Support the Reserve Force, the SANDF’s Expansion Capability

Building a future SANDF Reserve Component for 2030

SUMMER 2017

Part-time volunteers - making a difference for a better life for all

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defence
Department: Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Welcome to the Reserve Force Volunteer Magazine, summer 2017 edition, another bumper edition of our biannual publication that is dedicated to telling the success stories of the country’s unsung heroes. Crowded shopping malls, heavy influx of ‘inlanders’ in coastal areas, congested beaches, family outings and gatherings, braais, parties, stokvel meetings are all synonymous with this jolly season in South Africa.

A season many anticipate from as early as 3 December every year. And as expected, Defence Reserves brings you another page-turner in this 16th year celebratory edition of the Defence Reserves Volunteer magazine.

In this edition we have covered the successful presentation of the first instalment of the 2016 Johannesburg Military Tattoo, 2016 Military Skills Competition, 2016 AAD, South African Irish Regiment’s Change-of-Command Parade, appointment of the Acting Director in the Air Force Reserves and much more. Chief SANDF, General Solly Shoke and Maj Gen Roy Andersen have more than a thing or two to say.

Upcoming events: The City of Durban will be hosting the 2016 Armed Forces Day Parade on the 21 February 2017 and I am hoping to see you there. Chief Army Combat Rifle Shooting Competition (SAARSA) Gold Cup will be held in Bloemfontein and SS Mendi Memorial Services will be held all over the country to commemorate 100 years of the sinking of SS Mendi troopship off the Isle of Wight. For many more activities and full details we have inserted the 2017 Events Calendar but please always visit our newly refreshed website regularly for calendar updates. www.rfdmil.za.

We sincerely hope that you are going to enjoy reading this publication as much as we did while busy preparing it for you. The Reserve Force Volunteer Magazine Team would like to sincerely thank you for your great contributions and support throughout 2016 and extend best wishes for 2017. Until next time, keep well. Remember to pass this magazine on to a friend when you are done…

Ms R.D. Khashane

Cover Page: Pictures taken during the 2016 Military Skills Competition held in Potchefstroom.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles that follow are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the SANDF, Defence Reserves or the Editor.
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SUBSTANCE ABUSE AT HOME AND WORKPLACE

RESERVE FORCE, THE SANDF’S EXPANSION CAPABILITY 3
I welcome this opportunity to be able to use the Reserve Force Volunteer to communicate with the Reserves who form an important component of the SANDF. My thanks go to all the Reserves who selflessly volunteer to serve their country and particularly for the role they are playing in augmenting the Regulars on our borders.

The Reserves comprise a vital component of the “one force” and provide an efficient and cost effective capability for the SANDF. The current Reserve Force Service System which has stood us in good stead and has delivered good results, is however in need of modification and updating to meet the current budget constraints and our future requirements. We must also ensure that our Reserves are young, fit and combat ready.

My Commander’s Brief to the Service and Division Chiefs provides clear direction on the need for the development of a capability to defend and protect the RSA and thus for a new and exciting Reserve Service System which will also provide enhanced flexibility to see us through this period of tight budgets and until such time as the Defence Review – 2015 is implemented.

The message I have been giving to the Regulars of all ranks about the need for high levels of discipline applies equally to the Reserves. I also require of the Reserves to avoid fruitless and wasteful expenditure and to avoid the temptation of falling into a life of crime. Please also focus on cutting down on the number of road accidents and report any perceived irregularities in call-ups.

I would like to thank Major General Andersen for the significant contribution he has made to the SANDF. His passion for the Reserves and his insight on a wide range of subjects is highly appreciated by the Military Command Council.

My best wishes to all Reserves for 2017.
Major General Roy Andersen

2016 was an active year for the Reserve Force with just under 15 000 members being called up for duty. The Reserves who served on our borders at times made up more than fifty per cent of the forces deployed on Ops Corona and they achieved many successes.

The year began with the Armed Forces Day parade in Port Elizabeth in February. The colours of many of the Reserve units flew during this memorable parade. The SA Army Combat Rifle Shooting Championship followed in March with the two Reserve teams taking the first two places against local and international competition.

This edition of the Reserve Force Volunteer, together with the winter edition published earlier in 2016, describes these Reserve achievements and many more, including participation in:

- The Rand Show
- SA Navy Festival
- Commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood
- African Air Defence Show
- The Johannesburg Military Tattoo
- 2016 Netherlands International Shooting Competition
- 2016 International Military Skills Competition in Spain
- The South African Military Skills Competition in Potchefstroom

These and numerous other activities confirm that despite the budget constraints, the Reserves are active and are making a major contribution to the SANDF. The Reserves in all the Services will continue to play an important role in the future. In addition to the ongoing deployment of the SA Army, the SA Navy and SAMHS personnel, I am optimistic that the Air Reserve Squadrons will be reactivated in 2017.

You will have noted that the term of office of the Reserve Force Council has come to an end. My sincere thanks to Col (Dr) Job and his Council for their commitment to the Reserves. I wish Maj Gen Keith Mokoape (Ret) and his incoming Council, every success.

As I get closer to retirement after fifty one years of service, the last four of which have been beyond the normal retirement age, I find myself reflecting on my career. There have been many highlights, including:

- Commanding the Transvaal Horse Artillery
- Being one of a very few Reserve Force members to complete the then Senior Staff Course
- Serving as Senior Staff Officer Operations of 7 Infantry Division
- My appointment as Director Army Reserves
- Serving as the General of the Gunners
- The past thirteen years as Chief of Defence Reserves
- Setting up the SANDF Education Trust on instruction from C SANDF and,
- The privilege of serving as a member of both the Plenary Defence Staff Council and Military Command Council.

Serving in the SANDF is a privilege and I urge all Reserves to continue to do so.

It only remains for me to thank all Reserves for your commitment and professionalism, as well as the Defence Reserve Board and the Reserve Force Council for your support. I would particularly like to thank the loyal team in the Defence Reserves offices at DHQ and each of the provinces.

The South African National Defence Force, in partnership with the City of Johannesburg, presented the 2016 Johannesburg Military Tattoo at the Apartheid Museum at Gold Reef City from 7 to 10 September 2016.

Amongst others, the aim of this majestic military spectacle was to provide an enhanced showcase for local talent that reflected a truly South African character. The idea was to take the tattoo to the people and to ensure easy access by the general public from the various parts of Johannesburg.

Chief SANDF approved the participation as a joint venture between the SANDF and the City of Johannesburg, which was done to enforce the good relations between the SANDF, the City of Johannesburg and its citizens. The tattoo was organised and presented by the SA Army.

The Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg, Councillor Herman Mashaba, SAMHS Chief Director Force Support, Maj Gen Lesley Charles Ford, and Chief Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, were some of the attendees on Wednesday 07 September during the official opening of the event.

A throng of 5000 people made their way to the tattoo, which proved to be a hit among the families of the City of Johannesburg, of all ages.
The tattoo opened with a massed band playing the South African National Anthem, led by Lt Col Gerald Seekola. All four Arms of Service participated, along with civilian acts. Entertainment of the highest order included a mock attack, mass band displays (with the firing of Artillery G1 guns), cultural and dancing acts. The finale saw all the bands and all participants involved, taking to the arena in a display of colour, pomp and music. The spotlight dimmed to the Lone Piper playing the lament on top of the stage, followed by a colourful fireworks display, which marked the end of a successful Johannesburg Tattoo.

This first presentation of this majestic event did not disappoint as the performers gave brilliant performances, day in and day out, ranging from musical to military demonstrations.

The relationship between the two organisations confirms the link between the SANDF as a national asset of South Africa in general and the citizens of Johannesburg in particular.

It is also envisaged that this will not be a once off event, but an event that may become institutionalised in future years. We just cannot wait for another hit-show next year.
A conversation often heard around the dinner table, particularly between members of the business community, has recurring themes:

- Why are we spending R47bn per annum on defence?
- Surely there are other priorities such as healthcare, housing, education and service delivery?
- Where is the threat?
- What are we doing in the DRC anyway?
- Was the money spent on the arms deal worthwhile and is the equipment serviceable and manned?
- The SANDF wastes a lot of money - what do the troops do every day?

Similarly, frustration is often shown in conversations amongst leaders in the SANDF with equally strong lines of argument:

- Why it is not realised that by an ever-decreasing SANDF budget (in real terms) and by spending less than 2% of GDP per annum on defence, South Africa is running a real risk?
- The SANDF is in urgent need of rejuvenation of both personnel and equipment and requires additional funding.
- How can we implement the SA Defence Review – 2015, which was approved by Parliament, if it is not funded?
- Why do we not get credit for our success in Burundi and the excellent work in the DRC?
- Is there recognition for the achievements on the borders in Ops Corona?

So where does the truth lie between these two admittedly, at times, superficial lines of thought?

ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

To begin to understand the complex debate on defence expenditure, it is useful to make reference to the SA Defence Review - 2015 (Defence Review) in three areas:

- The international security environment.
- Insecurity in Africa.
- Mitigation of the Risks in Africa.

THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The Defence Review describes the International Security Environment as follows:

- Persistent regional and local conflicts.
- Violent, political, ethnic and religious extremism.
- Acts of terror.
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Involvement of non-state actors in conflict.
- High levels of international crime.
- Cyber threats.

INSECURITY IN AFRICA

This insecurity is described as:

- A lack of political rights.
- Weak and dysfunctional states.
- Inadequate political and economic governance.
- Politicisation of ethnicity.
- Marginalisation of groups.
- Inappropriate military intervention.
- Competition over scarce resources.
- Endemic disease.

MITIGATION OF RISKS IN AFRICA

It is up to each reader to reflect on each of the above and to do their own risk assessment.

In my opinion certain of these risks are real. There is also a chance that peace missions will convert into combat operations as was seen in the Central African Republic. Whether the risks are considered to be high, medium or low, they need to be appropriately mitigated.
The Defence Review proposes the following means of mitigation:
- Diplomatic initiatives.
- Political interventions.
- Economic measures.
- Deterrence value of the Defence Force.
- Military intervention – last resort.

South Africa can ill afford to be unprepared for some, if not many, of the risks described above. A question to explore first however is whether the SANDF can continue to provide a credible deterrence capability.

COMPONENTS OF A CREDIBLE DETERRENCE CAPABILITY

The components of a credible deterrence capability comprise:
- Credible combat forces.
- Rapid force generation.
- Trained Reserves.
- Strong doctrine.
- Quality training.
- Technology.
- Good morale.

It is clear that the current budget constraints, which will be explored below, are increasingly placing these capabilities of the SANDF under threat. Deterrence can easily be followed by military operations.

THE MANDATE OF THE SANDF
(Constitution – 1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa requires the following of the SANDF:
- Protection and defence of the Republic, its sovereignty, freedoms, territorial integrity, national interests, people and values.
- Compliance with international obligations.
- Preservation of life, health or property.
- Provision or maintenance of essential services.
- Upholding law and order in support of SAPS.

HOW SHOULD THE SANDF LOOK TO ACHIEVE ITS MANDATE?

The Defence Review proposes the following:
- A defensive posture with real offensive capabilities.
- A balanced, modern and flexible force employing advanced technologies suitable for operations in Africa, its coastline and airspace.
- Appropriately equipped, resourced and multirole trained.

Once again, a vital question arises: Do the current and projected defence budgets enable the SANDF to meet its constitutional obligations?

THE DEFENCE BUDGET

The amount spent on defence is an indication of the national will. It is a clear indication of how seriously the state takes its commitments to regional defence and how willing it is to face up to unexpected threats to itself or the region.

South Africa only spends 1.1% of GDP per annum on Defence compared to the accepted norm of 1.5%-2%. The SANDF is thus at least 30% underfunded.

There is no denying however that the current national budget is badly impacted by the lack of economic growth. There are competing budgetary demands and a risk of a sovereign downgrade. The conflicts between the requirements of Defence and the National Budget must be purposely reconciled.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CURRENT DEFENCE BUDGET

The Defence Review provides a gloomy analysis of the consequences of the current defence budget:

“The Defence Force is in a critical state of decline, characterised by: force imbalance between capabilities, block obsolescence and unaffordability of the main operating systems; a disproportionate tooth-to-tail ratio; the inability to meet current standing defence commitments and a lack of critical mobility.”

“Left unchecked, and at the present funding levels this decline will severely compromise …….. the defence capabilities.”
IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

It has been proved internationally that an increased defence budget has a beneficial impact on industry and stimulates technology development and manufacturing capacity. Such stimulation will benefit transformation and job creation as well as result in higher tax collections by the fiscus in South Africa. A “peace dividend” arising from Peace Support Operations will assist with economic activity. South African companies will be able to create new markets thereby growing the economy. There should also be a decline in displaced persons migrating across our borders.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above, it can be concluded that the SANDF is undeniably underfunded which brings with it risks to the State which will escalate over time. The longer it takes to arrest the decline, the more expensive it will become “to get out of the hole”.

This will leave a massive legacy for the next generation. At the same time however, the national budget provides limited flexibility to increase the Defence Budget.

There is an urgent need for both a short-term and medium-term solution to bridge these conflicting demands.

Short-term solution:
• The SANDF should arrest the decline by improving efficiencies and rationalising the ratio between the sharp end and the blunt end. Expenditure should be ruthlessly prioritised and all sources of revenue maximised.
• National Treasury should fund a personnel rejuvenation programme which includes reskilling of exiting members and the facilitation of new (younger) intakes for both the Regular and the Reserve Force. This could be achieved by a modest injection of say R2.5bn in year one with marginal increases in each of the next four years.

Medium-term solution:
• The Defence Budget should incrementally shift up to 2.0% of GDP to facilitate the implementation of the SA Defence Review – 2015.
• The recommendations of the Defence Review should be implemented in respect of all the identified phases.

CONCLUSION

I have no doubt that SA is at risk and needs a well-funded Defence Force! Delay will inevitably involve additional costs.

Note: This article is based on a speech presented to the Defence Service Commission Conference.
History is the only way that we can understand our past and narrate it through various means to the next generation. History teaches us about the past and as part of our life’s experience influences our daily thinking and decision making process.

This is the correct comprehension of the National Heritage Resources Act number 25 of 1999 which states, “This legislation aims to promote good management of the national estate, and to enable and encourage communities to nurture and conserve their legacy so that it may be bequeathed to future generations. Our heritage is unique and precious and it cannot be renewed. It helps us to define our cultural identity and therefore lies at the heart of our spiritual well-being and has the power to build our nation.

It has the potential to affirm our diverse cultures, and in so doing shape our national character. Our heritage celebrates our achievements and contributes to redressing past inequities. It educates, it deepens our understanding of society and encourages us to empathise with the experience of others. It facilitates healing and material and symbolic restitution and it promotes new and previously neglected research into our rich oral traditions and customs.

Weapons (Arms and ammunition) form a vital part of any nation’s history and heritage. Weapons may be put into their correct context by history; this explains who used them and for what purpose. Their design is indicative of the state of technological development of the people of the time and the offensive or defensive demands of the time.

The Gunners’ Association of South Africa in conjunction with Ditsong South African National Museum of Military History Building and Development Trust, with the financial support of Rheinmetall Denel Munitions refurbished the First World War (WW1) 7.7cm German Field gun. The newly refurbished gun was unveiled on 4 November 2016 at the Johannesburg Ditsong National Museum of Military History.

Gunner Niel Wiid, Branch Chairperson of Johannesburg, welcomed the esteemed guests that included Lt Gen Vusimuzi Masondo, SANDF Chief of Staff and patron of the Ditsong SA National Museum of Military History Building and Development Trust, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves and Chairperson of the Ditsong SA National Museum of Military History Building and Development Trust, Capt (German Navy) Gerald Koch, German Defence Attaché to South Africa and his wife Gabriele Müller, Mr Gyfford Fitchat, Rheinmetall Denel Munitions Executive Manager: Mortar, Naval and Aircraft New Business Development and Sales, Gnr Dominic Hoole National Chairman of the Gunners’ Association, Mr Godfrey Giles, President of the South African Legion, Col Jacques Baird, Chief of Staff SA Air Defence Artillery Formation, Mr Spencer Blackbeard, Chairman of GEM Homes and HLVPs of the Gunners’ Association, Mr Frank Louw, Col Tiaan Steyn, Brand van Rhyn, and Col Ivor Rimmer.

Mr Allan Sinclair, Curator and Administrator of the Ditsong SA National Museum of Military History revealed the reason why this specific gun was chosen to be restored.
“As you all may know we are still currently in the centenary period of the WWI; the Museum’s plan was to restore all WWI exhibits”, said Mr Sinclair. He thanked Rheinmetall Denel Munitions and the Ditsong SA National Museum of Military History Building and Development Trust for the financial aid for Museum projects. “Being a government entity it is very difficult for us to get things done due to budget constraints and a procurement process that often needs to take place, therefore for us to have Building and Development Trust is very important and it is also significant to have organisations like Rheinmetall Denel Munitions who are prepared to assist us with projects”, said Mr Allan Sinclair.

Mr Steve Tegner, Workshop Technician elaborated on the technical and physical side of restoring the 7.7cm German Field gun and Mr Hanish Paterson, Artillery Curator, gave a brief history of the 7.7cm German Field gun during the war.

After the unveiling, the invited guests were ushered to the gun park where they had an opportunity to appreciate some of the guns on display.

