

The Shamrock
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The Shamrock



The official newsletter of the SA Irish Regiment

From the Editor

From: The Editor

It is hard to believe that the year is already in its third month. This year has already started off at a hectic pace, with the Regiment preparing for commitments and possible commitments from the Defence Force higher HQ.

The editorial staff thanks everyone for their continued contributions and we continue to extend the invitation to everyone to submit articles for publication. Remember your contributions are vital.

Photos of training sessions and news from any Regimental events are also more than welcome. 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 SA Soldier magazine in PDF format.

You can also join our Facebook fan page or follow us on Twitter.

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From the OC's Desk

By: Lt Col. M.A. Bennett

Although the year is only just starting, members of the Regiment have been quite busy to prepare for all training and other activities that lie ahead for this year, and other long term projects for next year.

I am pleased to say that everyone has performed their tasks in this planning process admirably. At the Infantry command Cadre Conference (ICCC), held in February the SA Irish Regiment was the Reserve Infantry Regiment that stood out above the rest regarding our planning on our medium and long term

projects that was presented to the GOC of Infantry Formation Maj-Gen. Yam.

This is the high standard that I have come to expect from our Regiment and I want to commend all involved in this planning process. Keep up the good work.

. - Faugh a Ballagh!

Lt Col. M.A. Bennett

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From the Honorary Colonel

By Col. B. Molefe (Colonel of the Regiment)

I am always pleased to read new issues of The Shamrock and look into current events on the Regimental Website.

It warms my heart to read how my Regiment is growing from strength to strength.

As our proud Regiment approaches 100 years of service to our beautiful country it becomes more important to exhibit and showcase all our achievements, over the past century, to the rest of the SANDF. We have a lot to be proud of.

I want to thank all the members of the Regiment for all their hard work and sacrifices in making our regiment great, as well as being ambassadors for the SANDF at large.

–Faugh a Ballagh!

Col. B. Molefe

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Regimental Events

By: The Editor

June- Medal Parade (Date to be confirmed)

9 November – Freedom Regiments Parade

10 November – JHB Remembrance Parade – JHB Cenotaph
24 November – Sidi Rezegh Parade

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Did you know?

By: The editor

Soon after the SA Irish Regiment was formed in 1914, it was made part of the 4th SA Infantry Brigade. The Regiment first embarked to Cape Town and then to German South West Africa on 21 December 1914.

On 25 December 1914 the Regiment landed at Walvis Bay and went into action immediately.

The Regiment came into contact with German forces on 26 December, barely 3 months after it was formed.

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From the Pipes and Drums.

By: The Pipe Major

S A Irish Regiment Pipes & Drums 2013 Calendar of Events:

13 April – Lyttelton Manor Gathering – Pretoria

27 April – South Coast Highland Gathering – Amanzimtoti, Kwazulu Natal

11 & 12 May – Celtic Fest – Johannesburg

25 May – De La Salle Gathering – Johannesburg

15 June – Pretoria Boys Gathering – Pretoria

29 June – Gathering to be advised

9 – 13 July – Durban Military Tattoo

13 July – St Benedict’s Gathering – Johannesburg

27 July – Benoni Gathering (South African Championships) – Benoni
September – S A Tattoo (dates to be confirmed)

4/5/6 October – Barberton raid.

9 November – Freedom Regiments Parade

10 November – JHB Remembrance Parade – JHB Cenotaph

24 November – Sidi Rezegh Parade

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News from the Regiment – New Security gates at our Stores.

By: Sgt. S.H. Simpson

An unfortunate incident occurred over the December 2012 period, where culprits broke into the rations store. Security gates were installed and upgraded to ensure that this does not happen again.

WO2. Bezuidenouth arranged for new security gates and Sgt. Simpson and his maintenance team speedily executed the task of installing and upgrading. Rfn. D Modise and Rfn. M.G. Monareng ably assisted in this task

The matter is now under investigation by the Military Police and the SAPS. Following up on leads, arrests are expected soon.

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News from the SANDF – Infantry Memorial challenges South Africans to remember.

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The South African Army’s Infantry Formation held their annual Memorial Service at Fort Klapperkop outside Pretoria on 20 January 2013, where they paid tribute to South African soldiers who lost their lives in wars and peacekeeping operations over the last century.

