



SA Navy Reserves Indaba

“Reserves at Sea”

(Article & photos by WO 1 Manny Gounden)



“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.” Eleanor Roosevelt

The Deputy Chief of the South African Navy, Rear Admiral Mosuwa Hlongwane, opened the historic SA Navy Reserve Indaba in Simon’s Town on behalf of the Chief of the Navy, Vice Admiral Johannes Mudimu, on the 23 February 2013.



Deputy Chief of the Navy, Rear Admiral Mosuwa Hlongwane & Chief Defence Reserves Major General Roy Andersen at the opening of the Indaba

The theme of the conference was "Reserves at Sea." A total of 170 delegates from the Regular and Reserve Force of the SA Navy attended and participated in this epoch Indaba.

The objective of the Indaba was to provide a platform to which the logical and creative thinkers could input strategic guidance for the policy makers to map a clear policy for the SA Naval Reserves (SANR).

In his opening address Rear Admiral Hlongwane said: *“The human resource dimension of our Navy has come to reflect the demographics of our broader society. This has been paralleled by significant revitalisation and growth of our naval technologies, all of which have brought with them a set of unique challenges not previously experienced.*

Rear Admiral Hlongwane added: *“Time and again, it has become clear that simply relying on previous modes of thinking, and depending on historical data to derive future forecasts, is not only inappropriate, but also invalid. We cannot be found wanting. Let’s apply ourselves.”*

Naval Reservists come from all walks of life and from all parts of South Africa. Some are ex full-time personnel who have been discharged from the Navy, whilst others have recently undertaken Navy specific training, which they can combine with the skills they bring from the civilian world.

Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Rusty Higgs, the Chairman of the Indaba steering committee and first session chairman stated: *“Colleagues, I urge you today that we seriously interrogate our inner aspirations, and consider whether our intention and our will to competence and professionalism is indeed framed by this apathy, as opposed to an intentionality which asks each day: how can I be better, stronger and more capable.”*

“The One Force concept implies the sense of collegiality, coherence and shared perspective, not as a matter of administration, but as a core of our very identity. Naval professional is our our greatest strength and our greatest challenge,” Rear Admiral Higgs concluded.



Chief of Naval Staff & Steering Committee Chairman for the Indaba, Rear Admiral Rusty Higgs addressing the delegates

Chief, Defence Reserves, Major General Roy Andersen, Flag Officers, Mr Helmoed Heitman of Jane’s Defence, Mr Tiyali of SAMSA, Senior Officers and Reserve Officers were the main speakers.

In a paper delivered by Chief Defence Reserves, Major General Roy Andersen titled *“The Revitalisation of the Reserves.”* He stated that: *“The Reserves must be transformed and revitalized so that they can fulfill their primary role of providing the majority of the conventional landward capability of the SANDF, whilst at the same time supplementing the peace support missions conducted by the Regular Force.”*

Major General Andersen concluded by stating: *“The Reserve strategy must be finalised and fully implemented. It is a Ministerial Priority and it is good for citizenship and nation building.”*

A total of 15 papers were presented together with five work group sessions. At the end of the each work session, the group leader presented the group’s recommendations. The main focus for the Reserves is that the Maritime Strategy of the SA Navy will drive the Reserve Force.

The clear message from the presenters is that the mission of the Naval Reserves in any Navies around the world is to generate trained individuals and teams for their Defence and Armed Forces operations, including domestic safety operations as well as security and defense missions, while at the same time supporting the Navy's efforts in connecting with South Africans through the maintenance of a broad national presence.

The recommendations and critical assessments of the Indaba have been noted. The implementation of these recommendations in the form of policies is foreseen after a strategic review to see what best works for the Navy.

The Indaba was a gathering of the best naval minds with experience and knowledge in the business of maritime strategy. Both the Regular and Reserve components of the SA Navy made a critical assessment of the current status of the SANR to chart the way forward. A SANR strategy is envisaged.

The Reserve is a vital part of our Navy. Our members serve on a part-time basis but the contribution they make to the Navy as a whole is highly valued. It is the linkage between the South African Navy and the South African Population.

Naval Reservists are individuals engaged in their civilian lives while pursuing a military career. They work evenings and weekends, and during the summer period in a trade of their choice. They can be students, teachers, lawyers, delivery persons, secretaries, or other members of society.

“The Indaba was the best event ever organised to date,” said Cdr Graham Matthei, Directing Staff at Naval Staff College



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