

ADDRESS BY THE GOC SA ARMY ARMOUR FORMATION AT THE PASSING-OUT PARADE OF THE UNIVERSITY RESERVE TRAINING PROGRAMME (URTP) BASIC MILITARY TRAINING PHASE IN BLOEMFONTEIN ON 20 JANUARY 2012

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen (Maj Gen Roy Andersen, Chief Defence Reserves; Brig Gen JD Malan, Director Army Doctrine and Policy; Brig Gen Gerhard Kamffer, Director Army Reserves; Officers Commanding; Officers; RSMs; WOs; NCOs; Troopers).

What a pleasure to see the result of a newly introduced Defence Force programme in front of us. This group of young men and women pioneered the first programme of its kind when they started with their basic military training last year. Ladies and gentlemen, the University Reserve Training Programme, or as we all refer to it as URTP, was developed over the last number of years. What we see here is the end product of the first phase of the pilot programme that was managed by the SA Army and Armour Formation in particular and conducted and presented by the Regiment President Steyn (RPS).

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate all the recruits of this programme with their results. It really took a good measure of commitment for these youngsters to become soldiers while busy with their tertiary studies. A special word of congratulations goes to the individual performers with their excellent achievements. Allow me to also thank the OC and staff of the RPS with a job well done. You can feel proud of this pioneering work that has been done since last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the documents constituting defence policy in South Africa are very explicit and clear about the role of the Reserves in our military. A trained volunteer part-time component is needed as an efficient, cost-effective force-multiplier to be called upon in time of national emergency and to defend our country. A key component of this element is leadership and in this case junior leaders. Today's junior leaders are tomorrow's senior leaders.

It is for this reason and due to the inadequate feeding of the ranks of the Reserves that a plan had to be made of how to produce quality junior leaders for the Reserves. In years gone by the conscription system used to provide sufficient numbers of leaders to our Reserve units.

A tried and proven source of such leadership lies in the student bodies of universities and tertiary institutions – as has been recognized and successfully utilized for over a century in other countries. The leadership and management training given to such potential officers can be applied in both the military and civilian sectors, and provides an additional dimension of personal development to the part-time volunteer soldier. In addition it may contribute materially to further achievement and success on the student's chosen career path, both civilian and military.

The SA National Defence Force has introduced the URTP to source such junior leaders from the 'best and the brightest' of the undergraduate and postgraduate student bodies. The URTP provides a challenging programme of military training along with leadership and other complimentary social, cultural and physical training. These young men and women can today testify of their respective experiences. The goal of a URTP recruit is thus to become simultaneously a fighter in wartime, a leader of character, a member of a profession and a servant of the nation.

The programme will ultimately enhance the professional and intellectual capacity of the Reserves and the National Defence Force at large.

Ladies and gentlemen, as this was a pilot programme, many lessons have been learned in the process. The National Defence Force and the SA Army is now in a position to adjust the programme where necessary and to better and improve its approach towards the programme. That will ensure an even better output which is, in my view, already of a high standard.

I also wish to thank the families of these soldiers for the support they gave to their respective soldiers. Thank you for encouraging and motivating these youngsters to do their best. Together you can all feel proud today as this pioneer group is passing out ready to tackle the challenges they may encounter.

Once more, a word of congratulations to all these men and women. Well done RPS with the fine product that you have produced. I also wish to thank the offices of Chief Defence Reserves and Army Reserves for the interest shown and support given during the programme. A special word of thanks to Col Ed Carton-Barber who worked closely with Lt Col Jan Koen, the Staff Officer Reserves in my headquarters, as well as Lt Col Rassie Erasmus, the OC RPS. In his absence I need to thank Maj Sarel De Meyer for his huge input into this programme. He was an absolute star. He was ably supported and assisted by Capt Wolfaardt and Warrant Officers Rautenbach and Bath, all volunteers in their own right. The External Training Team (ETT) of the School of Armour, under the competent leadership of Lt Col Dirk Engelbrecht, needs special mentioning. You guys made the difference and deserve the admiration of the Defence Force for the sterling work performed over the last year or so.

It is now my wish that all these recruits will be evenly successful in the continuation of their military careers and specifically with the next phases to follow. May you also succeed in your tertiary studies and achieve the required outcome as soon as practically possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, may 2012 be a blessed and prosperous year to you all.

Thank you.



Passing-out Parade URTP Basic Military Training School of Armour 20 January 2012