executing its Constitutional requirements, namely to defend and protect South Africa, to safeguard the borders and infrastructure, to promote peace and security in Africa and to perform developmental and other tasks assigned to them.

Speaking about the deployment of the SANDF to the Cape Flats, he said this was done to support the Medium-Term Strategic Framework Outcome 3: “All people in South Africa are and feel safe.”

Lt Gen Yam said the Constitutional Imperative imposed on the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) under Chapter 3, Section 201(2), the obligation to employ the Defence in cooperation with the SA Police Service (SAPS) in terms of law and

Maj Gen Tembelani Xundu, the Chief Army Corporate Services, explaining the aim of the Media briefing.
Lt Gen Yam took the opportunity to inform members of the media about some of the commendable deeds of the SA Army. Recently, the SA Army Engineer Formation has been called upon to intervene to contain the raw sewerage spills into the Vaal River System through repairs of sewage infrastructure in the Vaal River Project. Engineers are also embarking on numerous projects in collaboration with other state departments as part of humanitarian relief. So far, they have completed building three vehicle bridges and seven pedestrian bridges in the Eastern Cape and it is envisaged that five more bridges will be built in the financial year 2019/20.

Furthermore, Lt Gen Yam indicated that South Africa remained a significant contributor to peacekeeping operations on the continent and continued to have a significant presence in the DRC through MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB).

He said the South African Battalion in the FIB was commanded by a female, Lt Col Tiisetso Sekgobela, who had led our soldiers successfully through a number of battles. Additionally, he said for the first time in the Peace Intervention mission, the SA Army had deployed the SA Army Artillery capability to provide indirect fire support to our foot soldiers during offensive and defensive operations.”

He also indicated that the deployment of the SA Army Specialised Infantry Capability (SAASIC) in border safeguarding has yielded positive results for the SANDF. Lt Gen Yam said: “The deployment of this capability in a border safeguarding role have managed to successfully reduce the levels of stock and vehicle theft, drug smuggling and illegal border crossing along the RSA international border. The successful application of this capability has ensured revenue for the RSA in curbing all the illegal activities taking place along the borders, especially where mobility is restricted since horses, dogs, motorcycles and personnel can negotiate very difficult terrain, which is part of the border areas with neighbouring countries.”

In addition, he said Project KOBA TLALA continued to become a role player in a strategic alliance for the economic growth and sustainable development of SMMEs. Through this project, a platform was created for various sector programmes to develop into sustainable businesses. He said 730 members from the Reserves had been reskilled in a variety of skills to enable their utilisation in their local communities.

He mentioned that the understanding of the role of the Defence Force both during peace- and wartime. He said: “To attest to that, we have received an invitation to participate in the Mpumalanga Show which was held at the Mbombela Stadium recently.”

He also acknowledged and commended the women from the SA Army who responded to the call of donating items of clothing to the people of Mozambique after the devastating Cyclone Idai wreaked havoc in that part of the country. Also the units around KwaZulu-Natal that gave a helping hand during the disaster in that province.

Lastly, he thanked his soldiers for their commitment to the SA Army. He said: “We should be enormously proud of the achievements and innovation of our people across a wide range of endeavours. To name just a few: the success of Operation CORONA, peacekeeping operations in the DRC and the professionalisation of the SA Army. We are achieving this and so much more while continuing to meet a range of real time commitments, including current operations, contingency forces, the defence cooperation programmes, the SA Army’s assistance to aboriginal communities and defence aid to the communities.”
SANDF awards long service medals to inspire morale

By S Sgt Itumeleng Makhubela
Photos by Cpl Jonathan Mogano

With a career spanning 32 years of service in the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), WO1 Seshego Moropana says his record does not bear any charges. He was speaking at the Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit Medal Parade after he was conferred a 30 years’ service medal along with other recipients.

He said: “I received the Bar 30-year service medal and I am proud. I was initially Infantry and change my corps to Signal Core and that is when I saw a lot of progress in terms of my career. To serve in the SANDF requires discipline, dedication and commitment”.

He started his basic military training at Lenz 21 Battalion in July 1987 and then was transferred to 116 Battalion in Musina in 1989. Among his other appointments, he also worked as a Military Security Officer before he came back to Musina for a WO Class 2 promotion. WO1 Moropana is currently a Static Warrant Officer in Limpopo Signal Unit.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang said: “A soldier is an extraordinary being who answers the nation’s call.”

Every medal tells a story and it’s a narrative of dedication and sacrifice that reflect the bearer’s history of loyalty, merit and gallantry.

WO1 Seshego Moropana, a recipient of the 30 years’ service medal believes that to serve in the SA National Defence Force requires discipline and commitment.
Officiating at the medal parade, the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Zimpande Msimang, said: “The SANDF is well aware that exceptional achievement does not come without sustained effort and much sacrifices by both the members and families.” He said the SANDF uses occasions such as this parade to show its appreciation of not only the achievement of the recipients, but also the loyal support given to them by their families.

Lt Gen Msimang said: “I am honoured to officiate at this auspicious occasion on behalf of the chief of the SANDF. It is with considerable pleasure that I congratulate the recipients and also convey to you the regards of the Chief of the SANDF. These medals denote the recognition by the State to have outstanding achievement, bravery and loyal service by individuals.”

He said military commanders have realised that the recognition of meritorious service or deeds of bravery by way of conferring medals and awards often inspires further such achievement. SANDF members are highly regarded and respected after what they have been able to demonstrate since the dawn of democracy. They have played a meaningful role in bringing about peace and stability on the continent in countries such as Burundi and the DRC.

“These men and women over the years have served this organisation with dignity, discipline, professionalism and patriotism. Our country requires men and women whose motivation for serving is selfless and not self-serving. A soldier is an extraordinary being who answers the nation’s call which is service and country. Men and women in uniform symbolise discipline and patriotic service to our nation. We salute the members who are here with us today to receive the medals and those who have laid down their lives in service of the country. We shall remember them as they have made an indelible mark on the environment of peace support and peace enforcement operations,” he said.

Lt Gen Msimang said the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa also stated that the SANDF must be structured and managed as a disciplined force. He was convinced that peers and subordinates would be encouraged to walk their path as they themselves would be recognised for their diligence, discipline and patriotism.

Another long serving patriot is WO1 Sharon Netshidzivhe, who is based at the ASB Limpopo Procurement Section. She joined the SANDF in 1996 from a non-statutory force after integration in Wallmanstal and had received a 30 years’ medal. She said: “As a female soldier I had to work hard and not undermine myself. I am very proud and grateful and I would like to thank the SANDF for recognising our service and also thank my family for supporting me and my work throughout my career.”
Namibian Defence Force benchmarks with SANDF human resources policies

The Namibian Defence Force led by Brig Gen Aktofel-Ndengu Nambahu, the Chief of Staff Human Resources, recently completed a day tour of the Chief Human Resources office where they had been ushered in by Maj Gen Katoki Mothlabane, Chief Director Human Resource Management. The visit, which was aimed at benchmarking against best practices and policies relating to human resources in the SANDF, was flagged off with a word of welcome by the Chief Human Resources, Lt Gen Norman Yengeni.

