

# South African Military Skills in Denmark

By: Capt Dougie le Roux



Team RSA at the closing dinner. F.l.t.r.: Lt Murray, Tpr Ntamane, Lt Dtshego, L/Cpl McLean, Capt le Roux, Sgt Daniels, L/S Muchlanga, Tpr Hlophe, Maj Labuschagne.



Team RSA1 consisting of Lt Ditchego, Sgt Daniels and L/S Muchlanga.



Team RSA2 consisting of Maj Labuschagne, Lt Murray and Tpr Hlophe.

## Competing against the best.

For the team of SANDF Reserve members who competed in the 2012 CIOR (Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers) Military Skills competition in Copenhagen Denmark the rigorous training and hard fought battle during the competition against other nations will forever remain lodged in their memories. The team, comprising Col Alberts (technical jury), Defence Reserves, Capt le Roux (coach), 3 Parachute Battalion, Maj Labuschagne, 3 Parachute Battalion, Lt Murray, Cape Town Highlanders, Lt Ditshego, Air Force HQ, Sgt Daniels, Transvaal Scottish, L/Cpl McLean, Transvaal Scottish, LS Muchlanga, Navy, Tpr Hlophe, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, Tpr Ntamane, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, managed to compete hard in every event and at the end of the day not only walked away as proud soldiers, but also as proud competitors.

The annual CIOR Milcomp competition is based on skills required from soldiers in combat situations and includes activities such as pistol and rifle shooting, land and water obstacle crossing, map, reading, distance estimation, grenade throwing and orienteering. Although the event takes place in competition format, competitors make use of every opportunity to meet and learn from fellow reserves from NATO countries as far as the USA, Norway and Sweden.

## Preparing for the unforeseen.

Preparation for the international competition starts each year during the National Military Skills Competition held in Potchefstroom. This competition is based on the same activities and basic skills required from competitors during the international competition. The top 20 performing competitors are chosen to form a training group that will attend the monthly training camps in Potchefstroom where they will go through a regime of exercises all designed to enhance their performance in shooting, obstacle crossing and orienteering. Additionally the competitors are also trained in the art of Tactical Combat Casualty Care and Law of Armed Conflict.

The coaching staff has numerously witnessed the transformation competitors go through once they qualify and join the training program. Confidence levels rise, self-respect increases, a sense of teamwork develops and more than anything individual skills required to be an effective soldier is gained, trained and enhanced.

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## The final countdown.

From South Africa the team left for London where they had a final preparation training camp with the United Kingdom team. Here the team made use of local conditions and international expertise to do their final preparations including activities such as pistol shooting, rifle shooting, water obstacle, land obstacle and orienteering.

With the training exercises rigorous and the training schedule from dusk till dawn, the team was left with very little time for socializing and sightseeing. After 4 days of training the break finally came and the team had one day to explore London and the Olympic buzz, and just to relax and take a break before the dream would finally realize and they would have the opportunity to represent their country.

For many of the team members it was their first opportunity to travel abroad and well deserved it was after the tough year of training and working hard in order to make the team selection. Families back home would soon receive photographs and souvenirs of the Big Ben, the river Thames, Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly Circus but to name a few. Few South Africans ever get the opportunity to see these sights first hand, but note that it all came at a price!

With the sightseeing done and dusted the team had to make their way to the airport for their final flight to Copenhagen Denmark! There they would be met by a group of administrators from the Danish Defence Force who would escort the team to their final destination, The Garrison of Hovelte – the training school for The Danish Royal Guards.



Team RSA exchanging gifts with their counterparts in England. F.l.t.r. L/S Muchlanga, Lt Murray, Tpr Ntamane, Col Alberts, Tpr Hlophe, Lt Ditshego, Capt Edmonds, Maj Labuschagne, L/Cpl McLean, Sgt Daniels



L/Cpl McLean with the medal he received for his team's 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the international competition – with Capt le Roux.

## Competition Copenhagen

If one statement can be made about the competition in Copenhagen it can be said that the arrangements by the Danish Defence Reserves were of high standard. From arrival to departure the competitors were never in doubt as to what would take place next, and how it would happen. From sleeping quarters to meal arrangements, training facilities to transport, all were well planned and well executed.

Having arrangements in place made it easy for the competitors to focus on the competition. South Africa once again improved on past performances with L/Cpl Mclean receiving a bronze medal for his teams 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the international category. Other highlights were as follows:

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|---------------------|--|
| Rifle Shooting      | - Lt Murray 1 <sup>st</sup> individual<br>- RSA1 8 <sup>th</sup> team overall  |
| Pistol Shooting     | - RSA2 13 <sup>th</sup> team overall   |
| Combined Shooting   | - Lt Murray 4 <sup>th</sup> individual<br>- RSA2 14 <sup>th</sup> team overall |
| Obstacles           | - RSA1 15 <sup>th</sup> team overall<br>- RSA2 18 <sup>th</sup> team overall   |
| Distance estimation | - RSA1 6 <sup>th</sup> team overall  |
| Grenade throwing    | - RSA1 5 <sup>th</sup> team overall  |