

The Shamrock

SA Irish Regiment

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The Shamrock



The official newsletter of the SA Irish Regiment

Happy new year



Irish New Year's wishes!
In the new year 2017,
may your right hand
always be stretched out in
friendship
and not in want.



From the Editor

From: The Editor



HAPPY 2017.

On behalf of the Officer Commanding, SA Irish Regiment and the editorial staff, we wish everyone a very prosperous 2017.

Thank you once again to all our loyal readers for contributions and making this newsletter a success over the past year. Remember: Contributions towards "The Shamrock" can also be emailed to irish.regiment@gmail.com

Remember: Newsletters can be downloaded from the internet. Go to www.sairish.webs.com to download Regimental newsletters and copies of the latest SA Soldier magazines in PDF format. You can also listen to the Regimental march on our website.

Faugh a Ballagh!

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From the OC's Desk

By: Lt Col. W.W. Kinghorn, MMM, DWD

We find ourselves at the start of another year. We have had many warnings from higher HQ that this year will be a very tough year, with preparations for commitments within a very tight financial budget.

We will have to become accustomed to doing more, with a whole lot less. Our resources will be subject to possible budget cuts, but our tasks and duties will most likely increase.

We as reserves have become accustomed to situations like this and I have no doubt that we will adapt to this situation like we have done so many times in the past.

We can all be very proud of our accomplishments last year, but we must also ready ourselves for the challenges of the year ahead. There are some tough challenges ahead!

On behalf of myself as Officer Commanding and my command staff, I want to wish all the members of the Regiment and their families a very prosperous 2017.

Faugh a Ballagh!

Lt Col. W.W. Kinghorn, DWD, MMM
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Regimental Events

By: The Editor

Please contact your company commander for more details on Regimental events. More dates will be published as they become available.

- 18 February** - Unit shooting exercise.
 - 17 March** - Saint Patrick's Day
 - 13 May** - Unit shooting exercise.
 - 15 July** - Unit shooting exercise.
 - 23 September** - Unit shooting exercise.
 - 26 August** - Barberton sunset parade.
 - 11 November** - Freedom Regiments Parade.
 - 12 November** - JHB Remembrance Parade – JHB Cenotaph.
 - 19 November** - Sidi Rezegh Commemoration Parade .
 - 1 December** – Regimental Birthday.
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Did you know?

By: The editor (Source Wikipedia)

Did you know, the highest scoring western Allied pilot of the Second World War was a South African pilot?

Squadron Leader Marmaduke Thomas St John Pattle, DFC and Bar (3 July 1914 – 20 April 1941), usually known as Pat Pattle, was a South African-born Second World War fighter pilot and flying ace (an aviator credited with the destruction of five or more enemy aircraft in aerial combat) of the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Born in 1914 in Butterworth, South Africa, Pattle applied to join the South African Air Force at 18 and was rejected. He travelled to the United Kingdom and joined the RAF in 1936, on a Short Service Commission (SSC). Pattle was a pilot in 1937 and was posted to 80 Squadron based in Egypt upon the outbreak of war in September 1939. In June 1940 Italy entered the war on the side of the Axis Powers and he

began combat operations against the Regia Aeronautica (Italian Air Force), gaining his first successes during the Italian invasion of Egypt.

After the Italian invasion, his squadron was sent to Greece in November 1940, where Pattle achieved most of his victories. Pattle claimed around 20 aircraft shot down and in March 1941 was promoted to squadron leader. After the German intervention, and in fourteen days of operations, Pattle claimed more victories. Pattle claimed five or more aircraft destroyed in one day on three occasions, which qualified him for "Ace in a day" status.

Pattle achieved his greatest success on 19 April 1941, claiming six victories. The following day, having claimed more aerial victories than any other Western Allied pilot, he took off against orders, while suffering from a high temperature, to engage German aircraft near Athens. He was last seen battling Messerschmitt Bf 110 heavy fighters. His Hurricane crashed into the sea during this dogfight and Pattle was killed.

Pattle is sometimes noted as being the highest-scoring British Commonwealth pilot of the war. If all claims made for him are correct, his total could be more than 51.

It can be stated that his final total was at least 40 and could exceed this value. Log-books and semi-official records suggest this figure, while personnel attached to his squadron suspect the figure to be closer to 60.

A total of 26 of Pattle's victims were Italian; 15 were downed with Gloster Gladiators, the rest with Hawker Hurricanes. He is considered to be the highest-scoring ace on both Gladiator (15 victories) and Hurricane (35 victories) fighters.

Pattle is however regarded as the 'unofficial' Highest scoring Western Allied Fighter pilot for WWII. Unfortunately the squadron war diary and his log books were lost in the retreat from Greece.

IRISH SALUTE!

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From the Pipes and Drums.