Brig Gen Nambahu hailed the visit as being important to explore the best HR policies, as well as to share experiences that influence bilateral interoperability while enhancing their ability to work and interact better with the SANDF.

Lt Gen Yengeni said: “We love sharing our experiences with our neighbours. That’s how we strengthen the military. I hope you will enjoy your stay with us and that you will learn as much as you can because our aim is always to share what we learn with others.”

The visit culminated in a briefing session at Defence Headquarters (Lekgotla Boardroom), where the focus areas of benchmarking were on recruitment, posting and job rotation, career management and addressing of skills gaps. Other areas of interest were retention and succession strategy, retirement, functions of the SANDF Service Commission and the mandate of the Military Police.

The Namibian Defence Force will use the gathered information as a guideline to improve their Human Resource policy.
Handing over of the remains of the South African peacekeeper

Article and photos by Sgt Nkosinathi Nkosi

Recently, the Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft carrying the body of Cpl Beon Coetzee, who died after a short illness during the deployment as part of the United Nation Force Intervention Brigade in Bunia in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, touched down at the Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria.

Among those who were there to hand the remains of Cpl Coetzee over to his family was the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, who offered her sincere condolences to the family and further mentioned that Cpl Coetzee did not only belong to the Coetzee family but to the Country and the entire Defence Force Family. Therefore,
Maj Gen Tersia Jacobs – a woman who has mastered the art of Grace

It is a cold winter’s morning. The General’s enclosure at the South African Air Force Headquarters is super quiet as I walk a good mile or two to the last office just before the registry. My appointment is in just a few minutes’ time and I can hear the General concluding her first meeting just before roll call. Maj Gen Tersia Jacobs remains the calm and ever so focused professional that she is.

When the Ad Astra Magazine intern (Molebogeng Mogajane) and I finally reached for her warm hugs, the General turned to her and gave her tips on how to maximise her time in the Department of Defence and told her that she should remain patriotic while learning as much as possible in her future professional endeavours.

Gen Jacobs does not look anything like being born on 21 December 1959 - 60 years doesn’t even begin to show on her face. Wearing the perfectly fitting working dress of the South African Air Force, the most enigmatically powerful perfume and very little make-up, this Commander has the same quality of looks that she had when I first met her in 2008 when she was Director Corporate Staff Services.

The General’s demeanour alone proves what we’ve always been told about women but often undervalue – that no matter the external conditions that surround us, we have an uncanny ability to leverage them in order to deliver our best in the moment of opportunity.

While it may be easy to attribute Gen Jacobs’ response to being a uniformed 2 Star-General lady, who is accustomed to having the world’s eyes on her as Chief Air Staff Operations (CAS OPS), the interaction with her throughout the interview would prove otherwise.

Throughout the initial strategic meetings, dousing fires when necessary, operations and high-level logistical arrangements, the General’s graceful way had been consistent. Fittingly, her name “Tersia”, which means “sensitive, affectionate and cooperative”, lends itself so well to the energy she infuses in every environment – one who is spiritually aware and prone to self-sacrifice, one who can keep secrets and is a good diplomat. Her role as a mother and wife extends to all the environments she finds herself in.

In the 1700s the German poet, philosopher, physician, historian and playwright, Friedrich Schiller, said, “Grace is the beauty of form under the influence of freedom”. If there is one lady commander who has brought those words back to life centuries later, it’s this first, soon-to-retire leader, mentor, result-driven and never-too-old-to-learn SAAF lady to serve as CAS Log, Maj Gen Tersia Jacobs.

“Even during the harsh life’s experiences, I was always composed, content against all odds. I remain firm without pulling rank. I laugh like I’ve never been hurt and I always try to come from a place of compassion.

“Before I joined the SAAF, my father had taken me to a Military Band concert and as they say, the rest is history, the military bug had bitten me.” Gen Jacobs finds herself at a time in her life and career where she can freely pursue mentoring her juniors while still being a mother and wife, without having to place the dreams of her family before her own.

“A rare freedom,” she says. “A true freedom. A blessed freedom. A grace inducing freedom carried perfectly by myself. A freedom which is still sought by so many women 63 years after the march of ’56, which saw 20 000 women marching to the Union Buildings to petition against the country’s pass laws – a women-led march for the benefit of all, something women are accustomed to doing because getting things done is our modus operandi,” she mentioned.

Getting things done with a fine sense of grace is a rare quality. When asked about her natural sense of grace, she said, “I believe it’s from my upbringing. I was raised to be very respectful and considerate of others...that no man or woman is an island. I am no less or more important than the next person. I therefore am always conscious of this notion, which I guess, presents itself as grace.”

Gen Jacobs has had an impressive career so far with
memorable moments that she has enjoyed such as rising through the ranks and working with different characters who have helped her hone her own.

A character she now mostly resonates with is that of her granddaughter, Alexa. “Her bright mind keeps mine alive. She is inquisitive and people say she looks like me, which is a bonus. I love her to bits and I can’t wait to enjoy more time with her after my retirement.”

While talking about her looming retirement, the General hastens to indicate that she loves listening to imperfect people. She further elaborated: “I love listening attentively to people’s life stories, what makes them tick.

As a country struggling with many social ills, what makes people wake up in the mornings and still choose to serve intentionally, have the courage to hustle even under this economic climate and still don’t put themselves down. Those stories of victory speak to me. I have loved exploring the minds of people and seeing that sometimes not taking sides is just the best thing one can do.”

She has mastered these roles at the tail-end of years of preparation and a consistent professional approach. CAS Log is more than justified in using the hashtag #TheMbobodimUniform on her open talk platforms that she is usually invited to. She speaks passionately about women empowerment and gender equality in the workplace without any qualms having worked with gender mainstreaming powerhouses like Gen Ntsiki Memela-Motumi, Maj Gen Ansu Fakir and Brig Gen Yoliswa Mavumbe-Malgas.

Regarding the importance of education in one’s chosen profession, the General states, “It’s no different from any other field or profession.

One’s formal education and training equips one with skills that one can apply in the field, so to speak. Education is a necessary foundation that arms one with tools to use beyond the book and the classroom.

The balance is using those formal skills to prepare for your implementation stage and inform your choices as an ethical leader. However, never forget to have a teachable spirit and use your instincts to guide your leadership style.

Besides my extensive military training and experience in the strategic arena as a deciding factor in being entrusted with more responsibility as a Major General, I also do have a reputation in the industry, which I believe is influenced by my training, for being a very professional and dedicated soldier. For me, soldiering is not only my passion and calling, it’s a profession I take very seriously.”

Indeed, she does take it seriously, especially as a service that she sums up as being an act of courage. In an age where a considerable Instagram following can bypass the work involved in learning the craft, The General’s take on this site’s insight into the perception of the military profession, “The era of social media and influence on culture cannot be ignored, be it in SA or in the global setting.