To restore the WWI 7.7cm German Field gun, the Gunners’ Association of South Africa in conjunction with Ditsong South African National Museum of Military History Building and Development Trust were guided by the National Heritage Resources.

Act number 25 of 1999 which was established to introduce an integrated and interactive system for the management of the national heritage resources; to promote good governance at all levels, and empower civil society to nurture and conserve their heritage resources so that they may be bequeathed to future generations; to lay down general principles for governing heritage resources management throughout the Republic; to introduce an integrated system for the identification, assessment and management of the heritage resources of South Africa; to establish the South African Heritage Resources Agency together with its Council to co-ordinate and promote the management of heritage resources at national level; to set norms and maintain essential national standards for the management of heritage resources in the Republic and to protect heritage resources of national significance; to control the export of nationally significant heritage objects and the import into the Republic of cultural property illegally exported from foreign countries; to enable the provinces to establish heritage authorities which must adopt powers to protect and manage certain categories of heritage resources; to provide for the protection and management of conservation-worthy places and areas by local authorities; and to provide for matters connected therewith”.

Standing on the left side of the WWI 7.7cm German Field gun: (Left) Capt (German Navy) Gerald Koch and (right) Mr Gyfford Fitchat, (left) Lt Gen Vusimuzi Masondo and Maj Gen Roy Andersen.
Since the establishment of the SANDF Education Trust in October 2013, the Trust has made remarkable strides in growing in terms of governance and support to the beneficiaries.

The object of the South African National Defence Force Education Trust is to provide bursaries and scholarships for study purposes to the dependants of the following persons:

- SANDF members killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, whilst on official duty;
- Civilian members of the Department of Defence killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994, whilst deployed in operations with the SANDF;
- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994 during the course of an operation of the SANDF, provided that such citizens were not engaged in an activity in opposition to the aims of the SANDF operation.

The Trust proudly unveiled the Trust Logo at a gala dinner hosted by Armscor on 6 October 2016. The Logo depicts the connection with the SANDF through the use of the nine-point star. Beneficiaries can relate to the logo through the promise of education by the use of the pages of a book and the graduation cap. The colour, golden orange, depicts hope and aspiration to excel in life.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula graced the occasion with her presence and during her speech, she related to the importance of education for our young generation and the continued support, through the Trust, to the children long after the pension and insurance pay-outs have run dry. Minister Mapisa-Nqakula mentioned that she is pleased with the assistance that has been received from the business community since the establishment of the SANDF Education Trust and urged the individuals and business entities to continue their valued support to the children of the fallen soldiers.

Mr Kevin Wakeford, CEO of Armscor, kindly offered to host the gala dinner on behalf of the Trust. During the evening, the Trust received welcome financial boost through the auctioning of donated items as well as pledges from individuals attending the dinner. The amount of R4 388 250 was raised and which the total of funds pledged since 2013 to the amount of approximately R15 000 000.

The Chairperson of the SANDF Education Trust, Major General Roy Andersen (picture below), welcomed all the guests and provided a short background to the Trust and indicated that the SANDF Education Trust is reliant on donations from the private sector since no government funds are utilised. He also said “The excellent turnout tonight demonstrates that there is great sensitivity towards the needs of our soldiers. It is important that when our troops deploy, they should know that if something happens to them, their children will be educated”. He quoted the example and bravery of Rifleman Plaatjie, a Reserve Force member, who was severely injured during his deployment in Sudan”.

The Trust can be supported by donating money no matter how much. The money can be deposited into the following banking account:

Name of Account: SANDF Education Trust
Bank: Nedbank
Branch: 19262100
Type: Business Account
Account Number: 1134917252
Reference: SANDFEDUTRUST/ NAME OF DONOR

Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Honorable Minister Nosiviwe Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula was the keynote speaker during this memorable evening.
The sad part is that the visitors to the WW2 cemetery are often on a pilgrimage to find the graves of loved ones and little bits of their past. But little do they know of the wealth of information, hard work, care and passion that are bestowed by the mountains, the towns and its people. One of these is the Castiglione dei Pepoli South African War Museum, a mere 500 metres away from the cemetery.

When South Africans visit Italy, they are always well received. But it is even more evident in a few small towns in the mountains south of the city of Bologna. Here South Africans are received with open arms. But why is it so different here? The older Italian people remember the South African soldiers who gave their lives in the mountains during World War 2 (WW2) to gain freedom for all. On the other hand, the younger generation will base their fuss on associating South Africa with Nelson Mandela.

Let us take one step back and begin where it all started. We know that during the WW2 battles in Italy, Monte Cassino only fell after some fierce fighting, subsequently the battle moved to Rome. However, Rome was quickly taken by the allied forces as little resistance was encountered. The next fortified opposition that the allies encountered was the “Gothic Line”. Hitler referred to the Gothic line as the “Linea Verde” or the “Green Line” because, in the event of the collapse of the front, he didn’t want to give the idea that a formidable defence line (with its high-sounding name) had been broken.

A Quick Orientation
The Green Line ran east-west through Italy along the edge of the last mountain peaks of the Apennine before breaking into the flat and open Po Valley.

The mountains provided the last natural obstacle and therefore provided the ideal environment for the Germans to dig in. This area is about 35 kilometres north of Florence (Firenze in Italian) and about 50 kilometres south of Bologna. The Green Line ran through and past towns such as Vergato, Grizzana (later changed to Grizzana Morandi), Stanco, Marzabotto, and just south of these towns, you will find Castiglione dei Pepoli.

One of the biggest battles on the Green Line took place on Monte Stanco near the town of Stanco. However, because Stanco was sheltered by hills, the 6th South African Armoured Division made this village its headquarters. Further south and out of the Green Line battle range Castiglione dei Pepoli was taken by the allied forces on 27 September 1944 and then became the hub from where the allied forces were supported. For the same reason, this town was and is today the base to the biggest South African Commonwealth WW2 cemetery in Italy.

What we found is that the WW2 cemetery at Castiglione dei Pepoli is indeed frequented by South Africans but only periodically. This we learnt from the register at the cemetery. The sad part is that the visitors to the WW2 cemetery are often on a pilgrimage to find the graves of loved ones and little bits of their past.

1. Bologna is a city on the edge of the Po Valley and is amongst others, known for a meat product known as “mortadella”. We know it as “polony” a name derived from Bologna where the product had its origin.

2. “Stanco” means “tired” and the town is so called because of a very steep and therefore tiring mountain to climb called “Monte Stanco”. The building which was occupied by the 6th South African Armoured Division Rear HQ today is owned by Andrea and Ruth Grandi who runs the renovated building as a bed and breakfast called “6 Stanco?” The “6” represents the 6th Division but also signifies “sei” in Italian which means “are you”. Therefore: “6 Stanco?” – “Are you tired?”
But little do they know of the wealth of information, hard work, care and passion that are bestowed by the mountains, the towns and its people. One of these is the Castiglione dei Pepoli South African War Museum, a mere 500 metres away from the cemetery.

Why a Museum?
We must remember that Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese had genocide and world domination in mind. The only reason we can live as free human beings today is because the soldiers of WW2 gave their lives to gain freedom. Yes, even here in South Africa. We owe so much to those Black, Indian, Coloured and White South Africans who gave their lives in a foreign country so that we can live in peace today.

Museums are not only for families of these soldiers, historians or the mere curious. No, we need to know what happened and make sure that this will never happen again. The museum in Castiglione dei Pepoli is there to ensure that we never forget what happened, why it happened and never forget those who paid the highest price.

Castiglione dei Pepoli South African War Museum
The Castiglione dei Pepoli South African War Museum was opened in April 2014. The idea to establish a museum dedicated to the South African soldiers originated 10 years ago. A group of people sharing the same passion wished to log and safeguard some of their research on WW2 events in this area. These items included wartime artefacts, documents, photographs and films. It is the first and only museum in Italy dedicated to the South African soldiers, in particular the 6th Armoured Division, which occupied this part of the Apennine frontline from September 1944 to April 1945.

Why is the Museum dedicated to the South Africans?
The 6th South African Armoured Division, along with an American unit, freed Castiglione dei Pepoli on 27 September 1944. As mentioned before, it is here where 401 South African, 99 British and two Indians found their final resting place. During the war, Castiglione dei Pepoli was the resting and recreation centre for South African troops who were engaged in protecting the battle front located twenty kilometres further north. Subsequently, the locals welcomed and befriended many a South African soldier. Soldiers, like Mr Collin Eglin, fell in love with the mountains and the people.

He learnt to speak the language and after the war was over, he volunteered to help establish normality to the area and thereby prolonged his tour of duty right to the end of 1945. These events established a special bond between the Italians of the Apennines and South Africans.

What will you find Inside the Museum?
The Museum was conceived mainly to illustrate the advance of the 6th South African Armoured Division northwards through the Italian territory, from its landing in April 1944 to the end of the war. A part of it is also dedicated to the war cemetery in the town.

Some panels narrate how the events unfolded, with special focus on the battles, especially the ones fought on the Gothic or Green Line, which mainly involved the Division. According to the Commander in Chief, Major General Poole, these were the hardest battles fought by South Africans during WW2. Various prints illustrate the troops’ advance northwards, supported by annotations.

Many period photographs were taken in the Castiglione area or in its vicinity because of the curtailment of operations on the front brought about by the onset of winter. The panels, as well as the descriptions of the photographs and the artefacts, are in Italian and English.
Besides the panels and the photographs, there are many showcases in the hall. The larger ones contain artefacts found on the battlefields, i.e.:
- Monte Catarello, where the British 24th Guards Brigade, seconded with its Scots, Grenadier and Coldstream Guards to the 6th South African Armoured Division, fought;
- Monte Stanco and Monte Salvaro, fought by South African troops; and
- Monte Sole, Caprara and Abelle.

The names of these mountains are still clearly etched in the records of the units which fought here, as well as in the memories of the living families of the soldiers who participated in these events. Many of these soldiers were only in their late teens or early twenties at the time.

The artefacts, many of which were found thanks to modern metal detectors, range from pieces of equipment, such as ammunition, to parts of weapons, water bottles, helmets, and personal items such as cutlery, clocks, badges, etc. Some artefacts were retrieved by farmers from their fields and used for civilian purposes at the end of the war. This allowed for the preservation of these items until they were donated to the Museum. Some objects have been donated or lent by family members of the soldiers who fought in the area.

Among these artefacts displayed are some of the belongings of Colin Eglin, courtesy of the family. The display includes items such as medals, beret and some photographs.

Another showcase contains the personal items of a German soldier found after almost seventy years. He rests in the Passo della Futa German Military Cemetery, which is fifteen kilometres south-east of Castiglione. Thanks to his “dog-tag” identification pendant, he has been identified. He was only twenty years old when he succumbed in battle.
One of the volunteer historians, Mauro Fogacci, has been visiting South Africa for the past five years, exclusively to research the South African WW2 files at the South African National Defence Force Archives. Spending all his leave time, he photographed more than 50,000 period documents and photographs, establishing the largest collection of information on South African WW2 events in this area south of the Green Line. Mauro has a wealth of knowledge on the subject and has a passion for the museum, the WW2 events in the area and would like to meet visiting South Africans.

Useful information
Castiglione dei Pepoli is located in the province of Bologna halfway between Bologna and Florence. You can reach it via the A1 highway, exit Pian del Voglio, or the A1VAR, exit Badia. The Museum is located in Via Aldo Moro 31, five hundred metres from the South African War Cemetery and it is open on Sunday afternoons from 15:00 to 18:00. Admission is free.

It is possible to arrange a visit to the museum by contacting Davide Pazzaglia via mobile number +39.329.185.75.58 (also sms messages are welcome) or write (for information as well) to Mauro Fogacci: m.fogacci@bo.cna.it. Mauro speaks English.

What else to do or see:
- Take a break and spend a few days in these mountains with its stunning hilltop towns.
- Visit Bologna main square, the St Luca Cathedral with its stunning views over the city (50km).
- Visit the Ducati factory museum in Bologna (50km).
- Visit the Ferrari museum in Modena (76km).
- Visit Florence (50km).
- Bologna has its own airport and it is possible to fly here from Johannesburg (connection flights via Milan, Rome, Frankfurt, Paris, London, Middle East, etc).

Where to stay:
- Stay with Andrea and Ruth Grandi at 6 Stanco in Stanco di Sopra. Experience the 6th South African Division headquarters and you will find that you are also central to the historical area (only 20km from Castiglione). Book your stay at www.6stanco.it.
- For the city experience and night life, stay in Bologna, Pistoia or Florence.

Mauro Fogacci (left) with veteran Pat Levings during one of Mauro’s many research trips to the SANDF archives. In 1944, Pat was the only member of a five-man crew who survived a mortar strike on their tank north of Bologna.

Castiglione dei Pepoli is a modern town that reflects a rich past.
The Chief of South African Air Force, Lieutenant General Fabian Zakes Msimang, hosted the Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (AAD 2016) at Air Force Base Waterkloof (AFB WKLF) over the period 14 to 18 September 2016. The exhibition was officially opened by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Honourable Ms Nosiviwe Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula, MP on 14 September 2016.

The Department of Defence (DOD), as part of the AAD 2016 partnership, was to exploit this event to ensure maximum local and international participation by exhibitors, trade visitors, official delegations and other stakeholders. The importance of AAD 2016 for the DOD included the opportunity to profile the primary objectives of the DOD in support of Government objectives and priorities.

The exhibition was scheduled for 3 trade days, 14 to 16 September 2016, and 2 public days, 17 and 18 September 2016. The show was enhanced by a comprehensive flying display programme encompassing military and civilian and recreational aircraft.

The Chief of Defence Reserves Division (Major General Roy Andersen) utilized AAD 2016 as a platform to promote and market the concept of the Defence Reserve System and briefed over one hundred members of the Defence Provincial Liaison Councils and Captains of Industry on the development of and other strategic issues regarding SANDF Reserves.
On Saturday, 17 September 2016, the Chief of Defence Reserves hosted a briefing session on Reserve Force matters for the Defence Reserves Board members, Reserve Force Council members, Defence Provincial Liaison Council members (Gauteng and Limpopo) and Captains of Industry. All the guests were then escorted by military police motorbikes from the Armscor Lapa in Erasmuskloof where they were briefed, to Air Force Base Waterkloof where the Air Show was taking place.

The Defence Reserves Division team and Provincial Office Gauteng had an indoor exhibition stand in a prime spot to promote and market the Reserve Force System and all services. The Reserve Force Volunteer Magazines and branded promotional items were distributed among the public.

Stakeholders and visitors came in their numbers to obtain more information about the South African Reserve Force and its operations.
The Defence Reserve provincial office North West formed part of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Human Resource Acquisition career exhibition that participated in the 2016 North West Show held from 27 May to 05 June 2016.

People of all ages within the Rustenburg area attended the exhibition, but first it was the preschool and primary school childrens’ turn. The majority of them were interested in what the Army does and most of them ended up with a toy gun in their hands.

The target group, which included Grade 11 and 12 learners, attended the career exhibition with the aim of seeking greener pastures as their careers have already been determined by the subjects they are currently taking. Their suggestion is to expose children to the career exhibitions of the Defence Force at an early stage so that the idea of a career in the Defence Force can be nurtured continuously until they take to it.

The parents are interested in the study opportunities for their children in the SANDF, but this has never been a coordinated effort between them and their children. We are of the opinion that career guidance to the young should start at an early stage to both parents and their offspring. Despite this, the fact is that most of the parents are concerned about the unemployment rate and are seeking solutions from career exhibitions.

Observing the parents’ and young ones’ attitude, the young ones always have a smile on their faces, but the question is: Will the four pillars of the Government keep those faces smiling forever? Those four legs are:

- Education
- Security
- Economy
- Health
It was a case of hitting two birds with one stone when Chief Defence Reserves annual dinner included a befitting farewell to three fine members of the force. The dinner was held at South African Military Health Services Training Officers’ Club in Thaba Tshwane on Thursday 01 September 2016.

This team-building exercise was aimed at boosting overall staff morale, celebrating achievements, building continued cohesion among the staff members of the division, and showcasing military culture to the letter while enhancing esprit de corps among the members. Col Zoleka Niyabo, SSO, acted as the mess president, with Lt Col Ronel Rademeyer as the Vice President.

Chief Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen, updated the guests with regard to the status of the Reserve Force Division. He shared the fair share of challenges and achievements of the division in the current financial year. He also enlightened the members with regard to the future plans of the division.

In her tribute to the three Reserves Force staff members (Col Gerrie Jansen van Rensburg, Lt M.J. Cuma, and WO1 C.G. Coetzee), Brig Gen Susan Debbie Molefe, Director Defence Reserves, said, “You have run the race of selfless military service; you stayed true to the course; you have completed the course, and you have accomplished the mission. Thank you for your contributions and continue to serve wherever you are.” She also shared priceless moments.

The ambiance at the club, food, drinks, good company and great conversation were the secret ingredients that made the evening a success. In the end the Chief’s guests enjoyed the lighter, fun-filled moments of the occasion, which entailed being “punished”, according to military traditions, for minor transgressions at the dinner tables. The dinner ended on a high note. In her closing remark, Col Niyabo praised the catering team of the club for an excellent and professionally prepared dinner.