By: *The Pipe Major and P&D Admin*
S A Irish Regiment Pipes & Drums
Provisional 2017 Calendar of Events:

- 1 April:** Vaal Highland Gathering: Bob Worrall Adjudicating
- 29 April:** South Coast Highland Gathering (Championship)
- 13 May:** Jeppe Gathering (Regional)
- 27 May:** De La Salle Gathering (Regional)
- 10 June:** Cornwall Hill Gathering (Regional)
- 17 June:** Pretoria Boys Gathering (Championship)
- 15 July:** St Benedict's Gathering (Regional Final)
- 29 July:** Benoni Gathering (SA Champs & Championship Final)
- 11 November:** Freedom of the City of Johannesburg parade.
- 12 November:** Remembrance day parade - Johannesburg
- 19 November:** Sidi Rezegh Parade - SAIR HQ.

Faugh a Ballagh!

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News from the Regiment

Written by the Editor

On 7 December 2016, the Officer Commanding of the SA Irish Regiment hosted a Mess evening for serving members, to end off 2016. It was the last Regimental function for 2016, where the OC thanked everyone of their support during a very tough year.

The event was limited to serving



members only and proved to be a huge success. A three course meal was served, which was well worth the cost.

The event was hosted in the hall of the SA Irish Pipes and Drums, due to the renovations still underway in the combined mess.

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News from the SANDF – Testing and boosting the Navy mine counter-measures squadron's effectiveness.

Written by defenceWeb

That the SA Navy's mine counter-measures (MCM) remains an effective and efficient component of the maritime arm of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) was ably demonstrated during Exercise Phoenix in Mossel Bay recently.

“Captain Theo Stokes, MCM squadron commander, and his personnel rose to the task given by Flag Officer Fleet Rear Admiral Bubele Mhlana to arrest the decline and stabilise the fleet,”

Chief Petty Officer Byron Lombard reports.

This saw the MCM branch move lock, stock and an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) to conduct the exercise. The

main aim of Exercise Phoenix was to transfer skills and knowledge to operators. No less important was rebuilding overall MCM capabilities.

According to Stokes the exercise was designed primarily to collect data off Mossel Bay utilising technology transfer between the Simon's Town-based Institute for Maritime Technology (IMT) and the MCM squadron using IMT's Remus 100 AUV fitted with side-scanning sonar technology.

The MCM squadron is positioning itself for the new technology which Project Motsu will deliver. Phoenix provided the opportunity to see and utilise the AUV's capabilities and incorporate it into the MCM toolbox. During the exercise information on the AUV's limitations as regards different weather conditions, topography and water depth was all gathered and will be put to future use.

Navy divers also formed part of Phoenix and are scheduled to be staffed aboard MCM vessels in future. Their task will centre on finding mine-like objects (MLOs).

As far as the future of MCM operations in the Navy is concerned, Commander Werner Stassen sees IMT assisting with hardware and knowledge. This input will decrease over time and be handed to MCM operators who gain the needed knowledge and skills during exercises such as Phoenix.

Stassen added that operators involved in Exercise Phoenix had made valuable

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suggestions on classifying objects and cleaning data. "All the data collected was presented to both Fleet Command and the Navy Office."

Exercise Phoenix data interpretation The skills transfer aspect of Phoenix saw leading seamen Gavin Gain and Sion Meyer, among others, learn how to process raw data from the Remus AUV as well as doing interpretation before turning the data into picture format. This post processing element is done using Sonarwiz and Sea Scan survey software.

"They look for contacts on the raw data and mark them in categories such as objects of interest, MLOs and non-MLOs. It was a case of on-the-job training during the exercise which can be lost if these members are transferred to other units," Lombard said.

"IMT gives scientific support for the AUV used in Exercise Phoenix but once the Navy has its own AUV they will have a better understanding of its limitations and operating parameters. This will lead to the development of doctrine and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to boost maritime security," IMT domain leader Jorg Schid said.

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News from the SANDF – New boss for AFB Overberg.

Written by defenceWeb

Lieutenant Colonel Musa Mbhokota, the first black Gripen pilot in the SA Air Force (SAAF) and a former 2



Squadron Officer Commanding, will next month assume his first base command when he becomes Officer Commanding AFB Overberg.

In addition to being a fighter pilot the 48-year-old is also a qualified test pilot and being at Overberg, home of the SAAF's Test Flight and Development Centre (TFDC), will see him use these skills on a more regular basis.

Mbhokota was one of six SAAF pilots selected to go to Sweden when the acquisition of the Gripen fighters was finalised as part of the Strategic Defence Procurement Packages (SDPP) in the late nineties.

In 2002 he flew a joint sortie with then SAAF Chief, Lieutenant General Roelf Beukes, during an exercise in Sweden. Then a captain, he told a BAE Systems/SAAB in-house publication the flight with Beukes, a former jet fighter pilot, was "an important milestone" for South Africa air defence capabilities.

He was given command of the AFB Makhado-based squadron, the only jet fighter squadron in the SAAF, early in 2011 and relinquished this post to Lieutenant Colonel Josias Mashaba in October this year.

Mbhokota, known almost universally by his callsign "Midnight", had accumulated well over two thousand flying hours on eight different aircraft types including Gripen, Hawk Mk 120 and its predecessor the Impala. In addition to his test pilot rating, he is also instructor rated on both Gripen and Hawk.