My fear, however, is that we’re breeding a generation of youngsters who don’t believe that education is a necessary step in any career one chooses, including the military.

We’ve already seen that the status quo has led to the devaluing of serving as a profession, which I truly believe is connected to the struggle of South African youth having recognisable rights that protect them as professionals.”

True to the nature of a seasoned professional whose years behind her grant her the right to carry such sound perspective, this is also true about the fact that she is a professional woman in uniform.

In opening up about her career as a woman, she opens up about what being a woman means to her. She said: “When I think of the essence of being a woman, I’m always reminded of the Setswana proverb: ‘Mosadi o tshwara thipa ka bogaleng.’ Loosely translated, it means that: ‘a woman always holds the knife by its sharp end.’

For me it captures the essence of what it means to me to be a woman. A nurturer, protector of those around her but has the strength to hold and survive the sharp edges of life’s challenges. While my womanhood and femininity make me part of the ‘fairer sex’, I’ve never allowed it to mean I cannot measure up to any man.”

Indeed, she has measured up to her counterparts – part of which involves her mothering a son. In an approach which focuses on equality, she quite emphatically says, “I am raising many human beings; young and matured, leaders of tomorrow.

My responsibility is to make sure they have the same value system regardless of their gender. Responsibilities are not gender-specific. Chores are not gender-specific. When it’s time for us to clean our SAAB Bases, we do it together. When it’s time to work in the garden or wash the dishes or cook, it’s a joint effort.

There are no boy’s or girl’s responsibilities in my mind. Nor are there boy’s or girl’s paths in the military. I’ve been very conscientious about this as a leader.”

This extends to the attention she pays towards being a woman and raising a woman-to-be through her granddaughter in a world that is yet to become a world where equality is the order of the day across all environments.

Gen Jacobs’ response to this was: “I have the responsibility to nurture and mould a young girl who can make an impact on their chosen path. A woman who will never be made to believe that her womanhood and choices as a woman are a limitation to her dreams, whatever they may be. I need to be exemplary in my choices and my achievements, I need to be the woman I would like her to be one day because ultimately, how can you be what you cannot see?”

Indeed, having a vision for oneself, even be it for the benefit of another, begins with having it for that very self. In asking whether Gen Jacobs is living as the woman whom she sees in her dreams, her response was at the very least, inspiring.

“It is exactly who I dreamed to be and more,” she says. She furthermore continued to say: “My mentees recently asked me how it feels when I look at my life today and think of all the things I wished for and didn’t have growing up and now have.

I told them that I am grateful to God. We all have dreams when we are young and not all of us have the fortune to realise those dreams. I truly have been granted that privilege and blessing.”

The Major General has a graceful way that makes her deep sense of gratitude easily felt. True to hope for all things positive and enriching in her life, career and for the lives of her loved ones, the Ad Astra Magazine certainly shares that hope and more than hoping, know with unquestioning faith that this soon-to-retire General, is an ever evolving well of wonder whose future is a gift not only for the local industry, but most certainly for international fronts as well.
There is a giant asleep within everyone. When the giant awakens, miracles happen. It is indeed true that change begins with the first one who is ready to make it happen. Nothing great has ever been achieved except by those who dare believe that something inside them is superior to circumstances surrounding them.

SA Soldier set off to meet Cpl Olgah Raditsabeng (28), who works as a Command Post Assistant at Air Force Base (AFB) Swartkop. She is known for her emphasis on social impact and always had a thing for health and social well-being. She is vibrant, versatile and steadfast in her pursuit to give back to the community.

Cpl Raditsabeng was born in the Ikageng Township, Potchefstroom (North West). After matriculating in 2008, she proceeded to the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in 2009 where she completed her National Diploma in Information Technology in 2011. Being an activist at heart, she has significant experience in community service as she volunteered at Families South Africa (FAMSA) as a senior counsellor at orphanages in her home town.

She joined the SA Air Force in 2012 under the Military Skills Development System (MSDS). She was enrolled at the Military Academy from 2015 to 2017, studying for her Bachelor of Military Science in Organisational Resource Management. She is currently studying towards her Honours Degree in Military Management.

The young and dynamic Cpl Raditsabeng could identify with the late statesman, Dr Capt Moesfika Moses and Cpl Olgah Raditsabeng (right) packing sanitary towels to be donated to female learners at various schools. (Photo supplied by Cpl Olgah Raditsabeng)
Nelson Mandela, when he said: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.”

I look at this phenomenal rising star as she talks, and during our engagement, I get the impression that she is a pioneer inspiring confidence and willing to change the status quo. She reminds us of the crucial responsibility that we have to create an environment in which young people can flourish. She firmly believes in leading by example and stated that it is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. She adds: “As young people we often ask ourselves, who am I to be a rising star, brilliant, talented and actually, who are we not to be?”

One of the concerns she noted was seeing young people involved in social ills, for example, the high number of teenage pregnancies and HIV. In the context of our stagnant economy, rising poverty, the youth unemployment rate, which is worryingly high, she is asked what she thinks needs to be done to address these issues. She highlighted some of the challenges faced by the youth and mentioned that unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and unplanned pregnancy could only be solved through the collective efforts from across a broad spectrum of sectors in society such as non-governmental organisations, corporations, industries and Government. In doing so, it will be ushering in a brighter tomorrow for youngsters and continue to inspire a national discourse of improving livelihoods.

What do you think will be a sustainable solution to solve this problem? She said: “Occupational opportunities should be increased to deliver the technical and vocational skills our country needs. Some of the problems arising from joblessness, including crime and substance abuse, could be alleviated. The youth needs to follow scarce skills career paths and other disciplines such as agriculture. Youth resilience is associated with innovation”.

She further stated that through her interaction with the young people, she had realised that they think that finding a job is essential, forgetting that there are opportunities for entrepreneurship, which can afford them opportunities to be self-employed, starting businesses to create jobs for themselves and others.

When asked to describe what is most fulfilling to her, she said that there was nothing as satisfying as knowing that you have helped somebody and you have given them hope. “Due to the high levels of poverty experienced in a large number of communities, I’m doing it for the underprivileged, orphans, the neglected, those with fewer opportunities, lack of resources and facilities,” she said.

Having headed the Military Academy Masiza Project, her list of accolades is quite long and impressive. She also does motivational talks, donates books and distributes sanitary towels to female learners at various school to help ease their difficult school journey or reduce the risk of missing school due to being unable to manage their natural, biological processes.

She is also involved in initiatives that give learners and unemployed youth the opportunity to be trained in computer literacy, accessing the internet and printing resources to provide them with the opportunity to learn how to fight poverty by searching online for job opportunities. “Changing the lives of the disadvantaged, orphans, homeless, vulnerable, women and children, elderly and disabled is a cause worth pursuing,” she asserts.

Looking into the future, to extend the reach and make a long-lasting contribution, she hopes to conduct more outreach drives in partnership with the DOD to make the largest impact that will have far-reaching effects.

Aiming high and dreaming big, Cpl Raditsabeng has her sights firmly set on obtaining her Honours Degree. From there she wants to obtain a Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree.