WO1 C.G. Potts, Mr M.G. Maoto, Maj Gen R.C. Andersen, Pte M. Thipe, and Mr B. Maphaha formed part of the event. Maj Gen Andersen with Col G. Ramaremisa.
WO1 Coetzee, Mrs & Col Jansen van Rensburg.

Mr W. van der Schyf, chairperson of the DPLC Gauteng, Maj Gen Andersen, and Col Ramaremisa.

Mr T.P. Mocuminyane, Lt Col K.F. van Heerden, and Maj M.E. Podile enjoying the occasion.

Maj Gen R.C. Andersen addressing members in attendance.

Col A.B. Bridgens, SCWO J. Viljoen, and Col (Rev) T.J. Molaba enjoying the occasion.

Col Z. Niyabo, Mess President, Col S.A. Motswadira, and Col S. Majombozi enjoying a memorable evening.

Capt (SAN) S. Khumalo with Capt (SAN) N.V. Mahlake reminiscing about old times.

Brig Gen Molefe handing a crystal to WO1 Coetzee as a token of appreciation for the contributions he made to the Defence Reserves Division.
Defence Reserves Provincial Office Limpopo was given the thumbs-up by guests who attended the annual 2016 South African Air Force Air Power Capability Demonstration at Roodewal Bombing Range on 12th September 2016. The Office invited forty guests from different stakeholders to attend this uncommon occasion. Visitors were warmly welcomed at the Office’s Lapa by Commander J.T. Magonono, Staff Officer Class One Liaison.

After the welcoming, members were ready to be given a presentation on Reserves and their roles within and beyond South African borders. On conclusion of the presentation by Colonel F.R. van Rooyen, Senior Staff Officer Defence Reserves Provincial Office Limpopo, members were safely escorted to the bombing range by the Military Police for the demonstration as invited by the newly appointed Officer Commanding Air Force Base Makhado, Brigadier General A.R. Barends.

The event was also attended by learners from secondary schools within Polokwane and Vhembe District Municipality as it was an open day for the impressive demonstration. Members of the public were thrilled by the wonderful demonstrations by professional, highly trained South African Air Force fighter pilots. Spectators were surprised by the capabilities of the Rooivalk, Gripen, Oryx and the Hawks to mention but a few. Defence Reserves Provincial Office Limpopo utilized the platform for marketing and promoting of the Defence Reserves to invited guests and the general public who observed the exceptional occurrence. Many magazines and promotional items were distributed to relevant stakeholders who attended the event.

An enormous salute to Brigadier General A.R. Barends, Officer Commanding Air Force Base Makhado, and Colonel F.R. van Rooyen, Senior Staff Officer Defence Reserves Provincial Office Limpopo, for successfully hosting the 2016 Annual South African Air Force Air Power Capability Demonstration.

**BRAVO ZULU TO OUR FIGHTER PILOTS!!!**

1st Row/LR: Mrs Z. Ngendane (Member DPLC LP), Mr A. le Roux (Chairman DPLC LP), Col F.R. van Rooyen (SSO Def Res LP), Cdr J.T. Magonono (General Secretary DPLC LP), Mr J. Mashita (Member DPLC LP), Mr J. le Roux (Guest), Mr D. van Zyl (Guest).

2nd Row/LR: Mr F.M. Phokungwana (Guest), Mr M. Mlambo (Guest), Mr T.C. Magwai (Guest), Mr F.K. Nang (Guest), Ms L. Kellerman (Guest), Mrs M. Calitz (Guest), Mr L. Reynolds (Guest), Mr H. Calitz (Guest), Ms Z. Molai (Guest), Ms R. Ralebipi (Guest), Ms D. Phahlane (Guest), Mr J. Schutte (Guest).

3rd Row/LR: Mr J. Oosthuizen (Guest), Mr D. van Zyl (Guest), Mr F. Hattingh (Guest), Mr R. Murovhi (Guest), Ms A. Nethathe (Guest), Lt Col W. Madikoto (RCB), Ms D. Phahlane (Guest), Mr T. Selepe (Guest), Mr A. Pretorius (Guest), Mr W. Pretorius (Guest), Mr J. Duvenhage (Guest).
The Director of Defence Reserves, Brig Gen Debbie Molefe, hosted a memorable and poignant lunch to bid farewell to Lt Col Mthetho Julius Cuma (SO1 Provincial Defence Reserves Division Office North West), and Col Gerhardus Ignatius Jansen Van Rensburg (SSO Policy Defence Reserves Division Headquarters), at DHQ Defence Reserves Division on 31 October 2016. Lt Col M.J. Cuma served for 30 years in the SANDF and 2 years of his career in the Defence Reserves Division. Col G.I. Jansen van Rensburg served for 41 years in the SANDF and 16 years in the Defence Reserves Division.

Senior officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and internal staff members of the Def Res Div were present. The farewell was held to appreciate the positive contribution, integrity, loyalty, dedication and determination of the two senior officers who were retiring and being declared as veterans respectively. Brig Gen S.D. Molefe presented them with certificates of service and crystals as tokens of appreciation.

Paying tribute to the retiring officers in her speech, the Director of Defence Reserves Division, Brig Gen S.D. Molefe, said: “I wish you nothing but the best in your future, you will be missed by colleagues and the entire staff of the Defence Reserves Division. You will be called in the future when your service or assistance is required. Do not forget about us. Keep in touch and remain friends of the Reserves”.

In his remarks Col G.I. Jansen van Rensburg said: “I would like to thank every staff member of the Defence Reserves Division for their contribution. At the end of the day I can sit and say there is no one who did not participate in the forming of my career and character”. Lt Col M.J. Cuma expressed his appreciation to everyone who had supported him during his career and said: “I feel honoured because I started from the bottom up to where I am today. I started reporting to a corporal and now I am retiring under the command of the Generals, therefore, I can tell the difference across the ranks. However, the highlight of my career in the SANDF is that I never knew what I know now, I never saw what I see today. I have seen the beauty of this world through the South African National Defence Force”.

It was a day of mixed emotions as the Defence Reserves Division team was paying tribute to the two senior officers who had served the Reserve Force selflessly and with dignity and integrity. After the speeches, staff members ate and drank what was available on the day. Most importantly, they began to engage and interact with one another. They spoke about the great moments they shared together and the challenges that their directorate had to face.
The SANDF GROUP LIFE INSURANCE SCHEME (GLIS) was established in 1979, and during the amalgamation of Forces in 1994, it was accepted as a benefit for the members of the SANDF. The AIM of the SANDF GLIS is to provide financial support to the families in the case of sudden death or disability of the main member.

Our scheme is underwritten by SANLAM and in June 2013, the SA Army Foundation was the appointed Administrator to attend to the members’ needs such as the payment of claims, enquiries and the Scheme administration.

For all uniformed members serving in the SANDF, Regular and Reserve Force, it is compulsory to belong to the SANDF GLIS. Contributing to the Scheme ensures that the member and his / her family have the following cover:

- Death cover
- Permanent and total disability cover
- Military disability cover
- Funeral cover
- Burial repatriation cover

**Death Benefit:** The scheme provides benefits to uniformed members of the SANDF under all circumstances, and guarantees Death Benefits to its members whilst on deployment inside or outside the borders of the RSA – Death Benefit is for the main member only.

**Total and Permanent Disability Benefit:** This benefit is a lump sum (equal to the Death Benefit) payment to a member who is permanently and totally disabled, directly and exclusively as a result of a bodily injury or an illness and is totally and permanently and continuously prevented from following his / her regular occupation.

**Military Disability Benefit:** A lump sum (R 75 000) payment to a member who is permanently and totally unfit for Service in the SANDF and has been discharged from the SANDF based on the ruling of a Medical Board (DD 50), directly and exclusively as a result of a bodily injury or an illness is totally and permanently and continuously prevented from following his own or similar occupation according to his / her training and experience.

**Funeral Benefit:** Funeral cover is payable if a member, or his / her spouse or child, passes on. The funeral benefit applies to unmarried children. The benefit is available for a full-time student until the age of 26 and a child with physical or mental handicap who is not self-supporting (providing this handicap commenced before the age of 21 or before the age of 26 as a full-time student), paid within this 48 Hours on receipt of the Death Certificate.

**Burial Repatriation Benefit:** The body of the deceased will be transported to the final funeral home closest to the place of burial of the deceased at no additional cost. This benefit provides transportation arrangements for one relative to accompany the mortal remains to the nearest funeral home of choice closest to the place of burial – South of the 22nd degree latitude.

**Contact Numbers:** SANDF Funeral Scheme
086 000 4080 / 011 745 9041

All the above-mentioned benefits are APPLICABLE to all uniformed members serving in the SANDF.
Applicable to Reserve Force Members.
As indicated, the introduction to the Summary of the SANDF GLIS policy can be found below. Please take note that currently our Reserve Force Members only qualify for the cover / benefit as indicated in the table below (benefit Category 1 & 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme codes and Policy numbers</th>
<th>P13858 / 17397546x7 / P22176 / 19173658x6</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scheme underwritten by Sanlam</td>
<td>As from 1 February 1999 and for Funeral Benefits as from 1 April 2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy anniversary</td>
<td>July - Benefits below effective 1 January 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eligibility for membership</td>
<td>Members of Regular Force, Reserve Force on call-up duty and members who exercise the Continuation Cover Option (for Regular and Reserve Force members)</td>
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### Benefits

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<th>Benefit Category</th>
<th>Monthly Premium</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Funeral main member</th>
<th>Funeral - Spouse &amp; Child age 14 - 21</th>
<th>Funeral Child age 6 - 14</th>
<th>Funeral Child age 0 - 6</th>
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<td>R17 500</td>
<td>R8 750</td>
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</table>

A Reserve Force Member is covered for a full month if call-up is shorter than one month and premium for a full month is payable.

**Reserve Force members - Age:**
Benefits cease at age 65 (for death and funeral benefits when on call-up duty)

**Cover Continuation Option:**
On retirement or resignation of a member from the Regular Force or after completion of call-up duty for a Reserve Force member, an option may be exercised to continue with death and funeral benefits until death of the main member:

- This option must be exercised prior to resignation, retirement or call-up for duty, but no later than 7 (seven) days after retirement, resignation or call-up for duty.
- The cover is limited to the cover that the member enjoyed on the date of termination of service and cannot be increased at any point - a lower option may be chosen for continuation.
- This option is not available to a member leaving the scheme as a result of disablement.
• Reserve Force members exercising the continuation option and who get called up for Active Military Service, will have “double cover” Both the benefits will be paid out – seeing that one premium gets deducted from the pay roll and the other premium is a debit order payment.

**Premium Waiver and cover continuation:**
When the principal member’s service with the employer is terminated as a result of ill-health (i.e. total and permanent occupational disability as approved by Sanlam or military approved disability), the funeral benefit of the principal member and the funeral benefit in respect of his/her qualifying spouse and qualifying children is retained without further payment of premiums, up to the death of the principal member.

**Disability Benefits:**
Only apply to Reserve Force members on active military service.

**Notification of a claim:**

• No benefit is paid in terms of this schedule if Sanlam is not notified of the claim for the benefit within six months:
  • after the member’s death for death benefits; or
  • of the start of the waiting period in the case of Total and Permanent Disability (TPDB); or
  • of the member’s Military disability; and
  • after a member’s or a family member’s death in the case of funeral benefits

or if all the documentation required by Sanlam in respect of the claim is not submitted to Sanlam within:

• thirty six months after the member’s death for death benefits; or
• twelve months of the start of the waiting period in the case of TPDB; or
• twelve months of the member’s Military disability; and
• within thirty six months after a member’s or a family member’s death in the case of funeral benefits.

**Administrator of the Scheme:**
The Chief Administrator and this team is committed to the one-Force concept and therefore every opportunity is utilised by the Administrator to address any matter, either with the SANDF GLIS Board, the Underwriter or the Chief Director Personnel Payment, in order to enhance this concept regarding the Scheme. All documentation and correspondence can be addressed to the Administrator of the scheme as agreed to by Sanlam.

Their contact details are as follows:

Tel: (012) 675-9400/4/8
SA Army Foundation Offices, 31 Superdrive Avenue, Clubview Ext 24 or P.O. Box 13085, Clubview 0014
First World War Memorials on which South African Commonwealth War Casualties are Commemorated-Part 1

Article and Photographs by: Captain (SAN) (Ret) C.Ross

Introduction
South Africans participated in many theatres of the First World War. These include the German South West African, German East African, Western Front and the Palestinian campaigns. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Database, there are a total of 10 129 South Africans Commonwealth war casualties from the First World War. Seven thousand two hundred and ninety (7 290) (6 683 known and 607 unknown) First World War casualties are buried in 602 cemeteries while 2 823 First World War casualties are commemorated on 21 memorials. This does not include the 1 750 members of the South African Native Labour Corps and the 306 from the South African Book of Remembrance whose names are in the process of being added to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Casualty Database.

Thiepval Memorial, France

During 1915 and the early part of 1916, the war on the Western Front remained largely static with small attempts by either side to break out. These incidents usually lead to heavy loss of life. This also saw the introduction of the use of gas. On 01 July 1916, thirteen Commonwealth Divisions launched an offensive over the area Gommecourt to Maricourt. This offensive was supported by a French assault further south. The Commonwealth assault was preceded by an artillery bombardment lasting several days. The initial assault failed and resulted in huge loss of life. So the Battle of the Somme began. It is reported that on the first day, the Commonwealth forces suffered casualties in excess of 60 000.

On 15 July 1916, more than 3 000 South Africans entered Delville Wood with the order to hold the wood at all costs. This would become one of the greatest moments in the military history of South Africa. Notwithstanding severe artillery bombardment, the South Africans held the wood until they were relieved. On 20 July 1916, less than 150 South Africans walked out of the wood. During the Battle of Delville Wood, more than 2 000 South Africans were wounded and evacuated from the wood. One hundred and fifty-two (152) South Africans (87 known and 65 unknown) are buried in the Delville Wood Cemetery. A South African, Private William Frederick Faulds, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his action on 16 July 1916.

The German forces were well prepared and offered severe resistance to the Commonwealth forces and, on occasion, launched counterassaults. The village of Thiepval was one of the main objectives of the Battle of the Somme and was finally taken during September 1916. The Battle of the Somme finally ended during November 1916, when the winter weather set in.

The Thiepval Memorial was erected to commemorate those who have no known grave and covers the period up to 18 March 1918. More than 72 000 casualties from the United Kingdom and South Africa are commemorated on the panels of the memorial. More than 90 % of the casualties died between July and November 1916. This includes 833 South Africans, who have no known grave, and are mainly from the Battle of Delville Wood. Those commemorated are 209 are from the 1st Regiment, 247 from the 2nd Regiment, 189 from the 3rd Regiment and 185 from the 4th Regiment. There are also 3 members from the Bailey's Sharpshooters.

The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Memorial with equal number of French and Commonwealth casualties buried in the cemetery at the foot of the memorial.
**Hollybrook Memorial, United Kingdom**

One of the challenges facing the Imperial War Graves Commission (later changed to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) was how to commemorate those who have no grave but the sea. Separate memorials were erected for members of the Navies and the Hollybrook Memorial was erected to commemorate those soldiers and airmen/women who died at sea and have no known grave. More than 1 900 servicemen and women are commemorated on the memorial. The first name on the memorials is that of Field Marshall Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State of War, who died when the Battle Cruiser HMS Hampshire was mined and sank off the coast of Scapa Flow on 05 June 1916.

Seven hundred and seventeen (717) South Africans are commemorated on the memorial. Five hundred and ninety-seven (597) of these are casualties from the biggest maritime disaster in the history of South Africa when the SS Mendi sank in the English Channel following a collision with the SS Darro in the early hours of 21 February 1917. The SS Mendi had departed from Cape Town on 16 January 1917 with the 5th Battalion of the South African Native Labour Corps, destined for service in Europe.

Of the additional 120 South Africans who are commemorated on the memorial, 25 are casualties from the SS Galway Castle that was torpedoed in the Atlantic on 12 September 1918.

**Menin Gate Memorial – Belgium**

This is one of the four memorials commemorating those with no known grave from the Ypres Salient. The Salient varied in size and shape throughout the war. Following the initial success of the British Expeditionary Force in October – November 1914, the Ypres Salient was occupied by the Germans during the second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. During this second battle, poisonous gas was used for the first time. The front remained largely stable until 1917.

The third Battle of Ypres was launched in June 1917 and was aimed at diverting German attention away from a weakened assault by French forces further south. This initial assault was successful in dislodging the Germans from the Messines Ridge; however, the main assault, which began at the end of July, was soon bogged down and the campaign ended in November 1917 with the capture of Passchendaele.

On 20th September 1917, the second stage of that Flanders campaign designed to capture the Gheluvelt Plateau began with an eight-mile front attack involving approximately 65 000 troops. At 5:40, the South African Infantry Brigade attached to the 9th Scottish Division, assembled in its front positions near Frezenberg (2 km west of Zonnebeke) and advanced in the direction of Zonnebeke behind a smoke curtain and creeping barrage. The churned up landscape was littered with wrecked tanks, shattered trees and treacherous water-filled shell-holes. Belts of barbed wire protected the massive defensive fields of concrete blockhouses (pillboxes) from which hails of machine gun fire swept the low ground. The South African Lance Corporal W.H. Hewitt captured one of these pillboxes single-handedly and received the VC for his exploit. Some three hours later, the four SA regiments had reached their assigned objectives, but at a high cost. Of the 2 576 men that started the attack, 1 255 were listed as killed, wounded or missing. More than 54 000 Commonwealth casualties are commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial of which 560 are South Africans.