“Today, our hearts and minds, our ears, our eyes, are on them, fellow South Africans who died in the line of duty,” said Chaplain N. C. Jack at the ceremony. “We remember and bring them back on centre stage. We remember also, that their bodies were broken; for us, peace, for stability and for a better world. And we also remember that their blood was shed for us and for a better world. And today, we remember them.”

General Officer Commanding (GOC) Infantry Formation, General Lindiyé Yam, pointed out that the achievements and personnel of the SANDF were often

ignored. He noted that infantry members are the first to arrive in conflict zones and play an important role in protecting civilians and building bridges and other infrastructure.

Yam reminded those present that the most recent loss on active service was 23-year-old Private Vincent Mthuthuzeli van der Walt, who was killed on his first deployment in Sudan in October 2012.

The Defence Force has increased the number of its personnel deployed on peacekeeping operations to about 2 000 as South Africa increases its involvement in regional conflict resolution. The troops have been deployed in three peace-support operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sudan.

President Zuma authorised 400 soldiers – mostly infanteers – to deploy to the Central African Republic (CAR), officially to assist with capacity-building of the CAR Defence Force. They will also assist CAR with the planning and implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration processes. Some commentators have argued the force is mainly designed to keep the country’s president, Francois Bozize, in power.

Members of the South African Corps of Infantry are also heavily involved in Operation Corona, in which they patrol South Africa’s borders to stop poachers, smugglers and illegal immigrants.

Members of regular force units of the SANDF laid wreaths during the memorial ceremony on Sunday, and were joined by foreign military attaches from Romania, The Netherlands, South Korea, India, Lesotho and Canada.

Members of Reserve Force Units, including 3 Parachute Battalion and the Cape Town Highlanders laid wreaths, as did the host veteran organisation, the Infantry Association, the Council of Military Veterans Associations, the South African Legion and other military veterans groups.

The Infantry Association has held memorial ceremonies at Fort Klapperkop since 1986. The South

African Defence Force Memorial was unveiled at the Fort in 1979 and includes a statue of a soldier holding an R1 rifle. The individuals who have lost their lives are honoured with an inscription on a number of marble plaques mounted around the statue.

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News from the SANDF — Reserve Force recruiting at Gauteng Universities.

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The success rate of 85% achieved during last year’s South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Reserve Force University Reserve Training Programme (URTP) bodes well for this year’s iteration, which will target six Gauteng tertiary institutions.

The first officer formative course run under URTP auspices following recruitment at and collaboration with the University of the Free State and the Central University of Technology saw 64 successful selections out of 120 assessments. Fifty-six completed basic military training and in December, 54 members completed officer formative training at the SA Army’s de Brug training area outside Bloemfontein.

“The completion of officer formative training is an important milestone not only for the Army but also for the Reserves and the SANDF,” said Major General Roy Andersen, Chief of Reserves.

The newly minted second lieutenants will now be posted to their Reserve Force units for further functional training.

This year’s URTP roll-out will see visits to North West University, the University of Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand, University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology and the Medunsa campus of the University of Limpopo. Senior Reserve Force and SA Military Health Service officers will actively recruit students for training in the June/July university vacation.

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News from the SANDF — SA Army Sends troops to the Central African Republic

Courtesy of Defenceweb

South African soldiers have been deployed to yet another hotspot on the continent as government furthers its foreign relations policy of peace and stability in Africa.

The movement of about 400 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) soldiers to the troubled Central African Republic (CAR) was authorised by President Jacob Zuma, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, on January 3.

South Africa has had a military presence in CAR since 2007 in terms of a bilateral co-operation agreement between the two countries. Indications currently are that South African soldiers are only tasked with protection of South African manpower and materiel assets.

A statement issued by the Presidency said the SANDF deployment would also “assist with capacity building” of the CAR Defence Force as well as the planning and implementation of the disarmament and re-integration processes in the strife-torn country ruled by President Francois Bozize.

The deployment instruction issued by Zuma is in force until March 31, 2018.

SANDF military personnel in CAR prior to the latest deployment are based at the South African training facility near the capital of Bangui. A defence source said the newly arrived soldiers would be responsible for protection duties at this facility.