Cpl Olga Raditsabeng is a game changer, creating reading awareness and stimulating the learning interest in young children. (Photo supplied by Cpl Olga Raditsabeng)
The Chief of the SA National Defence Force, Gen Solly Shoke, has urged the Defence Legal Services Division to look into protocols and arms regulations into which the country has entered, particularly those that have implications for managing the Defence Force.

General Shoke was speaking at the Division’s Academic Week, which is an event that provides a platform for legal practitioners in the SANDF to engage in academic discourse. He said the military was the last line of defence and was mandated by the Constitution to safeguard the sovereignty of the country. He was hopeful that the members would provide much needed advice to the principals.

The Chief of the SANDF said: “I like to start by saying that there are some international protocols that we have entered into as a country, which I think warrant our reconsideration since it is not about who we please but our interest as a nation.”

“We also need to look at the protocols contained in the National Convention Arms Control Committee (NCACC), which propose that we have to disclose to whom we are selling armament from our defence industry. We know South Africa is one of the best and we compete with the best in the...
world. Many people like the equipment we produce. Other people to whom we supply do not like these protocols and suggest we should disclose the details of the purchase and the type of weaponry acquired”.

General Shoke cautioned that the problem was that if their adversaries knew the type of arsenal they had, they could develop a counter to that effect. He said they were obliged to follow international protocols on proliferation and trade of arms but should ask whether it served the country’s interest.

The Chief of the SANDF said that this might have a negative impact on the defence industry and consequently hurt the economy. Gen Shoke said he was concerned about the fact that when some of the domestic laws and regulations were being developed, the military was not taken into consideration.

General Shoke said: “At the end of the day, we find ourselves bound by certain laws that make it difficult to run the organisation, for instance, the Firearm Control Act. We know that the shooting of weapons is a core function of a military organisation. However, we find ourselves in a situation in which we have to be certified by a particular firearms training academy. We should ask ourselves where the military was when these regulations were made.

“Another problem is that when we have to move weapons to a mission area, we are required to have an export permit. Conversely, we are not exporting goods, but moving arms to perform a mission, yet we just have to comply because these are set regulations.”

General Shoke also indicated that the management of the Air Traffic National Services (ATNS) poses a challenge. He questioned the fact that commercial airports have control of the airspace instead of the SA Air Force. He said that this could compromise the security of the country to a great extent.

The Chief of the SANDF indicated to the Division that they were supporting the instrument of the State that had been entrusted with the security of the country and therefore, they must ensure that the SANDF was able to fulfil its mandate with proper legislation.

The Adjutant General of the SANDF, Maj Gen Mnisi, said members of the Division must constantly engage and participate in academic discourse to improve the Legal Division and address concerns raised by the Chief of the SANDF. He said the Division played a critical role in the Defence Force and he believed that they needed such a discourse from time to time to review their laws.

Maj Gen Mnisi said: “We are here in the Academic Week to think critically as legal practitioners and we cannot refer to books that were written in the 1960s as they might be outdated. We will develop a centre of excellence in the Legal Division for research and development.”

Front Row, Fltr: Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Gen Solly Shoke, Adjutant General of the SANDF, Maj Gen (Dr) Eric Mnisi, Director Administration of Military Justice, Brig Gen Nico du Preez, Director Legal Services, Brig Gen Georgina May, Director Military Judges, Brig Gen Paula Raseroka, and Director Military Prosecutions, Brig Gen Sunitha Solomon, with attendees of the Legal Division Academic Week.
It takes a village to raise a child – Young Falcons camp 2019

The Young Falcons Winter Aviation Awareness camp 2019 took place at the Siyamukela High School, Madadeni in Newcastle, KwaZulu-Natal recently. The learners targeted are from different backgrounds and various schools around the country in Grades 10, 11 and 12. The programme is aimed at introducing learners to the theory of drill, recognition of aircraft, introduction of patriotism, acquiring an interest in mathematics and physical sciences, discipline and the military culture.

The camp is the brainchild of the SA Air Force in partnership with various stakeholders, including the Department of Education KwaZulu-Natal, the Department of Education, Armaments Corporation of South Africa SOC Ltd (ARMSCOR), SAAB GrinTek Defence, SA Civil Aviation Authority, SANLAM and Africa Aerospace Defence to relay the life skills and military knowledge to the Young Falcons.

In welcoming the participants, Col August Lekalakala, SA Air Force Director of Reserves, introduced the SA Air Force team to the learners. He said: “Being here in its own is a privilege. You being here clearly shows your interest in the SA Air Force”. Interacting with the learners, the SA Air Force members exposed them to the different roles and careers in the SA Air Force. The learners’ attitude and vibrancy towards the team was overwhelming as they warmed to the uniform.

Ms Mary-Rose Gwala, the principal of the Siyamukela High School, expressed her gratitude to the SA Air Force for the wonderful work they have done thus far with regard to the planning and execution of the camp. Ms Gwala said: “This is the first time a Young Falcons camp has been held in KwaZulu-Natal, and we are thankful for such an opportunity. We hope the learners can be absorbed into the blue uniform one day”.

In her welcoming address, Maj Gen Portia More, Chief Air Force Corporate Staff, assured the learners that they were in safe hands for the duration of the winter camp. He told the learners that depending on their attitude, this camp should be a life-changing experience as it will assist them to not only better their results, but also to instil discipline and aviation awareness that could open doors for them in the future.
The SA Air Force contributed facilitators who specialise in engineering, mathematics, Air Force history, radio telephony, map reading and aircraft identification. Lt Vusimuzi Radasi from AFB Waterkloof, 41 Squadron facilitated the Air Force classes and instilled a different approach in the learners. When speaking to Lt Radasi about the camp and the results of the learners, he said: “It is the first time that I do the Young Falcons camp and honestly I am really impressed with the number of children who took part in this initiative. The learners get to see the essence of maths, science and geography, as well as examples of its practical application in the world.”

During the camp the SA Air Force hosted an exhibition day for the learners at the Meridian High School. Stakeholders engaged with the learners and spark their interest in aviation. The exhibitions also included the simulator, an experience extremely enjoyed by the learners. The Directorate Human Resource Recruitment team explained the requirements for joining the SA Air Force. The best exhibition asset that the learners were keen to touch and feel was the Augusta A109 from AFB Durban, and the interaction with the pilot, Maj Kenneth Nthuli.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Fabian Msimang, also interacted with learners during the open day and taught them the mechanics of flight. He also touched base on what the Air Force facilitators had done within a week’s time. Military standard has it that at the end of a course, a prestige night and parade take place in honour of the members who have participated in the course.

The Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen Fabian Msimang interacting with learners.

The following day SA Air Force hosted the passing out parade at the Majuba Stadium, where the families of the learners showed up in numbers. The learners’ triumph showed to the guests that the two weeks on the camp had been of great pleasure. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, who was the main functionary for the parade, smiled as she saw them walk by.