The memorial has become a major tourist attraction, as there is a small Last Post ceremony every night at 20:00 local time. It is attended by thousands of tourists every year.
Pozieres Memorial – France

During March and April 1918, the Allied or Commonwealth 5th Army came under severe attack from the numerically superior German Army, driving the 5th Army back across the former battlefields of the Somme. On 08 August 1918, the Allied or Commonwealth 5th Army launched a major offensive to victory, forcing the German Army back across the battlefields of the Somme.

The memorial commemorates the Commonwealth casualties that died in the Somme over the period 21 March to 07 August 1918. More than 14 000 casualties are commemorated on the memorial. The 324 South Africans commemorated on the memorials are 111 from the 1st Regiment, 103 from the 2nd Regiment, 5 from the 3rd Regiment, 101 from the 4th Regiment, 2 from the South African Medical Service and 2 from the South African Signal Corps.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Database for the photos of the memorials and to Colonel Maryna Fondse for information on the involvement of the South Africans during the Third Battle of Ypres.
On 20 November 2016, the Transvaal Horse Artillery held a memorial service to commemorate the Battle of Sandfontein which occurred in the then German South West Africa on 26 September, 1914.

During the Battle, which ended in defeat for the South African forces, the THA gunners fired until their ammunition was exhausted. The fire of the THA was accurate and the gunners showed great courage. Six members of the Regiment lost their lives. The roll of honour reads:

- BSM A.E. Harris
- Bdr F A. Key
- Bdr N J. Pickering
- Dvr Cross
- Dvr Marteen
- Cpl A. Sondana

The service was conducted by the SA Army Artillery Formation chaplain FV Nyanda. The parade commander was 2Lt Mthembu and the parade warrant officer SSgt Pico. The gun troop was commanded by 2Lt Kgori. The first wreath was laid by the Officer Commanding, Major Agenbag.

After the service the Honorary Colonel, Major General Andersen, presented a lecture on the Battle of Sandfontein.
The troops on parade

2 Lt Mthembu

13 Pdr gun and limber

Gv1 gunners ready to fire the first salvo

The OC prepares to lay his wreath

13 Pdr gun and wreaths guarded by the sentry
A number of “combat-ready tests” around the world are aimed at preparing soldiers for future battlefields. However, battlefields require a unique way of preparation and training to prepare soldiers for battle. The SANDF hosts an internationally recognised competition annually, supported by the SA Army Infantry Formation, SANDF Reserves, and the Reserve Force Council. The SANDF can truly be proud of its Reserve Force, because during the Milcomp 2016 in Potchefstroom, it once again became evident that South African soldiers are improving remarkably. Since entering this competition, South African soldiers were at all times competitive in the various categories of the competition and were rewarded in the top three positions, against international competition.

Upon entering the stage at the awards function during the international competition in Spain 2016, the South African Team received a standing ovation for winning the obstacle course team event. They were complimented on their teamwork, spirit, discipline, and above all, their comradeship.

A standing ovation is a form of applause where members of a seated audience stand up while applauding after extraordinary performances of particularly high acclaim. In Ancient Rome, returning military commanders (such as Marcus Licinius Crassus after his defeat of Spartacus) whose victories did not quite meet the requirements of a triumph but which were still praiseworthy were celebrated with an ovation instead. Standing ovations are considered to be a special honour.

During the GOC SA Army Infantry Formation, Maj Gen R. Mphwanya’s, opening address at this year’s competition in October in Potchefstroom, he highlighted that the participation in the last ten years had improved, not only on a national level but also in the international arena. He encouraged members present to adopt the “going back to basics” notion, and said he would strive towards improving and managing the current readiness and multi-skilling in order to train soldiers to achieve commendable combat readiness.
He explained that the Military Skills Competition is an extreme method to test certain skills and that it would take much endurance, determination and hard work to declare soldiers combat ready. Reflecting back on the 2015 competition, there were only three international countries that participated in the competition. In 2016, five international countries competed against each other and SA. Botswana neighbouring South Africa and four Western countries (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) endured the South African military skills and hospitality.

To be part of a winning team takes strength, courage, companionship, pride, sense of belonging, cooperation, and most of all, self-discipline. Members of the SANDF started taking part in the Military Skills Competition from 2006 and over the past ten years have become a force to be reckoned with. Competitive musketry, the level of strength, fitness and a will to win demonstrate that the military training of the SANDF remains at a level to produce combat-ready soldiers.

After 10 years of local and a number of international competitions, the results of participants during the Military Skills Competition 2016 indicated once again that it is an appropriate method to test the level of basic combat readiness. It was remarkable to acknowledge that for the first time, the attendance was spread between 4 international and one boarding country, namely Botswana. Unfortunately, Lesotho withdrew from the competition.

The obstacle course test included running and obstacle drills, which included a challenging circuit of agility exercises, including sprints, jumps, and balance beam walks. The obstacle course is much like a cross-fit training session with a barrage of whole-body movements and high-intensity anaerobic challenges. The obstacle course requires a lot of strength, fitness, a strong mindset, and endurance.
During the water obstacle, many newcomers showed that this obstacle is becoming a popular individual challenge event. Swimmers chased their competitors, and the associated team mates made no effort not to share their excitement and support. However, there is still a great concern about the number of soldiers that cannot swim at all.

The swimming obstacle course is by no way just an easy way of swimming. It is a very challenging event that requires upper-body strength and good swimming skills. All obstacles represent a scenario that you might find during employment in battle. It was a very appraisable event and those who swam good times set a higher standard for the international event in 2017.

A different course outlay was set up for grenade throwing and was more conventionally correct when soldiers were exposed to a real scenario. The various targets were more realistic, and soldiers showed that they enjoyed this kind of competition. Both female and male soldiers did well, but some needed to practice their direction. Some soldiers showed unbelievable accuracy and distance.
During the GOC SA Army Infantry Formation, Maj Gen R. Mphwanya’s openings address, he urged soldiers to use every opportunity to train for mental and physical fitness. Only well-groomed and fit soldiers will get the opportunity to participate internationally. Discipline remains an individual responsibility, and he reminded the members that there are specific days when soldiers get an opportunity to use facilities to train.

Fitness and strength were probably the main reason why outstanding results could be achieved. The immense heat did not make the circumstances easy but still, the competition had everybody participating either as competitors or fans, and lastly but not least, those who assisted in preparing the event. It was by far the best competition thus far, but without the contribution of all the assisting staff, it would not have been achieved.

A special word of acknowledgement to WO1 Buys and his team members from SAASIC who kept all the logistic arrangements in a faultless manner. Also to the members from the RFC Council that helped with the programme, time keeping and other administrative manners.

At the end of the competition, a tired but proud group of soldiers and management staff waited in eagerness to see who the winners were. During the various speeches of the high-ranking officials, namely the Deputy Chief of the SA Army, Maj Gen L.R. Smith, the Chief Defence Reserves, Maj Gen R.C. Andersen, and the Chairperson of the Reserve Force Council, Dr (Col) J.L. Job, were congratulated all members and management staff for a praiseworthy competition. Milcomp 2016 was a great success, and during the closing address of the Chairperson of the Reserve Force Council, Dr (Col) J.L. Job, he extended an invitation to all Arms of Service to enter the Milcomp 2017.

The Deputy Chief of the SA Army, Maj Gen L.R. Smith, shares the happiness with members who took the trophy for best overall Reserve Force team during the Milcomp 2016. From left to right: Capt Le Roux (3 Para Bn), Maj Labuschagne (3 Para Bn), Maj Gen L.R. Smit (Deputy Chief SA Army), Rfn Smit (3 Para Bn), and Rfn Mdialose (3 Para Bn).
Brig Gen M. de Goede, Director Force Preparation SA Army Infantry Formation, recognised the top three teams during the Milcomp 2016: Potchefstroom – first place; South Africa Reserves – second place; South Africa Regulars; and Germany – third place.

Lt Col Uys van der Westhuizen, together with the International SANDF Milcomp members that went to Spain, gave the management staff members of Virgin Active Potchefstroom exposure to how it is to swim in uniform. They were impressed and had immense respect for the discipline and effort that the soldiers displayed.

During Maj Gen Smith, Deputy Chief SA Army’s welcoming address he extended his gratitude to all the participants and management staff for a very successful competition. He mentioned that the overall scores and individual times proved that the Military Skills Competition is a praiseworthy manner to prove the combat readiness of soldiers. He conveyed an invitation on behalf of the Chief of SA Army Lt Gen L. Yam, that more Southern African Countries should be included for the near future.

Dr (Col) J.L. Job, Reserve Force Council Chairman mentioned that the Milcomp 2016 Competition was a historic event. 2016 was the 10th time that the competition was presented in South Africa. As one of the founder members of the Military Skills Competition he praised the participants for their courage, dedication and motivation for their participation. He urged all members to for better results and to strive be proud of their achievements. He also mentioned that even though the National Defence Force and specifically the Reserve Force is going through a difficult financial phase, the Reserve Force Council will continue to support the Milcomp financially.

Maj Gen Andersen, Chief Defence Reserves congratulates Tpr Neethling for his achievement while participating in the grenade throwing. Even though his posture is likely to be the smallest during the competition he still proved that the distance lies within the technique. A member from the Netherlands came first from the five international countries that partook during 2016.
Speech by Major General Laurence Smith, Deputy Chief SA Army, at the Awards Function at the Military Skills Competition on 29 October 2016


It was no easy road and we had to learn a number of lessons over the years; luckily we could learn from our international counterparts who have been exposed for a much longer period to this type of competition and had a sound understanding of the physical and mental challenges involved. The words “Military Skills” can be interpreted in many ways, but the outcome of this is the fact that every man or woman in a military force needs to know and be able to execute the basic soldiering skills that are required to ensure proficiency in combat.

These basic skills are the foundation on which further military education, development and training are built. Many of these skills are part and parcel of the annual Chief SANDF Military Skills Competition. During this competition individuals and unit teams are exposed to some of these different basic military skills in a competitive environment. The readiness of a team and individual soldiers is measured against that of comrades with a tangible end result.

In short, every competitor needs to conquer their fear; be prepared to push the limit of their mind and body and still be able to function effectively irrespective of the odds against him or her. These skills, if properly attained, enhance discipline, confidence, commitment, team work, overall fitness and contribute towards honing some of the most basic military combat skills.

A special thanks to the Officer Commanding 4 Artillery Regiment and his unit for once again ensuring adequate accommodation and facilities in support of this prestigious event. The support team from SAASIC Reserve has outdone themselves in making sure that the event ran smoothly. Lt Col Holder – many thanks to you and your team.

Also to the Reserve Force Council for their financial and moral support as well as contributing to the development of the annual national and international Military Skills Competitions. Thank you very much for your inspiration and involvement. Many thanks and gratitude also to the office of the Chief of Defence Reserves for the liaison and coordination to ensure the participation of the countries represented here today.

The planning and leadership from the officer in charge, Lt Col van der Westhuizen has resulted in a very successful competition which we can all be proud of. He has been involved in this competition for the past 10 years, since its inception. He is currently serving as a technical jury member in the international environment and has represented the SANDF overseas 9 times. The development and progress of our team in the international arena is a testimony to his dedication and commitment and he is an excellent example to all of us. Uys, thank you for your contribution.

The feedback that I have received on the positive outcome of this event is something that we as South Africans can all be proud of. We are honoured and privileged to host our international friends and comrades in arms. Your presence added to the competitive spirit and our exposure to the wider international military community. I am looking forward to seeing all of you, and I hope we can in future also entice another few of our SADC and African friends to join us for this competition.

In closing, I challenge all our Arms of Service to expand their participation in both the number of teams and representatives participating in this event. This challenge is also extended to our female soldiers – I hope to see many more of you here in future.

I thank you. ☺
### Shooting

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Background

The annual international military skills competition was held in Spain from 30 July 2016 to 7 August 2016. The competition is a method of measuring the capability and ability of the soldiers of different nations with regard to their competencies in basic military skills. All of these basic skills, combined with the normal SANDF combat ready requirements, enable a soldier to be declared combat ready. These skills include land and water obstacle crossings, shooting with a pistol and a rifle at different targets (one target simulating marksman skills and another simulating three different enemy positions forcing the shooter to shift his/her aiming point), hand grenade throwing, map reading skills, range estimations and a military speed march including orientation, whilst carrying two weapons, by means of military maps and aerial photos without any electronic aids such as GPS et cetera.

The competition is a three-man team event executed over several days and includes a three-day training period in order to prepare and familiarise the competitors with the terrain, the obstacles, and the different weapons of the host country.

The SANDF was once again fortunate to send two teams to this competition due to a combined effort between the Defence Reserve Division, the Reserve Force Council, and the South African Army. These soldiers attended several training camps in order to prepare themselves for this gruelling competition.

The team consisted of Maj Labuschagne (3 Para Bn), Sgt Daniels (SAIL), Cpl Hlope (UMR), Cpl Tshikare (2 Sig Reg), Tpr Neethling (RMR), Rfn Mdalose (3 Para Bn) and Rfn Smit (3 Para Bn). Capt Ditshego (SAAF) was the team manager, and Capt Le Roux (3 Para Bn) was the instructor. Lt Col Van der Westhuijzen was the OIC as well as a technical jury member for the competition. Indeed a formidable team.

The team departed on 27 July 2016 and arrived on the afternoon of 28 July in a very hot (40º) and humid Madrid. It was quite a shocking experience, travelling from a cool 16º in South Africa.

Competition

The first event was the shooting competition. Both teams did well with the rifle, and Cpl Hlope almost achieved a full score: 174/180.
The next event was the land and water obstacles. Both our teams did extremely well and came respectively 1st and 2nd – the first time ever that both our teams ended in the top two positions together. The swimming event also went very well and many complimentary remarks by different competitors were made about the major improvement in our soldiers’ basic military skills.

In these two events, ZAF1 came 1st and ZAF 2 came 3rd in the combined obstacles event. Unfortunately, medals and trophies were issued only to the team that achieved the 1st position; otherwise, we would have had two teams on the podium.

Many teams were disqualified during the military march, but both SANDF teams were able to finish extremely well in this event. Again, it was the best ever for South Africa.

Extraordinary Achievements

Our soldiers are definitely making their mark in this prestigious international competition. We have received numerous compliments, and many nations congratulated us on a job well done. This was clearly demonstrated during the awards ceremony. ZAF1 was called forward and the whole congress stood up, clapped their hands, whistled and cheered our team whilst they were receiving their trophies. Again, it was a first for South Africa.

Another major compliment was given to the team during the gala dinner.

South Africa was the only nation that was thanked by name for their professional military conduct and participation in this competition. The technical jury member from South Africa was called forward and received a plaque for his contribution and military ethos during the execution of his duties. South Africa was also given the opportunity to hand over the first trophies of the competition during the awards ceremony.

These four incidents clearly indicate the calibre of our soldiers in a competitive international environment and emphasise the importance of interacting with different nations in order to measure our basic military skills capability to that of the international military community. The branding of our military culture in such an environment must never be underestimated.

South Africa, more specifically the SANDF, can truly say we were measured and not found wanting.
INTRODUCTION

The Commander–in-Chief of the Netherlands Armed Forces formally invited the SA Army Reserve to participate in the Netherlands International Shooting Competition for Reserves. The invitation was for a Reserve Force team of 10 members plus a coach and manager to take part in their annual Skill at Arms Meeting at the Infantry School in Harskamp Netherlands (NISC) over the period 05 to 12 October 2016.

This is an annual event and a joint venture between the Reserve Force Council and the SA Army. The RFC sponsors the airfares, overseas allowances, entry fees, accommodation and meals. This forms part of their annual plan and the budget is received from the Ministry of Defence. The SA Army supplies the Item 10 Manday wages, the training equipment and ammunition. These SA Army Reserve teams have been participating with great success over the past 5 years. The 2013 overall championship in Netherlands was won by the South African team. The success of this team in winning this competition at the 2013 Championship had a major positive impact on how the other participating countries viewed the standard of training of the South African Army members.

BACKGROUND

In early 2000 it was decided to formalise the Gold Cup Shooting competition more closely with the Chief Director Force Preparation at Army HQ owing to its training format. This led to the establishment of ARSA, the Army Reserve Shooting Association, later to become SAARSA, SA Army Reserve Shooting Association. This further developed the competition into the Chief SA Army Combat Rifle Championship where over 400 Reserves from the SA Army compete for top honours.