The SAAF component of the southern Cape base became reality in 1987 when TFDC, originally located at AFB Waterkloof, moved to the same location as what was then the Overberg Test Range, now the Denel Overberg Test Range. TFDC was declared an air force base in 2004 and has since been known as AFB Overberg.

The base is, according to the SAAF website, responsible for all experimental, research and

development flight testing conducted in the air force.

It is strategically positioned with a large volume of airspace allowing for maximum flexibility during flight testing.

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News from the SANDF – New JOps deputy chief named, but no word on a new Chief.

Written by defenceWeb

It appears no decision has yet been taken on who will become the next commander of the SA National Defence Force's (SANDF) Joint Operations Division.

Rear Admiral Derek Christian, officially Deputy Joint Ops Chief and acting Chief since the death of Lieutenant General Duma Mdutyana, retires at end of February next year.

He will be replaced by current Brigadier General Eddie Drost of the SA Army who will become a major general when he moves to his new post on March 1.

No appointment as Chief Joint Ops is contained in the as yet unreleased promotions and transfers signal for generals and admirals.

The deputy chiefs of the SA Air Force, SA Navy and SA Military Health Service (SAMHS) will all be leaving their respective arms of service.

Major General Jerry Malinga is due to retire as SA Air Force number two in June next year and will be replaced by Major General, currently Brigadier General, MI Buthelezi.

Rear Admiral Hanno Teuteberg has decided to voluntarily leave the SA Navy using a MEM (members exit mechanism) and his last day in uniform will be March 31 next year. Taking over from him in the Visagie Street, Pretoria building housing the Navy Office will be Rear Admiral Guy Jamieson, currently a JG.

The post of Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), vacant since the departure of Rear Admiral Rusty Higgs after 40 years of service three months ago, will be filled by current Rear Admiral (JG) AE Kubu who becomes a full rear admiral on assumption of the CNS post.

At SA Military Health Services headquarters in Kasteelpark, Major General HC Grobler retires at the end of July next year. His post will be taken by current brigadier general N Ndhlovu, who will earn his second star when he becomes the number two military medic in the country.

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News from the SANDF – Low-tech proves effective for KZN/Mozambique border protection.

Written by defenceWeb

Old-fashioned South African inventiveness has seen implementation of a decidedly low-tech but surprisingly effective border protection tool on the KwaZulu-Natal/Mozambique border.



A 30 km section of the border has long been a thorn in the side of soldiers deployed on border protection as part of the wider Operation Corona tasking, specifically as far as vehicles illegally being taken out of South Africa is concerned.

Lieutenant Colonel “Wollie” Wolmarans, Staff Officer Operational Planning at SANDF Joint Operations KZN tactical headquarters, said the border fence was regularly cut to allow

easy access to neighbouring Mozambique.

In September 2015, despite the best efforts of soldiers, police and local communities it was reported that vehicles were being lost at the rate of up to 80 a month.

The first effort to plug this hole was using railway sleepers as additional border barriers. This helped but when Wolmarans was making a call on a crusher operation in Ndumo he saw another – better – solution.

“The crusher operator was loading rocks of between 150 and 200 kg onto trucks. I asked and was told they [were] going to be dumped,” Wolmarans said, and a “stop the bus” moment materialised.

“I asked if we (the military) could collect them and place them along the border as additional barriers to prevent vehicles being illegally moved across. The rest, as they say, is history and we have now reached a point when no more than 20 stolen vehicles a month get past us.”

The large rocks are strategically placed on the commonly used routes. In time the entire 30 km section of border will have the extra fortifications to cut down even further on the movement of stolen vehicles.

“The placement of the rocks, as simple as it seems, has had a marked effect on vehicle recovery. Additional rocks are placed on a constant basis in different areas to close the gaps. The criminal is never sure which area is closed or safe to use,” he said.

Wolmarans is of the opinion additional Samil 100s fitted with cranes will see the project, codenamed Operation Ilitshe, go forward quicker and “close this border permanently”.

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News from the SANDF – DefCol SLPs contribute to reversing decline in the SANDF.

Written by defenceWeb

The SA National Defence College (DefCol) is making a difference when it comes to implementation of milestone one of the Defence Review.

The SA National Defence Force’s (SANDF’s) higher leaning institution in Thaba Tshwane has taken the milestone one mantra of reversing the decline in the country’s military to heart. This has seen existing resources, utilised mostly in the Security and Defence Studies programme, put to more use in what Colonel Bobby Keller, Senior: Directing Staff at the College, has dubbed the short learning programme series (SLPs).

This year saw four SLPs presented starting with scenario-based planning followed by management of national security and strategic leadership, presented by the United Kingdom Defence Academy. The final SLP of the year was national security and the media.

Each SLP follows the same format with subject matter experts presenting over a continuous five day period.

“Each programme is designed to provide delegates with practical exposure underpinned by a modest theoretical input,” Keller told SA Soldier.