The Defence Minister emphasised the significance of the month of June and how it was perfect timing for the camp. She said: “These camps build the new South Africa; our future pilots, Ministers and a President stand before me. As you drill in columns, salute with pride, dignity and the devotion that you gained. We look forward to the upcoming camp in September”.  

Sgt Dumisani Gasela teaching the Young Falcons how to drill.
A total of 14 soldiers of Army Support Base Mpumalanga attended a Basic Veld Fire Training Course over the period 5 to 8 August 2019 at the Kishugu Fire Training Centre. All the members were successful and adhered to all the requirements to pass this course. The unit now has 14 qualified fire fighters, especially with regards to the prevention and fighting of “veld” fires.

During the prize-giving ceremony, the Officer Commanding of Army Support Base Mpumalanga, Cpl Phindile Shitlhabana (best Student in Practical Module), Rifleman Mshefane Soko (Best Student in Theoretical Module) and Corporal Andisiwe Mali (Best Overall Student).

Lieutenant Colonel Coen van Heerden, addressed the students. He expressed his gratitude towards Kishugu and congratulated the members with this achievement, which is not only to the advantage of the unit, but also the broader community. He once again emphasized the importance of using learning opportunities and empowerment of members.

The three outstanding student were Cpl Andisiwe Mali (Best Overall Student), Cpl Phindile Shitlhabana (Best Student in Practical Module) and Rfn Mshefane Soko (Best Student in Theoretical Module).

Students busy with a practical exercise.
Capt Kelebogile Letanke has been working in the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) Ceremonial office as the SO3 SAMHS Ceremonial since May 2014 to date. Capt Letanke said that she was the only female junior officer surrounded by well-experienced officers and warrant officers, who knew she called them “Pa”, not forgetting their ranks. She said that it was a sign of her respect for them. She respects and admires them for their dedication, determination and hard work in making sure that all ceremonial events are executed professionally.

In the absence of the SO1 SAMHS Ceremonial, the member manages all day-to-day tasks of the Ceremonial Office diligently and professionally without any problem during and after hours. She is the key role player in the full functioning of the Ceremonial Office and a great asset. She shows promise of growth and accepts guidance and mentorship when offered. The member’s hard work was recognised and awarded with a certificate for excellent performance.

As a junior officer, she has also managed to brief the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Services and Divisional Chiefs with the utmost diligence and professionalism on several occasions at the Pretoria Military Sports Club during the SANDF Women’s Day Parade.

Most importantly, she upholds the tradition of officership by exercising the highest standard of integrity, loyalty, obedience and allegiance, portraying a good example of an officer. She was the Door opener for the President of the Republic of South Africa during the 2019 Inauguration and executed the task exceptionally well.

She had this to say about her career in the SANDF: “I have come across many obstacles in my life and career but never have I told myself to give up, instead I learn from the situation and toughen up. I am a God-fearing woman, hard worker and outspoken person. I have been given many opportunities in my career and I am very honoured and grateful. I would like to urge my age group, especially women, to remember that the sky is the limit and nothing is impossible, it is all in the mind.”

She further said: “Humble yourself at all times and most importantly, we must not lose ourselves and our dignity. Whenever the door is opened for you, strive to uplift one another and respect everyone, rank or no rank while climbing that ladder. Behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women, who have her back.”

We are encouraging more women to take part in ceremonial activities at large, and not to perceive it as a male-dominated environment.
Kimberley Gunners take delivery of the upgraded 35 mm Mark 7 System

The SA Army Air Defence Artillery Formation is the proud recipient of the Semi-integrated Gun Fire Units capability that was brought to bear by Project PROTECTOR, which forms part of the rejuvenation of the Landward Capability and modernising the Ground Based Air Defence Systems for the SA Army.

Project PROTECTOR aimed to establish a better Close-In-Weapons (Gun System) and layered protection for the Joint Air Defence function and has now delivered the upgraded 35 mm MK 7/5A twin-barreled anti-aircraft guns with the Gun Fire Control Systems as one of its key capabilities for the country's Landward Forces.

Handing this capability over to the SA Army Air Defence Artillery Formation in Diskobolos, Kimberley recently, Brig Gen Sydwell Mketo from Defence Matériel Division highlighted that what they were entrusting to the SA Army were deliverables of Project PROTECTOR - Step 1 of the Ground Based Air Defence System.

Brig Gen Mketo mentioned that the Defence Matériel Division (DMD) have vastly improved on the performance of the projects and established better working relationships with all key stakeholders within the Acquisition environment (Arms of Service, Armscor and Industry).

He stated that DMD ensures that projects are allocated the necessary resources, to deliver according to their mandates and satisfy the requirements of the Department of Defence (DOD).

“The objective set can only be achieved when different role-players in the Public sector work together as a team. The DMD’s effort of providing excellent acquisition to the DOD has been affected by numerous National Budget Cuts over the previous years,” Brig Gen Mketo lamented.

Representing the Chief of the SA Army during the handover ceremony, Chief Director Army Corporate Services, Maj Gen Tembelani Xundu, received the capability with great enthusiasm.

Maj Gen Xundu commended the SA Army Air Defence Artillery Formation (Acquisition Strategy) for being current, relevant and aligned with SA Army Vision 2045 and Future SA Army Strategy.

“The SA Army will address the shift from essentially analog army systems and platforms to systems concomitant with the digital landward battlespace.” Maj Gen Xundu asserted while also instructing the SA Army Air Defence Artillery Formation to utilise the delivered capability to its full purpose and intents.

Maj Gen Xundu mentioned that the SA Army finds itself under serious financial constraints where budget cuts are the order of the day but the service is still expected to perform under those difficult conditions. He instructed Director Army Products System Management to maintain the system for its lifetime ahead.

Project PROTECTOR started off with the registration of a Required Operational Capability (ROC) to address the capability gap in the Air Defence Artillery (ADA) in terms of a New Gun Fire Control System.

Project PROTECTOR conducted Preliminary Operational Tests and Evaluation in September 2016, as a Level 5 system and thereafter in October 2018 the Final Operational Test and Evaluation was successfully completed by the end user with few observations and recommendations in the POSTEDFIT environment to be addressed during the Operational Phase.

The SA Army Air Defence Gunners are proud to receive this capability at the time when they are expected to play a role in internal and external operations. With the Mobile Air Defence System (MobADS), the Department of Defence has a Competitive Advantage in Africa, especially during Peace Support Operations.
Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Sazi Veldtman accorded full Military honours

Scores of mourners gathered recently in a small village of Mbenge, Cala in the Eastern Cape to pay their last respect to a man whom many describe as a selfless giant. Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Sazi Veldtman who passed away in September 2019 was a man who devoted more of his time to effect positive change to his community of Mbenge. This was according to many community members who braced the humid dusty weather to come bury one of their own.

Prior to his retirement in 2015 Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman served in the SA Army as Chief Army Corporate Staff overseeing more than eight directorates. Among those present to pay their last respect was Chief of the SA Army, Lt Gen Lindile Yam, who told mourners he has lost a close friend in Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman. The two first met back in 1994 during the integration process of forces into the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

Lt Gen Yam further stated how resourceful and acute Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman was. He said: “Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman always had a plan and Veldtman always won on his plan.”