The levelling of the playing field between the very good shooting units and the newcomers necessitated the introduction of a development class. This enabled individuals who had not yet had exposure to shooting to compete against members of equivalent standard. After firing in the competition for three years, they are moved up from the development class to the open class guidance of Dr Sheryl Calder, called the Eye Gym Program. This program is computer based using a keyboard and mouse to enhance hand-eye co-ordination which is ideal for training shottists. This program for the development shottists was sponsored by funds from the RFC with exceptionally positive results.
There is also a category for females to compete and this is also proving very popular with over fifty ladies competing this year. This led to a rejuvenation of shooting within the Reserve units and an improvement in the overall shooting skills of these units and in the SA Army as a whole. The development program was further expanded to include four development training camps of three days each. The first three are held in Potchefstroom supported by Regt Mooirivier and the final one at the Atlantis Shooting range in Cape Town, his training is facilitated by Cape Town Rifles. The reason for the shift to Cape Town for the final training is that the SA Police Swat team utilises the Colt M4 Rifle and the Glock 17 pistol and made these weapons available for the development training. These are the same as the weapons that the team utilise in the Netherlands competition. The team also makes use of a program which has been developed by the University of Stellenbosch under the guidance of Dr Sheryl Calder called the Eye Gym Program. The program is computer based using the keyboard and mouse to enhance eye-hand coordination, which is ideal for training shooting skills. This program for the development shotsists was sponsored by funds from the RFC with exceptionally positive results. The Team selection is now made up of the top 3 members from the open section, the top 3 members from the development section and the top 3 ladies, all of whom having fired in the current local competition.

**Tour programme**

- Thursday 6 Nov 2016 arrive in the Netherlands.
- Departure from Schiphol International Airport to Infantry School at Harskamp.
- Friday 7 Nov 2016 weapons orientation and briefing at the Netherlands Infantry School.
- Saturday 8 Nov 2016 Opening parade and movement to shooting ranges – Compete in 2 x rifle events and 1 x pistol event. Utilise indoor rifle simulator.
- Participate in Gala evening and prize-giving ceremony.
- Sunday 9 Nov 2016 visit Belgium battlefield sites hosted by the Belgium Reserve team.
- Monday 10 Nov 2016 visit and view museums in Amsterdam.
- Tuesday 11 Nov 2016 - visit to SA Embassy in The Hague and meet with Ambassador, His Excellency V.B. Koloane. Depart to Schipol International Airport to return to RSA.

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**Team composition.**

**Team Manager:**
WO1 D. du Toit SA Army HQ.

**Team Coach:**
Col R. van Zanten SA Army Infantry Formation HQ.

**Team members:**
MWO P. Dias Lobo Fort iKapa.
Sgt B. Seleka Regt De La Rey.
Sgt E. Roux Regt Mooi Rivier (F).
Bdr D. Rossouw Vrystaat Artillerie Regt (F).
Cpl N. Nhlapo- Natal Carbineers.
L/Cpl T. Viti - Cape Town Rifles (F).
Rfn V. Bunge- Natal Carbineers.
Rfn A. Fortmann- Natal Carbineers.
Rfn P. Mokgheti- Regt De La Rey.
Defence Reserves of the following countries participated in NISC 2016: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This included 157 participants.

**Competition Exercises**

**Rifle Colt M4 .556 mm**
Assault Rifle with Aim Point Red Dot Sight.

This series is fired at 100 m, 200 m and 300 m. Fired in the standing, kneeling and prone positions. Fired rapid fire with compulsory magazine change (to ensure that the member’s rifle drills are up to scratch). Timings are 10 rounds in 30 seconds in the standing position, 10 rounds in 20 seconds in the kneeling position and 10 rounds in the prone position in 20 seconds.

**C7 (M 16) .556mm assault rifle.**
This series is fired at 100 m, 200 m and 300 m. Fired in the standing, kneeling, sitting and prone positions. Fired rapid fire with compulsory magazine change (to ensure that the member’s rifle drills are up to scratch). Timings are 10 rounds in 30 seconds in the standing position, 10 rounds in 20 seconds in the kneeling position, 10 rounds in the sitting position in 20 seconds and 10 rounds in the prone position in 20 seconds. This exercise is fired with normal iron sights.

**Glock 17 9 mm Parabellum Pistol**

This series is fired at 25 m. Fired in the standing, kneeling, and prone positions. Fired rapid fire with compulsory magazine change (to ensure that the member’s pistol drills are up to scratch). Timings are 10 rounds in 30 seconds in the standing position, 10 rounds in 20 seconds in the kneeling position and 10 rounds in the prone position in 20 seconds. This exercise is fired with normal iron sights.

**Targets that were utilised**
The day’s shooting was followed by an elaborate prize-giving and gala evening.

RESULTS

**INDIVIDUAL OVERALL**
Combined weapons, rifle Colt M4, Colt C7 and pistol Glock - 2nd place Sgt B. Seleka.
Pistol Glock 17 3rd place -Sgt B. Seleka.
Rifle Colt M4 Aimpoint 2nd place-Rfn A. Fortmann.
Rifle Colt M4 Aimpoint 3rd place- Rfn T. Mokgheti.
This was out of 157 competitors.

**TEAM EVENTS**
Rifle Colt Aimpoint 1st place- SA Army Reserve Team.
Rifle C7 4th place- SA Army Reserve Team.
Pistol Glock 17 3rd place -SA Army Reserve.

**OVERALL COMBINED RESULTS**

Teams
1. Belgium.
2. South Africa.

This was out of 14 countries.

Rfn Mokgheti receiving his prize for 2nd place overall in the Rifle Colt M4 class.
Sgt Ben Seleka came 2nd overall in the competition. A truly remarkable achievement against stiff international competition. Earlier in the year he won the Chief SA Army Combat Rifle Championship for Reserves at De Brug Bloemfontein.

Rfn Mokgheti, MWO Dias Lobi and L/Cpl Viti receiving their trophies.

The team was hosted by the Belgium team on a visit to Tyne Cot War Cemetery in Zonnebeke in Belgium.

Visit to the SA Embassy at the Hague.
The Reserve team arranged to pay a courtesy visit to the SA Embassy at The Hague and had tea with the Ambassador, His Excellency Ambassador V.M. Koloane. The Ambassador was truly happy with the successes of the South African team in the international arena.

This concluded a superb tour whereby the members really benefitted. The team would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the Reserve Force Council and the Chief of the SA Army for having given them this opportunity.
On Saturday morning, 30 January 2016, the scene was set for the change-of-command parade when Lt Col M.A. Bennet, RD handed over the OC’s Blackthorn walking stick, symbol of command as a symbolic gesture of relinquishing command, to Lt Col W.W. Kinghorn, MMM, DWD. The parade took place at the Heidelberg Army Gymnasium with distinguished guests as witnesses of this esteemed parade, which was executed with precision.

The invited guests included members of the Defence Force, Reserve Force, friends and family. Present were His Excellency Liam MacGabhann, the ambassador of the Republic of Ireland, Lt Gen (Ret) T. Nkabinde, Maj Gen R.C. Andersen, CSSA, SD, SM, MMM, JCD, Chief Army Reserves, Brig Gen B. Gqoboka, Chief of Staff, SA Army Infantry Formation, representing the GOC Infantry Formation and Col Brian Molefe, Honorary Colonel of the SA Irish Regiment.

The marching column was led by the celebrated SA Irish Regimental Pipes and Drums. The band was proudly commanded by Pipe Maj Craig Herwill and Drum Major Matthew Buttle. The band’s performance was complimented by the well-executed company in review parade, trained by Master Warrant Officer G.S. Moseki and commanded by the parade commander, Maj J.A. van Straaten.

The SA Irish Regiment is an Infantry Regiment and forms part of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). As part of the South African Army Reserve Force, all the Regiment’s members have civilian professions and execute their military duties after hours and whenever required to do so. The Regiment can be found at the Kensington Garrison in Johannesburg. When it was first formed in 1914, it was exclusively established as an Irish Regiment, but it has developed since then to become a unit that represents all cultures in South Africa. It is a regiment that in itself has exceptional traditions and rituals representing the Irish fighting spirit. Today, the term “Irish” refers to selfless service and a culture of serving your country.

Part of the rich history and culture is the Regiment Motto “Faugh-A-Ballagh” which in no ambiguous way demands: “Clear the Way”. The original motto of the Regiment (1914) was that of the Royal Irish Rifles. Later the Royal Ulster Rifles used “Quis Separabit?” that challenged the enemy: “Who will separate us?” During World War 2, it changed to “Faugh-A-Ballagh”, which has remained to the present time (www.sairish.webs.com: 2016).

This loudly expressed “credo” is often used in unison as part of a ceremonial mythology, it still expresses esprit de corps, determination, tenacity and conviction today. All of these characteristics are ever-present in the SA Irish Regiment.

Lt Col Bennett was appointed as the Acting Officer Commanding on 1 July 2005. He has been instrumental in building the Regiment into a force that is not only a military entity to be reckoned with, but also produced a well balanced soldier that could be integrated as a capacitated individual in a civilian environment. To make this possible, he was successful in establishing alliances with different tiers of state and the private sector.

Lt Col Bennett expressed his sincere confidence in his successor:

“...A new chapter opens with the appointment of Lt Col Kinghorn as the OC SA Irish. Having known Colonel Kinghorn of old, and indeed having served under him in the past, I am confident that the Regiment is not only going to be in a safe pair of hands, but importantly, a pair of hands capable of moving the Regiment on to greater successes in the future.”
Lt Col Kinghorn started his military career on 5 January 1972 when he reported for a compulsory twelve-month National Service call-up. The following year he decided to further pursue an alliance with the SANDF in the Commandos and diligently gained experience from different units in the Gauteng area. On 30 September 1985, he was offered the position of 2nd in command of the Edenvale Regiment, which he duly accepted. He served in several commandos as the 2IC. During 1990, he was promoted to Unit OC and served the unit for 10 years up to September 1995 – the time when the Commando closed down. On 01 October 1995, he was appointed OC of Alberton Commando. During 2002/3 whilst OC of Alberton Commando, Germiston Commando reopened and he also served as OC of this unit, running both units simultaneously.

During 2004/5, Germiston Commando was closed down. He remained active until April 1999. After much deliberation, Lt Col Kinghorn decided that he still has a role to play within the SANDF. His enthusiasm was noticed by Maj Gen Yam (at the time GOC SA Inf Fmn), who duly appointed him, after collaborating with Lt Col Bennett, as the new OC SAIR with effect from 1 November 2015.

In his private life he is married to Mrs Lynda Kinghorn, and they have been married for 39 years blessed with three daughters and three grandchildren. He is involved in numerous community based organisations. His business experience is extensive and he controls a number of businesses involved in the engineering and allied industries.

Lt Col Kinghorn proudly took over the position of OC SAIR and pledged that he will uphold the image and culture of the Regiment. He acknowledges it as an honour to be offered such an opportunity and vowed his commitment towards innovation, strong philosophy and reciprocity, cohesion and expansion.

In conclusion, Lt Col Kinghorn gave recognition to the Leader Group and specifically to the outgoing OC:

“I am extremely proud to take command of what is clearly a fine Regiment, not only in looks and bearing, but more importantly in its role as combat infantry. Add to that the superlative and almost unique benefit of a Regimental Band (the SA Irish Pipes and Drums) which is capable of fulfilling an area of military effort often lost these days - that of capturing the interest of the non-military public for the benefit of the Defence Force. With all of these attributes and capabilities I believe that we are well positioned to do as Lt Col Bennett asks, to move the Regiment on to greater successes. In this regard, I wish to thank Lt Col Bennett and his family for his commitment and effort during his time as OC SA Irish and to wish him well in his next post. Obviously, he will always be a member of the Irish family, so he and his advice are not lost to us”.

“Faugh-A-Ballagh”

After the conclusion of the parade, the Regiment hosted a cocktail party for the invited guests and members of the leader group at the SA Army Gymnasium during which presentations were made to the outgoing and incoming OCs and their wives.
Lt Col Kinghorn leading the Regimental Colour and the ceremonial company for the first time during the final march past.

Lt Col Kinghorn presenting Lt Col Bennett with a portrait of himself as the Regiment’s farewell gift.

Lt Col W.W. Kinghorn and Mrs L. Kinghorn.

Col Molefe presenting Lt Col Kinghorn with his welcome gift.

Col Molefe presenting Mrs Bennett and Mrs Kinghorn with bouquets. In appreciation of their past and future contributions.

The Regimental Colour of the SA Irish Regiment.
Cape Town Rifles (Dukes) was on parade in the City of Cape Town on 17 July 2016 as part of the commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood. Fought during the bloody Somme Offensive on the Western Front in World War I, the Battle of Delville Wood was the young South Africa’s baptism of fire as a nation. Members of Cape Town Rifles (CTR), one of the country’s oldest volunteer regiments, were at Delville Wood, fighting for their country as they have done for over one and a half centuries.

Established in November 1855 as a volunteer unit dedicated to the defence of the community, CTR (Dukes) paved the way for the formation of other volunteer regiments in South Africa and ultimately for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Reserves of today. The regiment has taken part in most of the military campaigns in southern Africa since 1877 and displays seventeen battle honours on the Regimental Colour. It is mustered as an infantry unit within the conventional forces of the SANDF, and is currently preparing for future airborne and seaborne operations.

Following the capture of German South West Africa in 1915, all existing South African military units were released from active service, ending the Regiment’s active service as a unit for the duration of World War I.

Nearly the entire membership, however, re-enlisted for active service in one of the new units that had been formed for further field service, with almost 240 men joining the 1st South African Infantry Brigade as part of the Cape of Good Hope Regiment, bound for action in Egypt, France and Flanders. There they faced one of the sternest tests of the war, at the Battle of Delville Wood.

Two hours before dawn on 15 July, the South Africans entered Delville Wood with 121 officers and 3032 other ranks. Fully half the men of A Coy were members of CTR (Dukes). For 6 days and 5 nights, the South Africans endured repeated bombardments. Thunderous explosions flashed through the forest, rendering sleep virtually impossible, and burning trees crashed down, adding to the sparks and smoke of the high-explosive shells and making the evacuation of wounded men a nightmare. At times, the incidence of explosions was seven per second, and on 18 July alone, 20 000 shells fell in an area less than one square mile. Six days after entering the wood, only 5 officers and 750 other ranks walked out of it. Many of this pitiable small band of survivors suffered from shell shock and dementia, and it is possible that those who died during the battle may have been better off than those who lived on with the scars inflicted by this Great War.

The South African National Memorial at Delville Wood near Longueval in France honours all South Africans who fell during both world wars, both combatants and non-combatants.

In his address at the centenary, the Officer Commanding CTR (Dukes), Lt Col Francois Marais, praised the commitment that still characterises the South African military. “The men of the 1st SA Brigade laid the foundation of our young nation’s fighting spirit. They showed that, come what may, we will endure and prevail. For us, failure is not an option. The men of the 1st SA Brigade carried that fighting spirit forward during the East and North African campaigns of WW2. So did the airmen and crews of the SA Air...
Force during the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War, and so too did the members of 6 SA Infantry Battalion in 2012 in the Central African Republic, when they faced an overwhelming advancing rebel force a couple of thousand men strong.

Three days of heavy fighting and tactical manoeuvring there saw the loss of 15 South African soldiers against enemy losses that counted into the hundreds. This, the Battle of Bangui, was the largest military battle in which the SANDF has been engaged since the establishment of our young democracy in 1994. It proves that the fighting spirit of our soldiers is as strong today as it has ever been."

"Today, soldiers from the SANDF are deploying continuously on the African continent for peacekeeping or other missions. Our borders are safeguarded to a large extent by Reserve Force soldiers. Whether deploying thousands of kilometres away from home or at hand on our borders, the SANDF is directly and indirectly securing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our rainbow nation."

As part of its ongoing commitment in this regard, CTR (Dukes) is currently deploying a company on the north-western border of South Africa in a national initiative to secure the country’s boundaries against illegal passage, smuggling and poaching. At home, regular Community Outreach projects strengthen the regiment’s ties to the local community and maintain unit morale and logistic capability.

Fifty-seven Dukes were killed in active service from 1915 until 1918. The reality is that all South Africans may be called upon to serve, and if necessary give their lives, in the interest of their country. The Delville Wood Memorial Service honours this willingness to sacrifice in the national interest. 🌷
In recent years, South Africa’s oldest logistics unit has called up 50 to 60 volunteers each month to work in the stores at the ASB (KZN) and Main Ordnance Sub Depot (Durban), and in the kitchens at the Bluff Military Base and our own base at Lord’s Ground. This was no different during 2016. The unit again ran a field kitchen during the annual training exercise, Yithemba, with other Reserve regiments in August /September. Our chefs have also been detached to other bases.

Apart from these taskings, which form part of its core business, 15 Maintenance also erected a stand at the Royal Show in Pietermaritzburg, where the military display once again won a gold medal. Thousands of visitors enjoyed interacting with the Army regiments. At the Delville Wood Parade in July and the Annual Remembrance Day Parade in November, both at Durban’s Cenotaph, the Unit provided a platoon and the OC laid a wreath. After the Delville Wood Parade, the Unit recreated an extraordinary photograph. In 1915, after the Unit had returned from World War 1 service in German South West Africa (Namibia), a photograph was taken on the side steps of the Durban City Hall. 101 years later, the volunteers who had been on parade sat on those same steps with the OC (Major M. Levin) and the RSM (W01 P.A.A. Vermeulen). Every member felt the emotional pull of the past.

There were many special events linked to the centenary of the battle of Delville Wood in July 2016. Maj Levin was the guest of honour at the opening of the exhibition at Durban’s KwaMuhle Museum, which commemorated the 150th anniversary of Durban High School and the 12 former pupils who gave their lives at Delville Wood: twelve boys from just one school. A few days later, Glenwood Preparatory School officially opened its own Delville Wood memorial. The OC and officers from Durban Light Infantry and Natal Mounted Rifles each laid a wreath, while schoolboys and girls observed this solemn ceremony.