“Apart from attending formal lectures, self-study, syndicate work and plenary discussions, those on course have to undergo formative and summative assessment.”

The DefCol SLPs are accredited with the North West University’s School for Business and Governance. Negotiations are underway to combine all SLPs into a tertiary qualification which will offer Department of Defence members and senior representatives of other government departments an opportunity to earn a tertiary qualification on a part-time study basis.

Another SLP advantage is preparing members for the Joint Senior Command and Staff and the Security and Defence Studies programmes.

An example of an SLP in action saw uniformed members from commander (SAN) to colonel and civilian DoD personnel as well as an Armscor employee and two Department of Environmental Affairs staffers attend the Strategic Leadership SLP.

Participants were challenged to establish “which leadership is applicable to South Africa’s current reality?” and then present a new African leadership model at the end of the course.

“Strategic leadership is one of the key tasks of senior officers. Leadership entails the provision of guidance to the organisation and its members. In large organisations such as the defence force and government departments, guidance is initially provided by identifying the aim or goal of the organisation, the objectives to be achieved and the crafting of a strategy to achieve them,” Keller said.

“As far as the strategic leadership SLP was concerned its aim was to lead and manage our organisations toward a better South Africa. This SLP also empowered those attending to enhance leadership and management at the strategic level across the defence and wider security sector.”

Next year will see DefCol present more SLPs for senior uniformed and civilian personnel.

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News from the SANDF – Operation Corona sees dagga and other contraband worth more than R77 million seized in 2016.

Written by defenceWeb

The porosity of South Africa’s land borders along with a lack of resources to properly patrol them continues to make the country attractive to illegal immigrants and contraband smugglers.

Standing between them and other border jumpers such as vehicle hijackers is a thinly stretched camouflage line – the SA Army regulars and reserves deployed on the national border protection tasking known as Operation Corona.

There are 15 companies, called “sub-units” by politicians, currently deployed along the country’s borders with Botswana (1 969 km), Lesotho (1 106 km), Mozambique (496 km), Namibia (1 005 km), Swaziland (438 km) and Zimbabwe (230 km). In total soldiers on foot and in 4X4 vehicles, assisted by elements of the SA Air Force in the form of either A109 or Oryx helicopters, are tasked with ensuring territorial integrity over a distance of more than five thousand two hundred kilometres.

That this thin line managed to, among others, confiscate dagga valued conservatively at over R31 million between January 1 and December 12 as well as other contraband, mostly cigarettes, liquor, clothing and footwear worth close to R46 million in the same period, is testimony to the soldiers’ effort and sweat equity.

Other notable seizures were 3 177 head of livestock, mostly cattle and sheep; 60 weapons, mostly hunting rifles and handguns but also including an AK-47, and keeping R155 million worth of vehicles, mostly high-end SUVs, in South Africa.

Among the thousands of people stopped by soldiers during regular patrols, 15 467 were found to be “undocumented persons” in government terminology. They were all handed over to police and Department of Home Affairs officials for “further processing” according to Lieutenant Colonel Piet Paxton, Staff officer, Operational Communication at SANDF Joint Operations Division.

“We have done well with the resources at our disposal this year,” he said adding “the year is not over yet”.

The Christmas/New Year period is one where soldiers have in past years encountered larger numbers of smugglers carrying cigarettes, liquor and clothing destined for spaza shops and informal markets of Gauteng.

By far the majority of clothing and footwear was confiscated from people entering South Africa from Mozambique while the South Africa/Zimbabwe border is the main entry point for illegal cigarettes. Both these countries are also the departure point for almost all the undocumented people seeking entry to South Africa.

The Free State/Lesotho border was where the majority of livestock rustlers were apprehended and this border is also the chosen entry point of dagga smugglers.

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News from the SANDF – SA Air Force facing tough times.

Written by Guy Martin

Early in November, reports emerged that the majority of the South African Air Force’s (SAAF’s) C-130 Hercules transports are grounded due to maintenance problems. Maintenance is one of many issues facing the SAAF, and with the budget being tight this is not going to get better any time soon.



According to a Times Live report from early November, seven of the SAAF’s nine C-130s are grounded while the remaining two will only be able to keep flying for another couple of months before they require maintenance.

In addition to the grounding of the C-130s, Times Live reports that a technician recently dropped a C-130 engine onto test equipment and four refurbished engines have not been able to be refitted due to a lack of qualified technicians. Apparently Denel spent R50 million refurbishing the engines in the United States, which were redelivered to Air Force Base Waterkloof in March and May. Another problem exacerbating the C-130's maintenance is that the Air Force's engine testbed is not certified.

The SAAF's maintenance, repair and overhaul capabilities were hit hard by the 2013 cancellation of the Denel Aero Manpower Group (AMG) maintenance contract. This saw hundreds of skilled technicians retrenched, as the contract was declared irregular by the Auditor General. Of the 530 technicians employed under the contract, 140 were retained to train their replacements but the last were laid off in April this year, forcing the SAAF to outsource a lot of its maintenance work.

