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CHIEF OF THE SA AIR FORCE ACKNOWLEDGES THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY RESERVE TRAINING PROGRAMME (URTP) AND THE RESERVES

During a recent certificate ceremony that marked the completion of the first ever Basic Military Training (BMT) course for the URTP in the SA Air Force (SAAF), the Chief of the Air Force, Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang congratulated the seventeen learners on their determination and commitment to be part of the SAAF.

The learners are mainly engineering students from the Engineering Faculties of the University of Pretoria, the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Witwatersrand. The BMT was presented under the auspices of the Officer Commanding, SAAF College. In accordance with the concept of the URTP, the training was presented on a modularized basis over week-ends and during university recess periods.

After scripture reading and prayer, Lt Gen Msimang handed certificates to the 17 members, unveiled their CO ranks and presented the following trophies for special achievements:

- Best male shottist - CO N.E. Nkambule (98.2%)
- Best female shottist - CO T.W. Nevhutalu (86%)
- Fittest male student - CO M.O. Bookholane (98.7%)
- Fittest female student - CO T.M. Moima (96%)
- Best academic achievement - CO A. Sanders (98%)
- Best overall student - CO M.O. Bookholane

In the speech of Lt Gen Msimang (which was read by Maj Gen S.D. Mashobane, Chief Director SAAF Force Preparation), C SAAF referred to the revitalization and rejuvenation of the Reserves which is a priority of the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans and the important role of the URTP – which is guided by the Chief Defence Reserves, Maj Gen Roy Andersen – will play in achieving this goal.

Lt Gen Msimang further expressed his gratitude “to those who worked so tirelessly behind the scenes to make training and final results possible”. Special reference was made to the role and efforts of -

- The OC SAAF College and the Officer Forming Wing.
- The Directing Staff of the programme - who are also Res F members.
- The Engineering Faculty of the University of Pretoria for partnering with the SA Air Force.
- The role of the Director Air Force Reserve and the Director Education Training and Development for leading the implementation of the URTP in the SAAF.

- The guidance and oversight on the roll-out of the URTP in the SAAF, provided by the Chief Defence Reserves.

Lt Gen Msimang quoted Mr Nelson Mandela who said “After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb”. In conclusion Lt Gen Msimang said to the newly unveiled Candidate Officers (COs): “And so it is with this programme, you have just completed the first hill on your journey of becoming professional disciplined soldiers of the South African National Defence Force and there will be many more hills to climb. I believe that the determination you have demonstrated in the past year, will carry you over many hills. As you travel this journey, you must keep one thing in mind, and that is, you are the future leaders of this Air Force. Climb every hill with courage and determination because OURS IS TO SERVE WITH DISCIPLINE, DIGNITY, PROFESSIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM”.

Lt Gen Msimang indicated in his speech that these COs will commence with their Officer’s Formative course in May 2014 which will prepare them for appointment as junior officers in the SAAF.



Chief of the Air Force, Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang arriving at the certificate ceremony of the URTP



Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang unveiling the ranks of the COs



Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang handing over certificates to members of the URTP on completion of their BMT



Chief of the Air Force addressing the COs and audience which included senior SANDF officers, Warrant Officers, NCOs, university representatives, parents and family members



CO M.O. Bookholane receives the trophy as the best overall student from Chief of the Air Force, Lt Gen F.Z. Msimang



The recipients of special achievement rewards: FLTR COs T.M. Moima, A. Sanders, M.O. Bookholane, N.E. Nkambule and T.W. Nevhutalu



SA Air Force URTP BMT Course Photo

Front row FLTR: Col M.C.G. Muller (SSO Res F Proj), Brig Gen M.M. Visser (DCSS) Brig Gen S. Mtimkulu (D SAAF Res), Maj Gen S.D. Mashobane (CD Force Prep), Brig Gen S.D. Molefe (Dir Def Res), Col W.J. van Aswegen (OC, SAAF Col), Prof Leon Maree (Eng Faculty, UP), Lt Col R. Molefe (URTP Proj Off)