Like the Nelson Mandela Day later that month, these events strengthen the bonds between the community and our volunteer soldiers, fostering both pride in the SANDF and the observance of military traditions. Although it is inadequately resourced like so many Reserve regiments, 15 Maintenance continues to look ahead with vigour and commitment.
Pte Dladla explains fuel tablets and rat packs to school children at the Royal Show exhibit.

Unit chefs at Durban Light Infantry during DLi’s deployment.

Unit volunteers on the same steps 101 years later. The RSM and OC are front, in step-out dress.

Unit volunteers on the Durban City Hall steps in 1915. The OC is front row Centre.

Hardy Wilson (Chairman SA National Society, Leon Erasmus (Headmaster of DHS) and Maj Mark Levin (OC 15 Maint) at the Museum opening.

Wreath layers after the unveiling of the Glenwood Preparatory School Memorial in July 2016.
Every year in October, one of the big events on the Cape Town calendar, namely the KFM Gun Run, takes place.

At 05:00 on Sunday morning 16 October the gun crew of Cape Field Artillery left iKapa Military Base to fire the start and end of the 2016 Gun Run. This year, Cape Town hosted the largest Gun Run, with about 22 000 runners from all over.

The Anna Foundation was appointed as the official beneficiary of the event for 2016, and all funds raised will go towards helping them with their cause. This non-profit organisation supports children who live on farms and in rural areas of the Western Cape.

Their aim is to empower disadvantaged rural children by building self-worth and self-responsibility through their education, sports and life development activities after school.

Well done to Cape Field Artillery for your participation.

Cape Field Artillery fired the shot for the cut-off time of the KFM Gun Run 2016.
Unlocking Future Potential and Arresting any Possible Decline by Maximising Team Performance

Article & diagrams by: Lt Col P. Coetzer, SO1 Reserves South African Army Armour Formation

Arrest decline, Enhance Team Performance!

The first milestone of the much talked about Defence Review 2015 is aimed at arresting the continuing decline in the SANDF’s capabilities and equipment. It is for this reason that an implementation framework has been approved not only to stop the decline but also to do it in line with the ever-shrinking defence budget.

The previous Chief of the Army, Lt Gen V.R. Masondo, stated that the SA Army’s activities over the next five years would focus on the achievement of Milestone 1 (Arresting the Decline), as indicated in the Defence Review. In this regard, he indicated that the Centre of Gravity (COG) for the Medium-Term (MT) in the SA Army would remain leadership. In this sense, leadership is an all-encompassing concept and should be addressed from a life cycle management point of view. It should start off with initial scientific selection and recruitment, and thereafter the constant development and progression of only the best leaders.

The question is all about performance and about making man and machine both efficient and effective – not only on a top management level, but also where the foot soldier has to make do with what is needed and what is available.

Ken Blanchard writes in one of his publications, “The heart of a leader”, that followers must be guided, but that boundaries are important. Boundaries provide direction. According to Blanchard, purposes, values, goals, roles and structure create autonomy. The aim of this article will be achieved by considering these and other aspects.

The SA Army Armour Formation investigated how these aspects can contribute to group effectiveness and the One-Force Concept.

Amongst other things, the following questions will be discussed:

- How can we determine what can be done to enhance team performance?
- What else can be done to improve the chances of achieving success in a project?
- In which practical ways can goals, roles and procedures be used as the cornerstones of greater effectiveness?

How can we determine what can be done to enhance team performance?

At some point, it happens to most teams, the team does not seem to be working as well as it should. You may have a nagging suspicion that things could be more efficient, or perhaps the initial excitement has worn off, other priorities have been established, or frustration about the magnitude of the task has set in.

Not all problems can be prevented, however. Therefore, what should be done when you want to be more effective and efficient?

It remains a perpetual challenge to prepare members and senior personnel to pursue vision, retain focus, and guarantee planned outputs. When challenges are encountered, one must react quickly by identifying what is really happening and by determining what is required to get the team back on track.

What must be done?

This may be easier said than done. The following three points can go a long way towards arriving at the correct remedial actions:

- Pinpoint challenges more specifically and deal with the underlying causes of the challenges. In other words, identify the problem and determine how it can or cannot be solved.
- Implement a 6- to 8-point activity plan.
- Finally, orientate team members responsible with regard to the activity plan.
How must it be done?

An informative though simple “Goals, roles and procedures pyramid” developed by Rath and Strong provides a good point of departure.

MORE SPECIFICALLY . . .

We should look up one level in the Pyramid (Figure 1) to identify the root cause of the problem we are experiencing /challenge we are facing at another level, for example, if we are having problems getting the team to follow procedures, the cause might be associated with unclear or conflicting roles. Typically, if an Armoured Car Regiment has difficulty in implementing appropriate Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs), it may well be that it was given inappropriate roles or does not interpret those roles correctly.

These troublesome TTPs would further manifest in strained relationships, where various members of the team have conflicting interpretations of what should be done to fulfil their roles.

By utilising facilitation sessions and structured questionnaires (Table 1), one can easily determine where the greater challenges with regard to team effectiveness lie.

Feedback is the breakfast of champions

After analysing the questionnaires, feedback is given to group members in a group context whereupon the results of team effectiveness are discussed.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 give feedback with the purpose of highlighting team challenges and development opportunities (this is an example only).

Figure 1: Goals, Roles & Procedures Pyramid

Figure 2: Team effectiveness & priorities (example)
Based on Table 1 and Figure 2, in the example of this hypothetical group, it appears that the group has clarity regarding roles (16) and that role conflict is limited (20). However, there is room for improvement in respect of aspects 21 and 23, for example.

Overarching scores can also be determined and reflected in the Team Effectiveness Pyramid (Figure 3). According to this, the average score of the group with regard to "Interpersonal Relationships" is lower. According to the "Goals, Roles and Procedures Pyramid Model", for example, greater attention will have to be given to improving interpersonal relationships and procedures.

In the introductory paragraph, mention is made of the fact that values are important.

**Value-driven leadership principles**

Values are often discussed during strategic sessions. Conscious efforts should be made to take the so-called values from posters on the walls to the hearts of our soldiers. The use of successive, informal round-table facilitation sessions provides opportunities not only for further discussion and understanding of values but also for further utilisation and development of these elucidated team-building strong points. Team-building development opportunities should be kept on the agenda. This method provides excellent opportunities and a point of departure for planning and conducting team-building sessions more effectively.

**Most significant success contributors**

Useful lessons have been learnt so far. From these, important deductions can be made.

Often, the question is asked in the Reserve Force, “Why do so many well-intended efforts fail?” The answer has nothing to do with technical or strategical support. It is possible that other factors come into play, such as lack of team skills, internal politics, and bad communication. In the SA Army Armour Formation, we have learnt that such challenges can be overcome by focusing on the following:

- Avoid the leading causes of project failure
- Get crucial early buy-in from and cooperation of all leaders and followers
- Establish clear team goals, roles, and procedures
- Possibly the most important aspect, plan the people/team side of your project!

What many leaders would have considered a waste of time we see as an opportunity to serve and listen. In other words, do not underestimate the “less important” tasks by concentrating too much on “management issues” in order to get to the end result. Many people incorrectly regard leadership as just an input, something that is done to others. Leadership is everything! Thus far, forums that provide opportunities for leaders to listen to others have been valuable in contributing to greater effectiveness and efficiency. Round-table facilitation provides further borders to share different cultures and views in a safe environment. It affords everybody the opportunity to voice their opinions.

Our most important recommendation is probably that leadership is not something you do to people, but as Ken Blanchard puts it, “It is something you do with people.”

At the end of the day, the SA Army Armour Formation, with its full-time but also part-time component, strives for an agile, balanced and technologically advanced force that is able to meet its current commitments and future obligations. This may prove impossible if we do not utilise effective, full-range leadership and commitment to arrest any decline and unlock potential by maximising team performance at every level. And we believe we have a valuable tool to assist us in achieving this.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>Score (1 - 7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Shared Vision: We, in the team, have a clear picture of the kind of changes we want to bring about by working in this team (i.e. Unit XYZ). Everyone has the same image in mind.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Goal Clarity: All of us understand the goals and objectives of the team (i.e. Unit XYZ). The goals are sufficiently clear and specific to be used in setting priorities and making decisions. When questions about goals arise, we discuss and clarify them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Goal Conflict: There is agreement among us about what the goals and objectives of the project should be. If there is conflict between team goals and our business or personal goals, we explore and resolve those differences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Goal Commitment: When we set goals for others, or when others (such as the next level) set realistic goals for us, we commit ourselves and pursue them vigorously. When presented with unrealistic goals, we state our position openly and try to negotiate new goals.</td>
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<th>ROLES</th>
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<tr>
<td>19. Role Clarity: In every situation, we know what we and others in the team are supposed to be doing. Responsibilities are defined clearly. Whenever there is confusion, we quickly discuss and resolve the situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Role Conflict: The roles, demands, and expectations of being in the project team are not in conflict with our other roles in Unit XYZ. In most cases, it is possible to live up to the expectations of team members and non-members.</td>
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<th>PROCEDURES</th>
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<td>21. DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control): The team follows the DMAIC method for the project itself and for problems that come up in the team. We define problems carefully, identify root causes, and consider alternative solutions. We are all encouraged to contribute ideas, which are evaluated on merit. Everyone participates in problem-solving; such sessions are not dominated by one or two assertive members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Decision-Making: Decision-making methods fit the decision to be made. Team members and non-members are involved in decisions when their input is essential for a quality decision, or when their understanding and acceptance of a decision are important. The time we spend on decisions is important. The time we spend on decisions is used well rather than wasted. We make and implement necessary decisions rather than leave them hanging.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Meeting Management: Our meetings are planned and well-managed. We define and explore issues and achieve closure. We disseminate information efficiently and effectively. Our meetings begin and end more or less on schedule, the right people are involved, and we leave with a sense of accomplishment and with the feeling that time has been well spent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Conflict Management: When a disagreement arises among team members, we manage it in a manner appropriate to the conflict. Where it makes sense to smooth feelings, we do so. When it is appropriate for someone to take charge and make a decision, it happens. When compromise is called for, all of us give and take a little. When the conflict is serious, we ensure that the disagreeing parties present their positions in detail; we listen carefully and try to come to a resolution that makes sense to everyone.</td>
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<tr>
<th>INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</th>
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<tr>
<td>25. Support: Team members (Unit XYZ members) encourage one another to take responsibility for outcomes. When things are not going well, members make an effort to help one another. We really pull together in this team.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Recognition: Everyone in the team recognises that the project cannot be done without the cooperation of and contribution from everyone else. All of us are treated as an important part of the team. When we put forward ideas or present problems, people pay attention. All of us have a feeling that our contribution to the project is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Trust: Members of the Unit XYZ team trust one another to do their fair share, meet deadlines, and produce quality work.</td>
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Table 1: Team Effectiveness Aspects (Please rate: 1 = low; 7 = high)

- Rath & Strong’s “Six Sigma Team Pocket Guide”

Lt Col Philip Coetzer is a PhD graduate in Management Science, SO1 in the Reserves of the South.
The S.A.C.S. Association was established in 1944, but became non-existent in later years.

Its successor, the SIGNAL’S ASSOCIATION was established at Signals Formation on 7 October 1995 and used to be administered from Signals Formation/CMI Headquarters in Wonderboom, Pretoria, but became dormant around the turn of the Century.

A KZN branch of the SIGNAL’S ASSOCIATION was established in Durban on 25 November 1998, but existed for only two or so years.

A Western Cape branch of the Signal’s Association was initiated as part of 71 Signal Unit’s Prestige Community Day event held at Acacia Park, Goodwood on Saturday, 6 May 2000. However, it was not until Saturday, 2 December 2000 that the Founding Meeting of the association was held, which resulted in the establishment of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION (Western Cape) on 2 December 2000. Our Association has managed to remain operational strictly in terms of its Constitution ever since and is the only Veterans’ Association for Signallers in the country that is registered with the Council for Military Veterans (CMVO), and as such, automatically with the South African National Military Veterans’ Association (SANMVA).

The objectives of the Association are -

- To maintain an association of those persons who are or become members of the Association;
- To actively encourage Signallers/Communicators to become members of the Association and partake in activities in order to ensure the continuity of the Association;
- To foster and encourage the continuation of the spirit and traditions of Signals;
- To assist members in obtaining any right or privilege to which they are or should be entitled by reason of membership;
- To affiliate with any organisation which has objects similar in part, or in whole, to those of the Association and whether within or outside the Republic of South Africa;
- To receive funds donated to it from any source and to raise funds for the furthering of the objectives of the Association.
Membership of the Association is open to –

• Anyone who is or was a Signaller / Communicator in the SANDF;
• Anyone approved by the Committee, who is or was a member of the South African National Defence Force, other than the SACS, who is or was attached to the SACS;
• Anyone approved by the Committee who is or was a member of Signals of any other country;
• Anyone who is or was a Signaller / Communicator in the SA Army, SAAF, SA Navy or SA Medical and Health Services.
• Anyone approved by the Committee who is or was associated with Communications, whether by means of radio or otherwise, and who has a distinct interest or shows a distinct interest in the Signals “Industry”.

The Chairperson of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION, when still the Signals Association (Western Cape), Lt Col Robbie Roberts, went to a lot of trouble to try and revive the original mother association (Signals’ Association) but his enormous efforts, as well as those of the Chairperson of the Council for Military Veterans’ Organisation (CMVO) proved unsuccessful in the end. During 2014, Robbie Roberts communicated with former Signallers who had previously been involved in the mother association, and of the ……… persons contacted, only ……… ever responded, regrettably all of them, although positively disposed towards the revival of the mother association, did not have the time nor circumstances to become involved in the revival process. The GOC of the SA Army Signals Formation, Brig Gen Leon Eggers, was continuously kept abreast of his efforts in this regard by Robbie.

As not a single person showed any interest in the mother association, it was obvious that the Signals’ Association was dormant. Resultantly, as the Signals Association (Western Cape) was the only remaining branch of the mother association, and had been a member of the CMVO since 2001, it was Unanimously decided at a duly constituted meeting held on ……… to drop the wording “(western Cape)” from its name paving the way for the association as it stands today, eg SIGNALS ASSOCIATION to be incorporated into the Association’s Logo and Flag as had officially been approved by national heraldry and the Department of Military Veterans Affairs.

About the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Robbie Roberts, whilst serving as Officer Commanding of 71 Signal Unit, initiated the establishment of the Signals’ Association (Western Cape) on 2 December 2000 following a successful Open Day event held at Acacia Park Military Base on 6 May 2000. Maj General Piet Verbeeck officiated as the functionary and signallers from all walks of life came together after having read advertisements placed in various newspapers at the time.

One of the highlights of that event was the attendance of a group of about twelve ladies, then all in their 80s/90s, who gathered out of interest as they had served as members of the Special Signals Service (SSS). They were incorrectly termed the ‘Secret’ Signals Service as their task during the war was to plot the position of ships sailing round the Cape coast and then, by Morse code, radio the position of enemy ships to the Castle in Cape Town for onward transmission to the allied forces in Europe.

The Association kicked off with 16 members and gradually grew annually mainly from members of 71 Signal Unit who joined. Presently, the association has 95 Members.
Although the Association has not promoted itself much over the past 15 years, the aim now is to grow steadily and make itself visible to the outside world in the hope that it can attract interest from as many former signallers or communicators as possible, irrespective of whether they originate from the army, air force, naval or medical communications divisions.

The Association is proud of its 15 years of membership of the Council for Military Veterans Organisation (CMVO), particularly as it is the only registered and recognized military veterans’ organisation for signallers in the country.

**Heraldic Description of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION Logo/emblem**

The logo of the Signals Association consists of a wheel signifying a rolling/continuing organisation with the image of Mercurius/Mercury (Or jimmy as he is commonly known and/or referred to) as the sign of the South African Corps of Signals (S.A.C.S.) and its traditional logo “Certa Cito” (meaning Swift and Sure for fast and accuracy in the transmission of signal messages) and “S.A.” for “South Africa” enscribed in the base of the image. According to Roman Mythology, Mercurius/Mercury was the fleet-footed Roman Messenger of the Gods who identifies with and shares the same characteristics with Hermes, the Messenger of the Greek Gods. He holds a purse, symbolic of his business functions – God with commercial interests and of messages/communication. The image of Mercurius/Mercury stands with his foot on Earth (a Globe) and is in the traditional S.A.C.S. Silver, with the base around the Globe in Gold and the image of Africa in Black. He carries a Caduceus (a herald’s Staff) with two entwined snakes that was Apollo’s gift to Hermes.

The Colours Green signifies Land (or Army) forming the Core of the wheel. Adjacent to the green is Light Blue signifying Air (Air Force) and the outer colour Royal Blue for Water (Navy), these colours being in line with the three colours having represented the Corps of Signals over the years, not only in South Africa, but also abroad.

A wreath of Protea flowers surrounds the design so as to depict a ‘national’ image as membership of the Association, in terms of its Constitution, is open to any signaler, not only in the Western Cape. The name of the Association enscribed in the outer blue circle is in White lettering and encompasses a single Disa flower, which is endemic to the Western Cape, and Cape Town in particular, being the “birth place” of the Association. The first petal of the Disa flower represents the individual ‘Member’ of the Association. The second petal represents the Association with all its members as a group to create unity and the third petal is for all signalers generally, other than those who are members of the Association.”