28 Squadron's nine C-130BZs will likely fly until around 2020, but since the cancellation of an order for eight Airbus A400Ms in 2009, there has been no talk of a replacement, meaning the SAAF will have to make do with the aircraft, some of which are many decades old.

The C-130BZs are the transport workhorses of the SAAF, with the type in service for half a century with 28 Squadron, the SAAF's only dedicated medium lift transport unit. Examples of what the ageing, but willing, workhorses have achieved during their decades in service include delivering freight in support of Operation Copper, the counter-piracy tasking in the Mozambique Channel, as well as delivering materiel and much-needed equipment to the Central African Republic capital of Bangui in March 2013. The squadron also supports South African peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and a 28 Squadron aircraft was also tasked with a flight to Malta during the 2012 Arab spring uprising to bring home South Africans who fled diplomatic missions in North African countries.

However, the C-130s have payload/range and volume restrictions and are not available in sufficient numbers, forcing the SAAF to hire Ilyushin Il-76s and Antonov An-124s to move equipment to and from places like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria.

Denel Aviation, as the only Lockheed Martin certified C-130 maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) centre in Africa, does a lot of work for the SAAF, but the Air Force has also turned to other service providers such as Execujet Aviation Group, which is upgrading the SAAF's King Airs with new avionics and engine modifications, amongst others. The SAAF has four King Airs in service.

The biggest threat facing the SAAF is not just a lack of maintenance and serviceable airframes, but a lack of funding in general. Treasury for the 2016/17 financial year allocated the Air Defence component of the South African National Defence Force R6.883 billion, which is R284 million less than the previous financial cycle.

Due to the reduction in budget, force employment flying hours are expected to drop to a planned 5 000 for the 2016/17 financial year, from a planned 6 500 the previous year (although only 4 785 were actually flown). This compares to 11 696 in 2012/13, for example.

Speaking in February, SAAF chief, Lieutenant General Fabian 'Zakes' Msimang, said "our chronic below global acceptable defence budget allocation levels will render us vulnerable, weak and undependable," but "in an environment of high demands and obligations, we have accomplished our missions."

Some of the SAAF's focus areas for 2016, according to Msimang, include the Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition 2016; building Reserve Force capacity and reactivating the Reserve Force flying squadrons; foreign learning opportunities; restructuring the SAAF; chess programmes; youth outreach; and transformation.

"We have done well despite the unfavourable budget allocations. Equally, we remain committed towards the implementation of the Defence Review 2014 in spite of limited resource allocation," Msimang said.

"Limited resource allocation" is indeed affecting the implementation of the 2014 Defence Review, especially as there is no accompanying funding model for it. The Review calls for the replacement of the C-130BZ fleet, increasing VIP transport, acquiring maritime reconnaissance and light transport aircraft, mobile and static radars, an airborne early warning capability, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), an in-flight refuelling capability, a military air ambulance capability and a deployable tactical air basing capability to support expeditionary operations. However, little funding has been made available for these projects although the Defence Review Implementation Project Team (DRIPT) is working on implementing recommendations that do not require much funding.

John Gibbs, who was a member of the Defence Review Committee, earlier this year warned that, "if there is not adequate and sufficient funding, the defence trajectory as set out in the Defence Review will not be reached and the consequences of that will be the continued decline of defence capabilities to the disadvantage of ordered commitments."

DRIPT, he said, was focussing on 12 issues during the first year of Defence Review implementation, based on milestone one of arresting the decline in SANDF capabilities. This includes implementation of a costed plan for milestone one; defence capabilities developed and sustained; defence industry engagements established; defence facilities maintained; restructuring of the SANDF in terms of force design and structure; DoD human resource management; and establishing a Defence Academy.

One example of a lack of funding hurting the SAAF concerns the acquisition of light transport and maritime surveillance aircraft under Projects Metsi and Kiepie, but it seems

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this has fallen by the wayside as the 2016/17 defence budget vote makes no mention of new aircraft and the SAAF budget is almost unchanged for the next several years.

This leaves the SAAF to continue maritime surveillance flights with its dozen C-47TP aircraft and light transport with its four CASA 212s. Numerous aircraft have been offered to the SAAF to meet its maritime surveillance requirements, the most recent being Dornier 328s that would be leased from a consortium led by Atlantis Aviation and including Avex Air, AeroData and AeroRescue. Although demonstration flights were flown for the SAAF in September, it is not clear what progress has been made in this regard, but it is an alternative funding model that may be more feasible than an outright purchase.

Lack of budget has also affected the sharp end of the SAAF, with thirteen of the SAAF's 26 Gripen fighter jets in rotational storage as the SAAF does not have the budget to fly them. A lack of qualified flight crew has not helped the situation, but to address the skills issue a number of 2 Squadron pilots are undergoing training in Russia and Cuba.

Although lack of funding has hurt the SAAF, there is budget for a few acquisitions. New Denel Dynamics A-Darter air-to-air missiles are being acquired for the Gripens and Hawks to replace the interim IRIS-T, with deliveries of operational missiles expected in 2017. The missile has also been bought by Brazil for its Gripen E/Fs.