Tributes honouring Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman came from both family and the community at large. Overwhelmed with grief they all expressed a great sense of loss. “We have suffered a great deal of loss the people of Mbenge. Our children when at school can relieve themselves with dignity inside flushing toilets all made possible by Gen Veldtman” said one member who spoke on behalf of Mbenge community.

Ms Phumela Veldtman who spoke on behalf of Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman children spoke fondly of her father as a loving father and grandfather. She said her father was a wonderful man, very loving and caring to all his children and to his nephews and nieces he was the cool uncle. She said people would approach her father about absolutely anything and he would listen and avail himself to assist.

Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman was born on 05 March 1957 at Cala in the Eastern Cape. He then moved to Nyanga East, Cape Town where he did his schooling. He served seven years in Robben Island as a political prisoner and was released in 1991. He was integrated into the SANDF in 1994 with a rank of a Lt Col. He retired in December 2015. Subsequent to his retirement he completed his doctorate in Public Administration from the University of South Africa, qualified as a Director from Institute of Directors and took up several community development initiatives in his village of Mbenge.

Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman received a fitting send-off for a man widely seen as a leader who spent most part of his life acquiring knowledge and serving others.

As the military funeral drew to a close the SANDF pall bearers took the casket on a 500 meters dusty uphill road to his final resting place where the last part of the funeral ceremony was to be conducted. Maj Gen (Ret) Veldtman is survived by his wife Ms Nolutho Veldtman, five children and five grandchildren.
General social media guidelines to observe for DOD employees to stay on the safe side

By S Sgt Lebogang Tlhaole

The use of social media tools around the world has been gaining acceptance in all spheres of government. This provides an opportunity for two-way communication between government and citizens, partners and stakeholders thereby increasing the frequency and speed of engagement. At the same time social media presents new challenges to governments who must address resulting citizen expectations and the differences in communication culture while navigating the blurry line between official and personal use.

In line with the Government’s social media policy, the Department of Defence (DOD) published its social media guidelines on 4 July 2019, viz C SANDF INSTRUCTION 27/19: PRINCIPLES FOR INDIVIDUALS ENGAGING IN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS IN THEIR PRIVATE (UNOFFICIAL) CAPACITY. The stated purpose of these guidelines is to create awareness across the DOD about the opportunities presented in using social media as part of DOD communications.

The guidelines also served as a reference point for all DOD employees on how to manage risks associated with the use of this technology. The document also established social media principles for DOD employees, setting out how to disseminate official DOD information. Most importantly, rules of conduct were formulated for employees using social media privately and in their personal capacity, especially when their DOD identity and affiliation were identified, known or presumed.

Social media refers to channels that can include blogs, wikis and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr and LinkedIn. However, there are many more and others are still evolving. The instruction covers the broad spectrum of social media platforms that are currently available and will be available in the near future.

In essence the guidelines served to regulate the behaviour of DOD employees with regard to how they communicate via social media in their official and personal capacities. The most striking injunction of these rules of engagement is the one that requires DOD staff to be cordial, honest and professional at all times.

Guidelines

- Only the Head of Communication or his designate can discuss Department of Defence (DOD) activities on the official social media sites. Any unauthorised communication is prohibited and will not be considered an official view.

- DOD employees using social media sites in their private capacity must be made aware of the relevant laws and regulations that apply in respect of privacy and confidentiality issues. They must declare upfront that they are writing in their personal capacity so that their comments are not interpreted as the official view of Government. Social media activity at Government Departments is regulated by the following policies:

  - Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
  - Code of Conduct for Uniformed Members
  - Code of Conduct for Public Service Act Personnel
  - Government Communication Policy
Principles for individuals engaging in social media networks in their private capacity

Individuals must adhere to the following principles when they interact on social media networks on DOD matters to avoid negative consequences:

- **Disclosure of Information.** Do not disclose information or records, including information of a classified nature that could be to the detriment or embarrassment of the DOD, or its officials.

- **Factual Correctness.** Correct the facts when misrepresentations about the DOD are observed. Do so with respect and dignity. Ensure that factual correctness and reliability are not disparaging when speaking to someone with a contrary view. Avoid arguments.

- **Avoid Offensive Postings.** To avoid any possible legal action, do not post any defamatory, libellous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hurtful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information.

- **Avoid Copyright Infringements.** Do not post any information or other material protected by copyright without the permission of the copy right owner.

- **Do not Breach Trademarks.** Do not use any word, logo or other mark that could infringe a trademark.

- **Avoid Endorsements.** Do not use the DOD’s or any of its sub-entities’ names to endorse or promote products.

- **No Impressions.** Do not forge or otherwise manipulate identity in postings in an attempt to disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent identity of or affiliation with any other person or entity.

- **Use Disclaimers.** Explain to readers of a personal social media site or post that the views expressed are own opinions and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of the DOD. Note that Government employees can be held legally responsible for comments that they post on their personal platforms.

- **Stay within Own Area of Responsibility.** Individuals are allowed to comment on issues within their own area of responsibility. In the case of an opinion it must be stated in the posting that this is the user’s own opinion.

- **Links to Other Sites.** Individuals are allowed to provide links from private sites to the DOD’s sites.

- **Personal Information.** Refrain from discussing or releasing any personal information, or records of any person, including, but not limited to, information relating to the race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, national, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental health, well-being, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, birth of the individual, etc. A person means a natural person or a juristic person.

- **Hate Speech.** Do not engage in any form of hate speech that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion. It constitutes incitement to cause harm.

- **Grievances.** Social media may not be used by officials to air their individual or collective grievances against the DOD as substitution for the following of command channels.

Comply with legislation and instructions regarding the protection of information. The Constitution provides that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right does not extend to speech that constitutes:

- **Propaganda of war**

- **Incitement of imminent violence, or**

- **Advocacy of hatred that is based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion and that constitutes incitement to cause harm.**

- **Do not disclose any information pertaining to the Government or the DOD’s physical or information security practices and procedures or any other information which may be used to breach either physical or information security procedures in place.**
The SA Army has good military environmental literacy – Research

When elephants do battle the grass gets trampled – Kikuyu saying

It is important to remember that proper environmental care is not only the responsibility of some specialist environmental managers, but of every member of the Department [of Defence]. It must become a way of doing our day-to-day tasks in a manner that complements the environment (Matanzima 2001: 19).

The environment and the military

Although there is no denying the devastating effects of war, a simplistic view of the way militaries operate would be wrong on at least two counts. In the first instance, militaries around the world spend only a small part of their time actively busy with conflict-related activities. The rest of the time they train, take part in peacekeeping missions and do humanitarian assistance duties. In all these military roles environmental issues are important.

Singer and Keating (1999) list operational domains such as land use, testing and development of new weapons (especially chemical and biological), manufacturing and production of arms, training and practice exercises, maintenance of hardware and infrastructure, and the disposal of old or used weaponry all as important military actions that can be harmful to the environment. Fortunately, the operational domain is also the easiest to influence positively to reduce possible damage to the environment. In the second instance, the world has changed. Militaries are no longer allowed to wage unselective wars and most nations today agree that it is important to protect physical and cultural environments during wartime.