**Historic Handing Over of Tradition event held in Cape Town on Sunday, 1 May 2016**

*Flag used by the 3rd Brigade Signal Company. In 1946 and lowered for the last time on Sunday, 1 May 2016*

*The registered flag of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION as hoisted for the very first time on Sunday, 1 May 2016*
Sunday, 1 May 2016 was a very special day not only for members of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION, but also for all military veterans, not only in the Western Cape, but in the whole of South Africa.

Initially, the Association embarked on this special once-in-a-lifetime event venture with concern, primarily because of the size thereof, but as it felt its obligation and close camaraderie with the 3rd Brigade Signal Company members was so great, it persevered and vigorously pursued to ensure what was presented on the ground that day.

75 years ago, on 27 May 1940, some 287 Other Ranks and 7 Officers marched from the Castle past the City Hall and down Adderley Street in Cape Town en route to the station from where they travelled to Potchefstroom, then to Durban, from there they sailed to Mombasa. From there they travelled to Kenya, Abyssinia, Berbera, Egypt, El Alamein just to mention a few, all in support of the 2nd World War. These were all members of the Cape Town-based 3 Brigade Signal Company, South African Corps of Signals.

Amongst those members who returned, one by the name of Charles Holloway decided to start a Reunion of members to reminisce about their WAR days and to, hopefully, get together on an annual basis. Quite often, an idea like this is not everlasting and fades away but, thank goodness, not these guys. With their perseverance, they managed to keep the flame burning for over 69 years. They are down to only 3 members and between them they have decided to call it a day. That occasion will be on Sunday, 1 May 2016, when they will be hosting their 70th and last Annual Reunion AGM / Luncheon when that same person who started the tradition, Major Charles Holloway (aged 98), Sergeant Syd Ireland (age 96) and Signaller Eddie Mills (Aged 96), who will be present as last Chairperson, Secretary and member respectively.

These gentlemen have been contemplating for some time now to end their almost lifelong tradition, but with the encouragement of 71 Signal Unit, originally 3 Brigade Signal Squadron, established on 1 May 1946, and the Signals’ Association which was established on 2 December 2000 as an initiative by Lieutenant Colonel Robbie Roberts, then officer commanding of 71 Signal Unit, the 3 Brigade Signal Company guys have faithfully continued the tradition established by them in 1946, the only signal unit from amongst 35 signal units serving in the Second World War.

In order to pay proper and justifiable tribute to these fine and brave gentlemen who had so gallantly fought for their country and others, the Signals’ Association decided to host a suitable event on Sunday, 1 May 2016. This event took the form of the last AGM and Luncheon of 3 Brigade Signal Company Reunion Association, simultaneously, to transfer the 70-year-old tradition to the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION as the next generation of signallers. For this purpose a ceremony was hosted which included the lowering of 3 Brigade Signal Company Reunion Association flag for the last time and the hoisting of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION flag for the very first time. Also, a new tradition was established which saw the introduction of a ‘Flame of the Signaller / Vlam van die Seiner’ as a tradition of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION.

SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

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Telephone : 079-283-0001 (Chairman : Robbie Roberts)
082-694-7616 (Vice-Chairman : Piet Jordaan)
082-410-2754 (Secretary : Howard Shagom)
082-952-6295 (Treasurer : Wilna Bekker)
Colonel Ramaremisa was born on 1 April 1947 and commenced his career as a keeper of the peace in the South African Police Service (SAPS). He was later transferred to the Venda National Force, which was the combination of the members from the South African Defence Force, South African Police, South African Correctional Services and the traffic officers. In 1993, Col N.G. Ramaremisa was promoted to the rank of Colonel, and from 1978 until 1981, he served as the personal staff officer to the National Force Commander.

In 1978, Col Ramaremisa did the basic military training course in Lenz. In 1981, he did the company commander’s course at Lenz under the SADF. Following that, he did the practical company course at Katima Molilo under the Namibian Defence Force, Namibia.

After the officer’s course, he worked at the Venda National Force Base as a lieutenant until he was promoted through the ranks to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Eventually, he was appointed as the Mobile Unit Officer in Charge.

In 1990, Col George Ramaremisa was appointed as the Minister in the Venda Military Governance Council and served in the following different portfolios: Home affairs, Public Works, Post and Telecommunications and Broadcasting. Included in the above-mentioned departments is also the Commission for Administration.

Between 1990 and 1993, Col George Ramaremisa served as a member of the Defence Committee of the Transitional Executive Council representing the Venda Government. In April 1994, he became a member of the National Parliament and amongst others served on the following committees: Defence Portfolio Committee, Safety and Security Committee, and the Intelligence Joint Portfolio Committee.

In September 2001, after five years of service in Parliament, he was appointed as a Non-executive Director of Armscor and presently manages his own business of farming and retailing.

In June 2002, Colonel Ramaremisa was called up by SAAF Reserves and was appointed as a colonel in the AFR and served as national co-ordinator for ‘Siyandiza’ until April 2009.

In 2012, Col Ramaremisa was appointed as SSO Air Force Reserves. On 01 March 2016, he was appointed as Acting Director Air Force Reserves to serve as a bridge between the Defence and the community and manage the SAAF Reserves and Administration of all Air Force Reserve members.

Col Ramaremisa also serves on the following forums inside and outside the SAAF: Air Force Reserve Council (AFRC), Air Force Budget Control Committee (BCC) and the Defence Reserve Board (DRB).

Questioned about the appointment, his response was, “I enjoy building the Air Force Reserves for all presented ages, all genders, man and women, and young and old. For all proud South Africans.”
Efforts to reactivate and resuscitate the role of squadrons in the Air Force Reserve Service (AFRS) gained impetus during a special Air Force Reserve Force Squadron Workshop attended by the Chief of the Air Force (CAF), Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang at the South African Air Force (SAAF) College, Pretoria, on 28 September 2016.

Speaking during the meeting, Lt General Msimang emphasised the importance of the role of the AFRS in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), in particular the significant role played by squadrons in support of the South African Police Services during times of crisis and distress in South African communities.

Commenting on the status of the SAAF, Lt General Msimang said the current sustained underfunding of the SAAF has led to the loss of capabilities, capacity, and increased maintenance backlogs, thus placing constraints on the SAAF development and transformation goals.

Among the issues discussed at the workshop were the importance of career planning, remuneration for pilots, transformation, and the AFRS to form an integral part of the SAAF. There was agreement that Reserve Force pilot remuneration needed to be investigated further. The meeting also resolved to start operational camps for the AFRS to start ground and air training and to get the squadrons operational again. Air Force squadrons will be reactivated once all shortfalls have been addressed.
In May 2016, Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang, the Chief of the SA Air Force, issued an instruction to appoint (20) Reserve Force members to the SA Air Force band. The band’s strength had reached a critical point, reaching its lowest point since 1994. Also, the average age of the band members had increased to forty-one (41), negatively affecting the band’s ability to perform on parade. Lt Gen Msimang’s instruction brought much-needed relief to the band’s personnel challenges.

Many different music training organisations were contacted and the news was spread via the musician’s network that the SA Air Force was searching for musicians. Within a short period, appropriately qualified musicians that were physically fit were identified and contacted. All the candidates were in possession of SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) accredited practical qualifications on the instrument they played, as well as appropriate experience in the music world. These members then went through the standard appointment procedures of the SANDF and were appointed as South African Air Force Reserves.

These new Reserve Force members were utilised on parade for the first time at the 68 Air School Presentation Parade on 24 August 2016. Audience members commented specifically on how different the band looked and, more importantly, sounded. Since then, the band has participated in the Mass Band Cricket Opening at Supersport Park, the Johannesburg Tattoo, an AFB Ysterplaat Medal Parade and several other events. At all these events, feedback on the difference in the SAAF band was very positive.

The effect on the morale of the Permanent Force members of these appointments has been fantastic. Not only is the instrumental complement of the band full again, but the standard of the Band Air Force Reserve members is high. This means that the band is back to its full capacity and can perform the full possible range of musical genres.

With such a band, the SA Air Force Band can confidently face a future in which it can fulfil its mandate properly: servicing the ceremonial requirements of the SAAF, uplifting the morale and “spirit de corps” of SAAF members and promoting the SAAF to the general public at large.
The Sinking of the SS Mendi disaster was one of South Africa’s worst tragedies of the Great War.

The Journey

On the 16th January 1917, the SS Mendi troopship sailed from Cape Town en route to Europe carrying a contingent of the SANLC, comprising 802 Black soldiers, five white officers and 17 NCOs as well as 89 crew members and 56 other military passengers. They sailed at noon and formed up in convoy with four ships carrying South African and Australian troops, and a consignment of gold. The cruiser HMS Cornwall escorted them. The experienced Captain Henry Arthur Yardley commanded the SS Mendi.

The steamer SS Mendi, 4230 tons, was in the Liverpool-West Africa service until chartered by the British Government and was named after the Mendi tribe in Sierra Leone. On her previous journey she transported Nigerian troops from Lagos to Mombasa for service in German East Africa.

The convoy proceeded at a leisurely pace and the men fell into the routine of life in a troopship. The long, slow voyage was notably calm and marked by few incidents, the most striking being the death of one of the assistant stewards who was buried at sea. The SS Mendi called at Lagos in Nigeria and Freetown in Sierra Leone where coal and stores were loaded. From Sierra Leone the convoy steamed on unescorted, although the last part of the journey was the most dangerous because of the U-boat threat. At this time, the German submarines had orders to attack without warning, which made the British waters especially dangerous.

The weather became cold, the sea rougher and the sky grey. The black soldiers endured this with cheerful fortitude.

The SS Mendi arrived safely at Plymouth, 34 days since departure from Cape Town. Here, the military passengers disembarked.
The Sinking

In the afternoon of 20th February 1917, the SS Mendi sailed from Plymouth and steamed to Le Havre in France, escorted by the destroyer HMS Brisk. The weather was overcast, with threatening mist, light winds and a smooth sea. At nightfall, the weather became foggy and the ship’s siren was sounded at one-minute intervals, as required by regulations. Thereafter the fog became thicker and the speed was reduced.

The SS Darro, 11,484 tons, was a much larger vessel than the SS Mendi and was commanded by Captain H.W. Stump. In the late afternoon of 20th February, she sailed from Le Havre and steamed at full speed to Falmouth with a cargo of frozen meat. In the foggy night its lights were shown and the lookouts were reinforced, but the siren was never sounded and the speed not reduced.

On 21st February 1917 at 4.57 am, the lookouts of the SS Mendi heard a vessel approaching and sounded the siren. As the SS Darro was travelling at full speed and making no sound signals, the second officer and lookouts heard the SS Mendi’s siren and saw a green light. Orders were at once given to put the engines full speed astern and the SS Darro’s siren sounded. It was too late. They were about eleven miles south south-west of St Catherine’s point on the Isle of Wight.

The SS Darro’s bow crashed into the starboard side of the smaller ship almost at right angles with tremendous force and cut into her from keel to deck to a depth of about 20 feet. Men standing on the SS Mendi were hurled to the deck by the force of the impact and the men who were sleeping were abruptly woken up. The SS Darro struck near the watertight bulkhead between No.1 and No.2 holds and opened both of them to the sea. On the SS Darro, the engines which had been going full steam astern were stopped and the two ships drifted apart, leaving a huge hole in the side of the SS Mendi through which the sea poured. The force of the collision knocked down Captain Yardley. He got up quickly, went to the fore part of the bridge and ordered the engines to be stopped. He sent a man to tell the carpenter to sound the depth of the water in the breached holds of the ship and gave the order to lower the boats to the rail. No SOS was sent out because the wireless operator could not be found.

Men shaken by the shock and sound of the collision began to struggle out of their blankets, picked up their lifebelts and made their way in the dark through the rising freezing water to the exits. But at least one of these exits may have been damaged by the bow of the SS Darro, so that some of the men were trapped. A large number (one estimate was 140) never made their way to the deck and drowned in the blackness of the hold as the water rose quickly. For most of those who survived, perhaps 750 men, there was now a struggle in the darkness to lower the lifeboats that could take a total of 298 men. As the SS Mendi sank lower in the water, she listed heavily to starboard and it became difficult to lower the portside boats.

The troops were quiet and orderly at their stations, as they had learned in the exercises at sea during the voyage. Officers and crewmen lowered the lifeboats on the starboard side. No.1 and No.3 boats were lowered safely and were quickly filled with men. The No.2 boat while being lowered capsized with the men aboard owing to a sailor’s blunder. No.5 boat was lowered safely to the water with two crewmen and four soldiers, but a lot of men then jumped into it on one side and capsized it. Everyone was thrown into the water and it was not possible to right it again. The No.6 boat smashed against the ship’s side. What happened to No.7 boat was never determined.
The work proceeded to get out the 46 rafts, each capable of supporting 20 people, and the troops worked methodically under the direction of their officers. At the same time, other soldiers came up from the hatch of Nº1 hold.

Somewhere about this time must have occurred the best known legend in the story of the Mendi. It is not confirmed by any survivor or official account, but oral tradition has preserved it and the press kept it alive. The Reverend Wauchope Dyobha cried out to the men:

Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die… but that is what you came to do… Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers, Swazis, Pondos, Basutos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries, brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies.

And they took off their boots and stamped the death dance on the deck of the sinking ship.

Captain Yardley, realising that the ship would not last much longer, ordered that everyone leave the ship and get away from it before it sank. Many men threw themselves into the sea, singing, praying and crying. There was a big explosion which shook the ship, putting out the lights and causing panic and confusion. However, a lot of soldiers remained aboard as they were too afraid to jump into the icy waters. Most of them had no experience of the sea, many probably not even having seen it before they embarked on the Mendi, and very few could swim. In spite of the call from their NCOs and comrades in the waters to jump, most were still aboard of the dying ship when it sank.

During this agony of 25 minutes, no help came from the SS Darro, even so not far, and HMS Brisk had lost visual contact with the Mendi in the fog. In 2016 two additional exhibit cases were added to the Museum.

About 120 men were now in the two boats, and some hundreds more were in the freezing water clinging to rafts or wreckage, or supported only by their lifebelts.

At 05h00 the Darro sent an SOS message to which the HMS Brisk replied. The crew inspected the vessel, lowered the boat to the rail and prepared to do a potential evacuation. But the damages were moderately minor. No attempt was made to hail the other vessel or to lower a boat in the water.

Not far away, in the icy waters, the tragedy carried on. Many frozen men hung to the rafts and several reached to go up on the keel of the Nº5 boat. Men without lifebelts drowned and others died freezing or from exhaustion. The water temperature in the Channel at this time of year is only about 7 degrees.

Captain Yardley floated for about an hour and a half and recalled: “I had a lifebelt on. There were hundreds of boys around me after the wreck. They died from exposure. They all had lifebelts on… It was a very cold, dark, damp, miserable night…”

About 400 men drowned or died of exposure in the water or on the rafts.

The Nº1 boat was the first to reach the Darro, about 50 minutes after the collision. The shipwrecked troops were so exhausted that they were helped by the crew to go up the gangway. The Nº3 boat came alongside the Darro about ten minutes later. Some members of the crew heard the shouting of men on rafts. However, Captain Stump took no measure to rescue the men.
At the same time, the boats of the HMS Brisk, who came rapidly on the site after the wreck, carried on searching but with great difficulty in the darkness and the fog. The SS Sandsend picked up 23 survivors.

The Darro remained in the vicinity until 06h45 and then proceeded through the fog at reduced speed sounding her whistle. The HMS Brisk called her boats with her exhausted crews at 09h45 and cruised looking in vain for survivors.

The tally of survivors was 267: 107 on the Darro, 137 on the Brisk (of whom Captain Yardley was one) and the 23 men picked up by the Sandsend.

The final toll of this tragedy is terrible. Thirty-three members of the crew, two white officers, seven white NCOs and 618 black soldiers were lost. Among them were prominent figures: Pondoland chiefs Henry Bokleni, Dokoda Richard Ndamase, Mxonywa Bangani, and the Reverend Wauchope Dyobha.

When the news of the tragedy was announced by Parliament on the 9th March 1917, all the members of the South African House of Assembly, led by Prime Minister Louis Botha, rose in their seats as a token of respect.

The captain of the Darro, HW Stump, was later disciplined, but the sanction must appear minor compared to the tragedy: a ship command suspension of 12 months.

**THE MENDI TODAY**

The event is remembered by a number of memorials in South Africa, Britain and France. The Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton bears the names of the men of the Mendi who have no known graves. Thirteen men rest in cemeteries in England, one in France and five are commemorated by special memorials in Holland.

In South Africa, the Mendi Memorial in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, was erected in memory of the disaster and the Gamothaga Resort in Atteridgeville commemorates those who know no grave but the sea. Recently, another memorial to the Mendi was unveiled in Cape Town. Located on an embankment on the Mowbray campus of the University of Cape Town, the site has significance to the Mendi as it is here that troops of the South African Native Labour Contingent were billeted before embarking on the ill-fated voyage to France. A further memorial can be found in the Avalon cemetery in Soweto. It was unveiled by her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 23 March 1995.