Denel Dynamics last year also delivered an unknown number of Seeker 400 UAVs to the SANDF's Defence Intelligence division and these have been offered as a contribution to the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC). Both Defence Intelligence and the SAAF are apparently hoping to operate the Seeker 400.

On the defence equipment side, the SAAF is seeking to replace some of its fixed and mobile radars under Project Chutney, with a Request for Information released last year and

funding allocated for the 2018/19 financial year. At the moment the SAAF uses six Plessey AR3D Umlindi air defence radar systems (upgraded by Tellumat) and four Plessey Tactical Mobile Radar systems. Also regarding situational awareness, the SAAF is upgrading its Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (JARIC) with image analysis tools under Project Achilles.

Other equipment has been upgraded to keep it in service or improve performance, such as fitting the Caravan fleet with Argos 410-Z day/night reconnaissance turrets under Project Koiler, and upgrading 39 Oryx helicopters under Project Drummer to keep them in service until 2020. The final Oryx was handed over to the Air Force in September, concluding a lengthy and technically challenging programme that began in 2006. While there has been talk of acquiring a heavy lift helicopter for battlefield support in line with the Defence Review, little appears to have become of this plan.

After very good performance with the United Nations combating rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the SAAF's 11 surviving Rooivalk attack helicopters may get an upgrade as well. Denel Aviation is talking about developing an enhanced Rooivalk for the SAAF that would introduce modern avionics and weapons and improve performance. Denel Aviation has brought back Rooivalk jigs and is seeking to rebuild the crashed example as a Rooivalk Mk II prototype.

In the meantime, the Rooivalk has fired Forges de Zeebrugge 70 mm laser guided rockets, Mokopa anti-tank missiles and been fitted with an Airbus Defence and Space Optronics Argos II airborne observation system. In September Airbus Helicopters and Denel Aviation signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in which they agreed to cooperate on a phased programme of enhancements for the Rooivalk helicopter.

"As part of the Rooivalk roadmap we developed, we will launch a market assessment and feasibility study into a modernised version of the Rooivalk incorporating enhanced operational capabilities. Our ultimate objective is to

offer a South African product which will provide an attractive solution for potential export customers around the world," said Mike Kgobe, CEO of Denel Aviation.

Secretary for Defence, Dr Sam Gulube, said discussions and negotiations were ongoing with potential African partners to both contribute to actual manufacture of Rooivalk Mk II and potential users. "We are looking at about 60 or so aircraft to be used by African air forces as well as their possible sale to BRICS partners, Brazil and India."

While the SAAF is keen to get an upgraded Rooivalk, it seems that production of the Rooivalk Mk II would only proceed if sufficient export orders are achieved. In the more than 20 years since the Rooivalk first flew, no export orders have been placed, but now that the fleet has been upgraded and performed well in the DRC, this may change.

An area where many feel the SAAF is being dragged down is VIP transport, with much effort and money going towards flying VIPs and leasing VIP aircraft. Tens of millions of rands are spent on chartering VIP aircraft every year – for example, between 2009 and 2012 the SAAF spent R76 million chartering 55 VIP flights while its own aircraft flew 814 VIP flights in that period at a cost of R217 million. During the 2015/2016 financial year, the Air Force flew 893 hours for VIP flights, according to the Department of Defence.

The SAAF's VIP 21 Squadron flies a Boeing Business Jet (BBJ – Inkwazi) acquired in 2003, two 1980s era Falcon 50s, a 24-year old Falcon 900B, and two 34-year old Cessna Citations, but these are often deemed insufficient and aircraft are leased – especially when aircraft are down for maintenance, although President Jacob Zuma seems reluctant to use the BBJ. (At the moment the Citations are apparently grounded.)

The government is attempting to acquire new VIP aircraft but with at least four abortive attempts since 2011, it is not clear if this will ever go ahead. In October 2015 Armscor issued a

Request for Information for the acquisition of an 'intercontinental air transport system' with a closing date of 20 November, but on 22 April Armscor issued a tender for the wet lease of an intercontinental VIP aircraft for at least 12 months. This was subsequently cancelled as none of the bids were suitable. This week defence minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said the acquisition of a new VIP aircraft was still on the table and the Defence Council had decided the process for "a full acquisition" should proceed.

In spite of budget cuts, VIP remains an important function of the SAAF and it has been reported that 20% of SAAF flight hours go to VIP flights. There have been calls by experts and commentators for the VIP airlift function of the SAAF to be transferred to the Presidency so the SAAF can focus on its job of defending and protecting South Africa and its people. This involves supporting peacekeeping operations outside the country, contributing to anti-piracy operations, disaster relief, search and rescue, logistic support and border safeguarding. With the lack of funding threatening to turn the SAAF into what is jokingly referred to as the South African Grounded Force, the SAAF needs every cent it can get and reprioritising its mandate to exclude VIP flights could be one step in the right direction.

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News from the SANDF – Defence force told to cut troops by 16,000.