It is important to note that poorly handled environmental impacts are not bound by borders and can easily cloud good relations with countries bordering the conflict zone. In 2012 when American soldiers by mistake burnt copies of the Koran in Muslim Afghanistan, the United States military suffered severe counterattacks, protests and deaths among soldiers. They learnt the hard way that the total local environment, including the cultural environment, must be respected at all times (Rubin 2012).

Poor environmental conduct not only reflects poorly on the nation conducting the military operation, but it may also put mission success in danger and even endanger the lives of soldiers involved in the mission (Bonds 2015).

The danger unsustainable waste management practices present to the health of soldiers and civilians in Afghanistan has been studied by Bonds (2015). He reported that open-air burn pits used to get rid of solid waste caused health problems for United States soldiers and Afghan civilians.

The examples mentioned above are true for most militaries worldwide (including the South African military) and have far-reaching implications for the way in which environmental issues are dealt with by militaries. It also provides a powerful incentive and reason for militaries to do their work in environmentally responsible ways. In South Africa this is not only a moral obligation but a legal one too.

Fortunately, the South African DOD has a long history of formal environmental management, as revealed by the first instruction to formulate guidelines for environmental management in the then South African Defence Force in 1977 (Godschalk 1998). The National Environmental Management Act No 107 of 1998 (NEMA) eventually required all organs of state with functions that affect the environment, including the DOD, to develop an Environmental Implementation Plan (EIP) (South Africa 1998).

In 2001, the Environmental Implementation Plan (EIP) for Defence was formulated and became part of South African law after publication in the Government Gazette (South Africa 2001). The second edition EIP for Defence was published in 2008 (South Africa 2008). In 1998 and 2014, Defence Reviews were conducted and both reports committed the DOD to sustainable environmental practices (DOD 1998; 2014).

The DOD is therefore externally mandated by the Constitution (more specifically NEMA) and internally committed through the EIPs and various policy documents to good environmental management.

The military environmental literacy survey

The aim of the military environmental literacy research was to determine the military environmental literacy (the attitude towards, behaviour in and knowledge of the environment in which the military operate) of the members of the South African Army.

To reach this aim a questionnaire to measure military environmental literacy in a South African Army context was developed. The questionnaire consisted of a covering letter explaining the study, a section with 15 attitude items and a section with 13 items related to reported behaviour, both using a five-point Likert-type scale. A third section had 14 multiple choice items to test the environmental knowledge of respondents.

The three sections form the subscales of the questionnaire to measure the three components of military environmental literacy. Six open-ended questions formed a fourth section in which respondents were required to answer questions in their own words and explain their answers. The final section asked for soldier biographical and service history information. A letter of consent, which had to be filled...
Informed consent form

The military environmental literacy questionnaire was used to survey twenty-five units from all formations in the Army. Of the 1200 distributed questionnaires, 1090 were returned for analysis.

Excellent results for the South African Army
For all three components of military environmental literacy, attitude (mean of 1.8 on a five-point Likert scale), behaviour (mean of 1.8) and knowledge (mean of 65%) respondents recorded high scores. The composite military environmental literacy of 75% means that the military environmental literacy of soldiers of the South African Army is high (See Table 2). These results are higher than the average results for global studies in civilian populations.

This is the first time a military specific questionnaire to test military environmental literacy was developed and a survey of this nature carried out in any military. The South African Army is thus the only arm of service of any military in the world that can prove their good level of military environmental literacy.

Improve the military environmental literacy of SA Army soldiers
The main recommendation from the research is that the good level of military environmental literacy of this sub-directorate cannot be overemphasised. Military environmental services play a vital role in making sure that South African Army soldiers are literate in a military environmental sense, and they should be supported to continue the excellent work they do.

The most important secondary recommendation is that soldiers who deploy are a special group representing their country and the DOD in other countries. Special programmes must be developed to cater for the environmental education and training of soldiers prior to deployment and sufficient time must be budgeted to conduct these pre-deployment interventions. The South African military cannot afford environmentally illiterate soldiers who are insensitive to the cultural, social and physical environments of the countries in which they operate.

By doing this, the quality of environmental education and training in the South African Army will be further improved, leading to an even better military environmental literacy among its soldiers.

Commander (Dr) Hennie Smit is a lecturer in Military Geography at the South African Military Academy in Saldanha. He is also the President of the International Association for Military Geosciences. This research was done for his doctoral degree.

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<tr>
<th>STRUCTURAL ELEMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Letter of introduction</td>
<td>Explanatory information for the respondents to enable them to make an informed decision about participation in the survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude scale</td>
<td>Eliciting responses regarding attitude 15 Likert-type items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviour scale</td>
<td>Eliciting responses regarding self-reported behaviour – 13 Likert-type items</td>
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<td>Knowledge scale</td>
<td>Eliciting responses to military environmental knowledge items – 14 Multiple-choice items</td>
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<td>Open-ended items</td>
<td>Allow respondents to motivate their responses and establish an environmental narrative. Six open-ended items [First two items correspond to the attitude section in the quantitative part of the questionnaire, two to the behaviour section and two to the knowledge section]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographical and service history section</td>
<td>Eliciting biographical and service history information 16 items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informed consent form</td>
<td>Explanation of the implications of participation in the research. Signature required from a respondent to participate.</td>
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| Table 1: The structure and content of the final military environmental literacy questionnaire |

| Table 2: Indicators of average military environmental literacy in the South African Army |

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<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Military Environmental literacy</th>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>65%</td>
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The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) takes note with great sadness of the passing of Springbok rugby great and former serving South African soldier, Chester Mornay Williams on Friday, 06 September 2019.

While a member of the SA Defence Force (SADF), the Paarl-born Chester Williams served first in the South African Navy (SAN) as a Recruit and then as Seaman from January 1989 until April 1990. During this time, he served in Navy shore establishments as a Storeman at SAS Saldanha, SAS Sonneblom, and SAS Hugo Biermann, as well as a short stint on the fleet replenishment ship, SAS Drakensberg.

During April/May 1990, he transferred to the SA Army’s 1 SA Cape Corps Battalion (1 SACC Bn), which was eventually to be incorporated into 9 SA Infantry Battalion (9 SAI Bn). He was promoted to Lance Corporal and thereafter to Corporal by September 1992. For musketry skill at arms, Cpl Williams earned the First Class Shottist Qualification Badge in bronze, and was awarded the Republic of South Africa’s military campaign General Service Medal on 29 November 1991.

Seaman Chester Williams during his time in the SA Navy.

Cpl Chester Williams while he was a member of 9 SA Infantry Battalion.

Chester Williams scored 14 tries for the Springbok Rugby Team.

During his military service (which came to an end in February 1995 after the establishment of the
Seaman Chester Williams with his fellow sailors.