The Mendi is also commemorated at the Delville Wood Commemorative Museum by a fresco element and one panel bearing the names of the men lost and two display cabinets.

The bridge telegraph from the Mendi can be seen at the Maritime Museum, Bembridge, on the Isle of Wight.

A painting, The Loss of the Mendi, by Hilary Graham, is housed at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Museum of Art in Port Elizabeth. Curiously, the artist depicted the tragedy in heavy seas, while the sea in fact was almost like glass.

The Mendi has also given its name to South Africa’s highest award for courage, the Order of the Mendi Decoration for Bravery, bestowed by the President on South African citizens who have performed extraordinary acts of bravery.
The SS Mendi is also honoured by the modern South African Navy, which has among its fleet the SAS Isaac Dyobha, a Warrior-class fast attack craft and the SAS Mendi, a Valour-class frigate.

On the 23rd August 2004 a wreath-laying ceremony was held when the SAS Mendi and the British Navy’s HMS Nottingham met at the site where the SS Mendi sank.

In 2006, The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the History Channel released a 20-minute film, Let Us Die Like Brothers, exploring the Mendi disaster and Black South Africans’ involvement in the Great War in Europe.

On 21st July 2007, a great ceremony took place at the Hollybrook Memorial, Southampton, followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the site of the tragedy.

The centenary of the sinking of the SS Mendi will be commemorated in the UK and at the Armed Forces Day parade in Durban on 21 February, 2017. Services will also be held in Soweto, Atteridgeville, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley. During the parade in Durban, a commemorative plaque will be unveiled.

(Compiled by Major General Roy Andersen, based on information provided by the Ditsong National Museum of Military History and www.delvillewood.com). 📚
3 Medical Battalion Group Once Again Successfully Integrated in a High Level National Event

Article by: Sgt K. Jeppie, 3 Medical Battallion Group

Making it impossible to spot the difference between Regulars and Reserves in the exercise area and our own AOC (LT Col. E.F. Petersen) were one of the core key players with a contingent of some of our highly skilled members representing various fields of expertise.

Lt Col E.F. Petersen, AOC 3 Med Bn Group in Cape Town, and in particular the OC 8 Med Bn Gp, were tasked by higher HQ to head the Medical Task Group at Kimberley (Exercise Winter Solstice) in support of the SAAF, which included air casavacs for Exercise Ndlovu at Lohatla Combat Training Center.

This unit had to support him on his many journeys to CTC Lohatla and 8 Med Bn for the various planning sessions with the other role players, which started early June 2016. The unit was always on standby waiting for instructions as no one knew what was required of our AOC and the unit as such until he informed us after the long sessions on his return. As the reader should well know, the core function of this unit, and SAMHS as a whole, is to support, and we pride ourselves in doing just that. No one walks alone when a medic is near: meaning there is no need for fear. That is just what we did with respect to supporting our AOC with the task at hand.

Thanks to unit level exercises like the Combat Readiness exercise held during March in Touws River; there was no shortage of eager, willing and sharp minds and bodies to assist and face the fierce Northern Cape weather conditions so commonly known during July.

Once again, it was a hugely successful combination of Regular and Reserve forces (mainly 3 Med Bn Gp). These unit level exercises mentioned earlier, and in the summer edition of this magazine, are a must to ensure combat readiness on all levels.

The unit was able to supplement the exercise with logistics personnel and equipment driven to Kimberley by the members with this unit’s own vehicles as well as HR personnel and HPCSA-trained medical personnel, which included ECTs, Ops Medics, AEAs and BAAS all of whom were present at the unit Combat Readiness exercise earlier this year. A very dedicated team all of whom have previous deployment experience.
The Base Administration Area were situated behind Kimberley airport and upon arrival, there was no time to waste as the base had to be pitched asap because this was a real-time situation with regard to air casavacs and daily sick reports.

Always expect the unexpected and be ready when it happens. The weather had a huge negative influence on the situation but not enough to dampen the spirits of the men and women on 24-hour standby for medical emergencies throughout this huge exercise happening out in Lohatla.

A mobile medical post was utilized with canvas tents as level one medical facility and accommodation. Capt Williams, nursing officer, wasted no time and as soon as the facility was up and running, she reported and placed the medical personnel. SGT Mohammed, Sgt Viloen (Deceased), Cpl Stoffels and Pte Merino were seasoned OECPs and needed no direction regarding what was expected of them in these situations.

The officer commanding 8 Med Bn Gp, Col Moremi, and his entourage also visited the base and were very impressed with what they saw and experienced. As the Task Group Commander, Lt Col Petersen had to face many challenges but had to keep a straight face in front of his subordinates, never letting on when there was a situation at his level that looked beyond repair; because it was imperative not to let them stress under these conditions as the morale was always of a very high standard. There to assist by guiding the NCOs was WO2 Tloubatla (Medical Task Gp Warrant Officer).

Also, regular visits from the OC (Col Delport) and senior members of AMHU NC helped a lot to boost and keep morale on track because the positive team spirit meant that all tasks were executed to the MTG Cmdr’s satisfaction, at all times. Regular feedback afterwards to the lower ranks once again meant that an informed subordinate would develop a sense of importance and belonging. This bolsters their willingness to give their full cooperation with the given tasks and in the process makes it easier for the leader group to focus on the core business, which includes the planning phases.

Men and women in the front line, mainly infantry, sometimes wonder, or shall I say, assume that the medics live a life of luxury in these situations. Very wrong thought, for as an ex-Ops Medic myself, I am very sure that I can speak on behalf of my fellow medics when I say that it’s not the case at all. If a medic is not physically in the front, their minds kick into overdrive until “demob”. Reason being the fact that you don’t know what’s happening in front and the waiting for the call and at the same time praying no one gets hurt is an inexplicable stress on the mind. Although medics are in the area for this specific reason, it’s never a welcome sight to see another experiencing pain, but emotions have to be kept in check and tasks are to be performed diligently and professionally.
Overall, the exercise was a huge success and luckily there were no serious incidents. It was an enormous learning curve for the young enthusiastic and newly appointed Reserves. As can be seen in these photographs, there was a mixture of the past and the future of the DOD. The unit team was very diverse with enough wisdom among them to lead the new generation out of the past.

Some of these members are currently on OP CORONA sharing their experiences with their peers as they have been very actively preparing for the whole year. I wish them well while serving on various borders representing the Reserves and SAMHS as a whole. Yet again, I stress the fact that unit level exercises are of utmost importance to keep members combat ready for any situation. Each of us has a role to play in this Defence Force and we should respect one another no matter what position or post we hold.

Also, lead the new generation into the future by guiding them in the right direction. In other words: “Lead by Example!”

To show his appreciation, Lt Col Petersen gave each participant a sincere letter of thanks and appreciation for their valued support during this month-long endeavor.

Lt Col Petersen and Capt Jikela (HR Off of Ex Ndlovu) with some of the 3 Med Bn Gp members

Unit Commemoration Stone at CTC (Lohatla)
Like all SANDF units, including the Regular Force and the Reserve Force, 6 Medical Battalion Group (or 6 Med as it is affectionately known to us) has not been immune to budget reductions and cuts over the past fifteen years. Indeed, the past decade and a half has been particularly unkind to the unit, with very little happening in the way of the mandate of the battalion.

Training and Force Preparation activities came to a virtual standstill, with the result that many unit members lost interest in continued participation in the unit. At the beginning of 2015, under the leadership of the Officer Commanding, Col Moji Mogari, the Command Group instituted a renewal programme, with the intent of revitalising the unit, retraining existing members, and recruiting and training new members.

This was no small task, and many hours of administrative work and planning were put in by the Command Group staff and the Force Preparation Wing, most often without remuneration, but hey, we Reserves do this out of pride and passion, and not necessarily for the money.

One of the biggest challenges was tracking unit members down. So many had changed their contact details over the years, and many valuable contributors of the past were nowhere to be found. Luckily, social media has become a driving force in the world today, and eventually, over 150 current members were contacted.

It was necessary to start with a bang, and so, to this end, a series of exercises was planned. Code named Exercise Phoenix, named after the mythical bird that arose from the ashes of its dead predecessor, the plan was born of a series of four exercises at a training location, over a period of a year, interspersed with single-day training activities on Saturdays.

The plan was designed to retrain existing members and provide training for newly recruited members. However, we were still restricted by budget, so we did what all soldiers do when faced with the impossible – we looked outside the box. Now, 6 Med proudly can boast that we have presence on Wikipedia, our own external facing website, an SMS communication facility, our own secure e-mail system, a locked-down internal website, a web-based discussion forum, a very active Facebook page, a twitter handle, and our pride and joy, an online training portal.
Of course, all of these are accessible not only through a normal computer, but also through tablets, mobile devices and smartphones.

The online training portal was the driver behind our “going digital”. As we do not, and will not for the foreseeable future, have sufficient funds to call members up for all the training and retraining required, we needed a way to minimise contact training time, yet still provide quality theoretical training.

The training portal provides this through structured lesson plans and curricula that are consistent with approved DOD and SAMHS curricula. Now students not only can go through the lessons in their own time, but also can go back as many times as they like to the content. They can undertake self-assessment tests, submit assignments, and then, finally, write an online exam, which all form part of a final portfolio of evidence.

In July 2015, Exercise Phoenix I was held at Apex Military Base in Brakpan. With the capable instructors still in 6 Med, and supported, guided and advised by the Reserve Force members from the Army’s Air Defence Artillery (6 LAAR and Regt Eastern Transvaal) based at Apex Military Base, the exercise managed to get 85 members to attend and start on the journey towards combat readiness.

Ex Phoenix I concentrated on drilling, field craft and discipline. Many of the members who attended (of all ranks), had not been called up for quite a while, and many military skills had inevitably become somewhat rusty. From early morning to late evening, the base resounded to the drill commands and responses of a unit learning to be a formidable force again. A sign of how successful the exercise was is the fact that it was never necessary to call “lights-out” – the members participating in the exercise were already “lights out” and fast asleep in their beds.

One of the highlights of the exercise was the review parade held on the last day, in which Lt Col Dries Herbst took the final salute of his Reserve Force career, having spent over 40 years in the Reserves. Of course, there were challenges. Many mistakes were made, and many tempers flared, especially among the leader group behind closed doors.
However, this was a learning curve for everyone, and eventually everyone pulled together and made it work. It would be remiss also not to mention that the superb messing facilities at Apex Military Base, as well as the continued guidance from MWO Errol Brits, helped to make it all possible.

Unfortunately, directly after Exercise Phoenix I, budgets were cut again, and all unit activity ceased until the new 2016/17 financial year started. This was a cruel blow, but in the interim, the Command Group continued in their own time with polishing plans, preparing the next exercise, and tracking down more unit members.

In April 2016, a series of one-day contact training events was started at 6 Med Bn Gp HQ in Kempton Park. It was again a slow start, but the idea was to prepare the unit members for their roles in the exercises.

In July 2016, over a period of five days, Exercise Phoenix II kicked off, again at Apex Military Base. Unfortunately, this time the numbers were not as exciting.

This did not prevent us from continuing with the planned activities, and to the consternation of all attending, an “exercise in an exercise” was held. During a Friday evening mess and bar etiquette training session, the discussions were interrupted by the SAPS who brought an urgent instruction to the exercise control staff.

An immediate warning order was issued to the leader group on the exercise, and planning was immediately started to counter a planned invasion by the coalition of Nambabwwe. Using a blend of current affairs, known military protocols and a little bit of rumour mongering, everyone in the exercise, with the exception of only two control staff members, was under the impression that we really were in a crisis situation.

More than a few senior members who should have known better phoned their spouses to tell them that our call up had been extended indefinitely, and that we were about to deploy!
Working almost through the night, leader groups were put through their paces, learning how to compile an appreciation and deployment plan. Considering that some of them had never done this before, the results were surprisingly very good. In the meantime, the troops in the exercise were being briefed on the roles they would be playing in the upcoming deployment. Radio procedures were hastily brushed up using live radios, kit lists were prepared, and pre-deployment counselling started.

By the end of Exercise Phoenix II, the battalion members who had attended both exercises and the training days were well on their way to combat readiness. Field craft, musketry (although we did not get to shoot on this exercise), radio procedures, deployment drills, plans and order groups; all of these aspects had been presented, and the participants in the exercise were starting to fully realise what deployment is all about.

Exercise Phoenix III has been planned to take place as soon as possible, where all attendees will be either certified or re-certified on Tables 1 and 2 in musketry and pistol shooting, where medical support structures will be practised in real time, and where the leader group will be expected to run the whole exercise as if in a real-life deployment. Budget willing, by the time Exercise Phoenix IV is completed, 6 Med Bn Gp will be able to boast up to 60 combat-ready members, all ready, willing and able to deploy in support of SANDF operations, both internally and externally.

This model of training is planned to take place every two years, consisting of 4 exercises, around 24 day-training events, and a large joint real-time exercise every 2nd year with other arms of service units and SAMHS units. The ability of the SANDF and the SAMHS Reserve Force to comply with their mandate requires fresh thinking and dedication, something that is not in short supply at 6 Medical Battalion Group. See more at www.6med.co.za
Simply defined, it is a maladaptive pattern of using certain drugs, alcohol, medication and toxins. Despite the adverse consequences, substance abuse has become an escalating problem in the South African society.

Studies have provided a comprehensive examination of childhood predictors of alcohol abuse and dependence at the age of 21. These predictors indicate that the majority of the future labour course group stand at a much higher risk of abusing alcohol or any other substance in their personal environment and their employment organisations.

At present, it can be asserted that approximately 70% of heavy drinkers and drug users are between the ages of 18 and 49 and work on a full-time basis. 20% of all 18- to 34-year-old workers are using substances at home and in their workplace. These statistics serve as a clear warning about the level of hazards our work society and organisations are coming to face.

As known, an intoxicated employee is not equivalent to a productive employee. Substance abuse has a large impact on the employee’s individual, work group and corporate performance, signifying the transformation a staff member can undergo from being an asset to a liability to their respective organisations. Substance abuse by an individual can lead to decreased productivity, a decline in the quality of work, increased absenteeism and reduced job satisfaction. It also has an impact on families and fellow colleagues: it leads to impaired communication between staff members, resentment and ill will and decreased morale. Conversely, an employee’s substance abuse predicament affects the corporate performance in terms of the costs of absenteeism and turnover, increased compensation costs, the impact on corporate culture and the effect on efficiency.

Society and organisations at large can nonetheless be consoled by the fact that as big as the problems at hand might be, there are ways and means of solving them. Ways of enforcing organisational policies would be through firm reprimands of general substance abuse behaviour in the workplace. There are organisations which help with supervisor consultation and prevention education workshops for employees.

They are also able to provide assessment, treatment and act as a referral source for those suffering from that kind of problem. There is the Chaplain Service that is (through its chaplains, prayers, pastoral care, counseling and referral) provided to the affected members.

Through certain programs that are in place, these problems can be monitored and controlled, which is exactly what is needed to tackle them without compromising the organisation’s productivity as well as its culture. Hence, substance abuse in the workplace can be controlled if not avoided by the employees as individuals.

To elaborate, organisations, such as the DOD, are not immune to these problems because, like in any other organisation, there are a number of staff members who are adversely affected by this kind of deviant behavior. However, through proper rules and regulations set in place by the Department, misconduct caused by substance abuse is decisively dealt with. This is done not only to rid itself of intolerable behavior of some members or employees but to maintain the organisation’s culture and discipline.

Members are seriously cautioned not to indulge themselves in this deviant behaviour within and outside the working environment as well as where internally or externally deployed.
IN MEMORIUM

Defence Reserves was sad to learn of the passing away of eleven South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members who were killed in a tragic bus accident in the Golden Gate Reserve on Friday 19 August 2016.

Chief Defence Reserves, Major General Roy Andersen and staff, wish to express their heartfelt condolences to the families, loved ones and friends of the deceased members who were on board when the bus crashed.

The eleven members who were lost in this fatal accident were:

1. Chaplain Phumza Teledimo *
2. Sergeant Matseko Josephine Madimabe
3. Corporal Akhona Tshoni
4. Lance Corporal Sharon Nosiphiwe Macala
5. Private Maserame Dorcas Molibeli *
6. Lance Corporal Cheena Roberta Jonkers
7. Lance Corporal Maditsietsi Constance Morotolo
8. Ms. Alice Thakanyane Masilo
9. Ms. Portia Palesa Ramabodu
10. Ms. Lesego Cynthia Rasethuntsha
11. Ms. Maria Jacobs

* Reserve Force members

We also wish to express our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of the following Reserve Force fallen heroes, who passed away:

**SA Army Reserve**
Brig Gen A.C. Chemaly of First City Regiment – 22 October 2016
WO2 G. Wade of 3 Parachute Battalion – 19 October 2016
Cpl L.F. Madjaka of Tswane Regiment – 14 October 2016
Cpl G. Nimmerhout of Cape Town Highlanders – 28 August 2016
Cpl S. Coetzee of Kimberly Regiment – 10 November 2016

**SAMHS Reserve**
Cpl A.S.Q Martin of SAMHS Head HQ – 23 July 2016

Chief Defence Reserves: Maj Gen Roy Andersen and Staff
CHIEF OF THE SA ARMY COMBAT RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIP

To take place over the period 17 to 22 April 2017 at the De Brug Training Area Bloemfontein

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