*Courtesy of the Sunday Times News
By MZILIKAZI wa AFRIKA*

The South African National Defence Force has started to retrench up to 16,000 personnel.

This is in response to an instruction by the National Treasury to cut almost R3-billion from its salary bill over the next three years.

More than half the defence budget is spent on salaries. In the current financial year about R27-billion, in a

budget of R47-billion, was allocated to pay the troops.

The defence force said soldiers on peacekeeping missions and at embassies outside South Africa would also be affected.

The job cuts include administrative staff and fighting troops.

The retrenchments are likely to be carried out in other government departments too.

Civil service cuts were expected after Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's announcement in February that the Treasury would trim the public sector wage bill by at least R25-billion over three years.

Treasury spokeswoman Yolisa Tyantsi said the recommendation to reduce the wage bill had been sent to all government departments.

The defence force said the cuts would affect its "efficient and effective management".

Spokesman Siphwe Dlamini said: "If our budget is reduced further, as has been the case over the years, it will ... have a negative impact on the human resource component ."

Kobus Marais, the DA's spokesman on defence, said South Africa could not afford the current defence force.

"We do need a strong defence force, but right now there are too many chiefs, not enough Indians.

"The defence force is bloated with more senior and ageing people than the young and active personnel that are really needed."

Some staff at Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria said they had received letters terminating their contracts, but Dlamini said he was not aware of any letters. He was unable to check with the defence force's human resources department.

Dlamini said that to cut R3-billion from its wage bill would mean the loss of 16

000 jobs. He said other ways of cutting the wage bill would be investigated.

Defence personnel who spoke to the Sunday Times said they did not know what criteria were being used to decide on retrenchments.

"There was no consultation," said one.

She said she had been an office administrator in the defence force for more than 10 years and had now received her notice.

A major who has been with the defence force for 21 years had also received a letter ending his contract.

He said that about 60 people from Air Force Base Waterkloof had received letters informing them about the termination of their services.

He had been told that his service in the defence force would be terminated in March even though he had been contracted until December 2017.

A corporal who has served in the defence force for 10 years said he received a letter in October informing him that his contract would not be renewed in March.

"I am a soldier and will serve and defend my country, but now I don't know what I am going to do as I have been laid off," he said.

A sergeant with 21 years' experience said he was devastated after receiving a letter informing him his contract would be terminated in March, even though it was due to expire only in December next year.

"I dedicated my life to protect the sovereignty of this country and its citizens and now I am being thrown out in the cold without any explanation," he said.

Pikkie Greeff, secretary of the South African National Defence Union, said any recommendations from Treasury were subject to the law.

"We will go to court to stop the retrenchment of our members. If the defence force think they will go ahead

The Shamrock

with this, they have a big fight coming," he said.

It is believed those affected were contract workers. The longest defence force contract was for a pilot, which went up to 15 years and could be renewed.

Editorial Note: The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has denied a report that it will cut 16 000 jobs. SANDF spokesperson Sipiwe Dlamini denied that mass retrenchments would be carried out.

"Whether the budget is cut or not there will be no retrenchments in the National Defence Force," Dlamini told News 24.

"The defence force is not planning to discharge 16 000 soldiers."

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News from the

SANDF – New wide area surveillance system in Kruger is another poaching deterrent.

Written by defenceWeb

A new wide area surveillance system has been taken into use in the Kruger National Park.

Known as the Postcode Meerkat, in recognition of funding for it coming from the People's Postcode Lottery in the United Kingdom and which was secured by the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF), it is the first time technology of this type has been applied in a counter poaching role in a bushveld environment. This makes the system unique, said Tendani Tsedu of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), a partner in the system.

SANParks, the national conservation agency under whose aegis management of the Kruger National Park falls, is the third partner in the project.

Postcode Meerkat comprises a suite of radar and electro-optic sensors that detect, classify, monitor and track humans moving in the park over a wide area. Additionally, the system has been designed to be mobile so it can be rapidly deployed to prevent poaching crisis zones from developing.

Smart thinking in its development allows it to differentiate between humans and animals, while its application will guarantee early warning and rapid response capabilities. This will augment ranger reaction times, allow for better preparation and support proactive apprehension of suspected poachers, which could save lives both human and animal.

Postcode Meerkat also has future potential to be used in a conservation role, for example to better understand animal behaviour.

The system will significantly increase Kruger's ability to protect rhino and other vulnerable species. It will enhance capacity to combat wildlife crime, along with other systems already in place, such as improved ranger skills and support, increased aerial and ground mobility, gate access control and zones with increased wildlife protection, Tsedu said.

Apart from developing and manufacturing the system, the CSIR will also provide ongoing technical and administrative support to Kruger.

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News from the

SANDF – Fallen Soldier returns home.

From the SANDF Defence Corporate Communication

The SANDF received the mortal remains of Rfn Moalosi Albert Mokhothu at AFB Waterkloof on 30 December 2016 in a ceremony symbolising the military practice of

receiving a hero who fell in the battlefield.