Seaman Chester Williams, fierce on the rugby field.

Chester Williams was named SA Rugby player of the Year in 1994.

SANDF in April 1994) and thereafter, Williams was active in provincial and national rugby. He would represent the country on Springbok tours to Argentina and Australia in 1993; Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and New Zealand; and the Cathay Pacific Hong Kong Bank Sevens tournament in 1994 to name but a few.

His contributions on the field saw him named SA Rugby player of the Year in 1994, and he was also a member of the Tri-Nations winning Springbok team in 1998. On the home front, he played for Western Province, and the Golden Lions hoisted the Currie Cup in 1999 with Williams in the ranks.

Williams’ progress on the field during the quarter-final, semi-final and final of the South African hosted and winning 1995 Rugby World Cup is legendary and was a highlight of a Springbok rugby career spanning 27 tests from 1993 to 2000 in which he scored 14 tries. The SANDF salutes this accomplished player, who put his non-commissioned officer’s leadership qualities to great use after his active rugby career by coaching for numerous teams at home and abroad, including the Springbok Sevens in which he had played and captained at the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

Of late, Williams led the FNB University of the Western Cape (UWC) Rugby team to victory in the FNB Varsity Shield tournaments in 2017 and 2018 in his capacity as head coach. He continued on in this position until his untimely passing.

A sailor, a soldier, a Springbok, a breaker of barriers, a national hero. Fortiter et fideliter.

We will remember him.
The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Rugby Championships were held at ASB Kimberley recently, where 10 male and 4 female teams congregated to determine who would be crowned national champions in the Seniors’, President’s and Women’s Divisions, and claim all bragging rights until 2020. The competition kicked off on a sad note when the passing of Bdr Richards, a player from North West Province, was communicated to the Executive Committee. The proceedings commenced with the annual church service held on Sunday, during which tribute was paid to the fallen, followed by the official opening ceremony on Monday.

Fierce competition throughout showed that constructive development had taken place prior to the championships, which saw one of the favourites in the Seniors’ Division, Gauteng, being taken out of the running for honours. The women’s division saw Western Province (WP) walking away victorious with the highest total points. In the President’s Division Northern Cape (NC) managed to play consistently to take top honours with the highest total points. In the Senior Division, the finalists of 2018, South Eastern Cape (SEC) (“Seccies”) and Western Province (WP) (“Province”), once again faced each other.

The spectators were entertained with brilliant attack rugby, with no team giving an
inch. The winner was determined by a technicality with Western Province (WP) being crowned the victors after the match ended in a draw 17-17. The week was concluded with a gala evening, during which the relevant national teams were announced that would participate in the upcoming Interforces Rugby Championships over the period 14-19 July 2019.

A delegation consisting of representatives from SANDFRA and ASB Kimberley proceeded to Groenpunt Primary School on 4 July 2019. A cash donation to the amount of R7,100.00 was handed to the Principal on behalf of the players and officials as part of SANDFRA’s community outreach programme.

French Gendarmerie Rugby Tour

The SANDF Rugby Association (SANDFRA) participated in the Interforces Rugby Championships, and also hosted a French Gendarmerie Rugby Team that was touring South Africa. The French Gendarmerie Rugby Team, as back-to-back winners of the French National Military Championships, was preparing for their participation in the International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) in Japan during September 2019. Their participation in the Interforces did not only create sporting ties, but also educated them about the various cultures of South Africa with specific reference to those in the Western Cape.

The participation by the French brought an international flavour to the competition, a first of its kind in the history of the Interforces Rugby Championships. Not only was the occasion used to join the French expatriates in celebration of Bastille Day on 14 July 2019, but it was also an opportunity to bring foreign rugby to the shores of the local community of Franschoek. The community’s gratitude was reiterated by the Chairman of the Franschoek Rugby Club, Warrant Officer Class 1 (Retired) Archie Johnson, who was also a prominent defence force player.

Matches played saw the French team narrowly beat both the South African Police Service (SAPS) 22-19, and the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) 21-17. The team of the SANDF managed to lead against the visitors most of the time during their match, but poor discipline saw unnecessary penalties being handed to the French. The SANDF managed to score a penalty in the final moments, resulting in the match ending in a draw 17-17.

A delegation consisting of representatives from the three departments and the French Gendarmerie rugby team proceeded to Lords Acre Community Centre, Franschoek on 4 July 2019. Donations of blankets, mattresses, groceries, sweets, and cash were handed to the management on behalf of the players and officials as part of the Forces Rugby Association's community outreach programme.

The Head Coach of the French Gendarmerie Rugby Association, Gilles Soirat, displayed his satisfaction with his team’s performance and the hospitality of the South African people as a whole. The tour ended with the tour group attending the rugby match between South Africa and Australia at Ellis Park before returning to France.

Assistance to Russia

The Department of Defence of the Russian Federation has now approached the Chief of the SANDF with a request that the SANDF avail the services of coaches to enhance the development of rugby in the Russian Army faculties. The CSANDF has in principle approved such interaction, pending ministerial approval. The delegation’s mandate will also include, but not be limited to, enhancing sporting relations between the SANDF and the Russian Federation Armed Forces.

We wish them all the best.
The value of women through hope, faith and joy

By Chaplain (Rev) Erika van Tonder, Chaplain at 1 Military Hospital

In the Take Art Gallery in London hangs a striking painting by Frederick Watts. The title of the painting is HOPE. A beautiful woman is sitting on the globe of the Earth. She is blindfolded and in her hand she holds a lute. All but one of the strings is broken. The woman sits bent forward touching the one string with her finger, listening. She is filled with hope, believing in the best in the worst possible circumstances.

This striking painting brings to mind the woman of Luke 15:8-9: “or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it she calls her friends and neighbors together and says: “Rejoice with me, I have found my lost coin.”

As with the woman in the painting, the woman of Luke 15 is filled with hope, believing she will find the lost coin. In the woman in the painting and the woman of the parable we find some typical characteristics of Godly women. Characteristics like:

- HOPE, never give up, the woman in the parable kept on hoping. She did not sit and wait for the coin to reappear out of the blue. She put in a lot of effort, and searched with great difficulty to find it. Even in the worst possible circumstances we must never lose hope. Women, never give up.

- FAITH, the woman in Luke lost her coin, but not her faith. Her house was dark because it did not have any windows. This was due to the fact that she was poor and could not afford the taxes for the size of the windows. Despite this, she believed that she would find the coin. She knew with God everything is possible. And in this faith she found the coin. Women, you can do everything through Him Who gives strength, the God through Whom everything is possible.

- JOY, the woman finds the coin and invites the neighbours to a celebration. Having found the coin, she has proven her faith and now she wants to celebrate, joyful about her success. Women, be joyful in everything, always.

I conclude with a poem by M.S.Moem:

Count all the ways you’re beautiful;
Your soul and your spirit,
Your brilliant body and all the wonder within it.

Almighty God, we praise You. Our existence is a gift from You. To You we offer all that we have and are. We honour You through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
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 Matatiele, 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,
Matatiele 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.