Rfn Mokhothu died during a gun fight with rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo on Monday, 19 December 2016. Rfn Mokhothu lost his life while serving as a member of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) with the responsibility of ensuring peace and stability in the eastern part of the DRC.

IRISH SALUTE!

o0o

From the Chaplain

Written by: Captain M C Pelsler (Our honorary Field-Chaplain)

With all the excitement of the festive season and Christmas behind us we are once again standing at the beginning of a new year. We have 2017 in front of us like a blank page...

If you have a blank page in front of you, you can do whatever you want on that page. You can use it to write a story, to draw a picture or set up a budget. The choice is yours....

Should you decide to write a story you once again have a couple of choices. You can write a love story, a tragedy or a drama. You can choose what your main character will look like, act like and even dress like. It is your choice what you want to do with this story of yours...

We have a blank 2017 in front of us. We are not sure what lies ahead of us. We are not sure what the year will hold for us. We have some doubts as to how

our finances are going to work out. Will I have enough days to provide for my family? Will I be healthy enough? There are many things that we look at and that will make us doubt what is come in 2017....

In the Bible (Matthew 14:22-33) we read the story where Jesus walked



on the water. Peter said to Jesus to order him to come out of the boat and walk towards Jesus. This he did. Then...as soon as he started to doubt he started to sink into the waves! There are some very valuable lessons to learn from this scripture. Let's look what we can learn...

There will always be storms in our lives. Difficulties and problems will be on our way every day because we are living in a broken world, broken by sin, and the Devil will try by all means to discourage and attack you. But, by keeping our eyes on Jesus, we will be able to face the problems! As we can see in verse 30 – “But when he (Peter) noticed the strong wind, he was afraid and started to sink down in the water.” It all depends on where your focus is. I once heard some say: “Don't tell God how big your problems are, rather tell your problems how big your God is!”

All Peter had to do, when he realised that he was in trouble and sinking, was to utter the word (verse 30): “Save me, Lord!” That is all we need to do as well! When you feel things are getting to much just ask the Lord to “save you”, and he will...as he did in verse 31: “At once Jesus reached out and grabbed hold of him (Peter)....”

Now, let's get back to our blank page for 2017... What story will you be writing? I plan to write a story of adventure and success! One where I will be my own hero. One where I will be keeping my eyes fixed on God!

So, what will your 2017 story be like? Let us pray: Lord, we come before You at the beginning of a new year. We thank You for having protected and having brought us through 2016. Lord, we place our 2017 story in Your hands and pray that You will protect and bless us in 2017. We pray that it will be a year where we are safe in your loving and protecting hands. We place our Unit and all its members before You. We ask you to be with each and every member during 2017. We pray for our country and its leaders. We pray that You will take charge of our country and that you will use our leaders to lead us on Your way. We pray this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen!

Now, get out there and start writing your 2017 story!

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Guide on the older medals of the SANDF

The Unitas Medal was instituted by the President of the Republic of South Africa on 4 November 1994.



It was awarded to all ranks that were on the active strength of all seven constituent military forces from 27 April 1994 until 10 May 1994, to commemorate their amalgamation into the South African National Defence Force. It was also awarded to personnel of the British Military Advisory and Training Team which served in South Africa at the time.

The seven constituent military forces were:

- The South African Defence Force (SADF).
- The Transkei Defence Force (TDF) of the Republic of Transkei.
- The Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF) of the Republic of Bophuthatswana.
- The Venda Defence Force (VDF) of the Republic of Venda.
- The Ciskei Defence Force (CDF) of the Republic of Ciskei.
- Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress.
- The Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress.

Source list: Wikipedia
SA Medal Site
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Murphy's laws of combat– A humorous look at the military with a touch of wisdom.

Written by the Editor

1. If the enemy is in range, so are you.
2. Incoming fire has the right of way.
3. Don't look conspicuous; it draws attention and inevitably, fire.
4. Try to look unimportant, they may be low on ammo.
5. Professionals are predictable, it's the amateurs who are dangerous.
6. The enemy inevitably attacks on two occasions:
 - a. When you are ready for them.
 - b. When you are not ready for them.
7. Teamwork is essential, it gives them someone else to shoot at.
8. A "sucking chest wound" is nature's way of telling you to take it easy.
9. Never draw fire, it irritates everyone around you.
10. Anything you do could get you killed, including doing nothing.
11. Never share a foxhole with anyone braver than yourself.
12. If you are short of everything but the enemy, you are in a combat zone.
13. When you have secured an area, don't forget to tell the enemy.
14. Make it tough for them to get in and you won't be able to get out.
15. If you can't remember, the claymore is pointed at you.
16. Never, ever forget that all your equipment, including your weapon, is made by the lowest bidder.
17. If the attack is going well, you have just walked into an ambush.
18. When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend.
19. The Easy way is always mined.
20. There is always a way.
21. The enemy diversion that you have been ignoring will be their main attack.
22. Friendly fire is not friendly.
23. A medal just proves that you were smart enough to think of a plan, stupid enough to try it, and lucky enough to survive.
24. Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
25. Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.
26. If it looks stupid but it works, it is not stupid.

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2017

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