The CAR deployment brings to three the number of SANDF continental peacekeeping, peace support and peace maintenance operations currently underway with a fourth looming ever larger on the horizon in Mali.

The 400 soldiers now in CAR bring to over 2 400 the number of SANDF personnel doing continental duty. The single largest SANDF contingent is in

the DRC (more than 1 200) with close to 800 in Sudan.

Questions aimed at obtaining more detailed information about the CAR deployment from SANDF Corporate Communications went unanswered.

Editorial Note: On 13 January 2013 a cease fire agreement was reached between the CAR government and the Rebels. At time of going to press the deployment SANDF troops was still on schedule.

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News from the SANDF — South Africa’s deployment to the Central African Republic

Courtesy of Defenceweb: Author Helmut Romer-Heitman (defence analyst)

President Zuma’s decision to deploy South African troops to the Central African Republic (CAR) is an interesting one that may – and ‘may’ is the key word here – be an indication of what role the government sees for South Africa in Africa in the future.

The first question that the deployment raises is why?

The immediate answer to that is the one given by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), to protect the training and assistance team that is already in the CAR. The alternative would have been to pull them out, which would have shown South Africa running away from a problem in a fellow African state with which we have a defence memorandum of understanding (MoU). Not a pretty picture, and not likely to either enhance Ms Dlamini-Zuma’s position in the African Union or strengthen South Africa’s case for a permanent African seat on the UN Security Council.

Another consideration will have been that greater instability in the CAR is not in South Africa’s best interests, and were the rebels to topple the Bozize government by force and simply seize power, that would hardly be likely to result in stability in the near- or even medium term.

There is nothing to suggest that they would be able to immediately co-operate to put a functioning and stable government in place. There is certainly no track record of the various groups – and their various factions - being able to work together; in fact it would seem that it was a break-away faction of the Convention de Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP) that set the scene for the current fighting, with attacks on Sibut, Damara and Dekoa on 15 September – less than a month after the CPJP had signed a peace agreement with the government. Much more likely would be a period of squabbling and strife while various factions of the three main groups each try to grab power.

That would not be good for the image of the AU or the AU Commission, for South Africa’s image as a regional power, for South African business interests in the CAR, or for the people of the CAR – and that is probably the order of priorities in political minds.

Worse, greater instability in the CAR would almost inevitably result in the Lord’s Resistance Army being able to step up attacks in the north of the DRC and probably also to resume its attacks in Uganda. There would also be a real risk of the Allied Democratic Forces being able to rebuild their guerrilla capability in the north-east of the DRC and to resume attacks against Uganda. Such attacks, in turn, would inevitably see Uganda again intervene in the DRC, and that would impact on Rwanda’s actions there.

None of that would be good news for the DRC, for the SADC or for South Africa as a major player in DRC peace efforts over the years. And, of course, as a fellow member of the SADC, South Africa has security obligations towards fellow members.

Finally, following so quickly on the M23 offensive in the DRC and the mutiny and rebel successes in Mali, yet another rebellion is simply not good news for Africa as a whole, and the government may have wanted to make the point that it understands this and that it is willing to take a stand.

So, assuming that South Africa wants to

be a regional player and be taken seriously, there are some good reasons for the decision to intervene in the CAR.

Why, then, such a small force?

The force that has been deployed – essentially Special Forces and a reinforced company of paratroops – is strong enough and well enough armed to protect our training and assistance teams and to carry out an opposed extraction if that becomes necessary, and to provide a secure foot on the ground to allow the insertion of a stronger force if needed. At the same time it is not so large a force as to appear to be a firm commitment to protect the government of President Bozize regardless, or so large as to present an extraction problem if that became necessary. An ‘elegant sufficiency’ one might say.

The thinking may well also be that even this quite small South African force deployed to Bangui, taken together with the 600 French troops and 760 troops from Central African countries, will suffice to serve as a deterrent to the rebels simply entering Bangui and toppling the government by force.

It is, in fact, only the foreign forces in the Bangui area that can prevent a simple seizure of power: The admittedly very small and poorly equipped CAR army would seem to have simply pulled back from towns without serious fighting and even sometimes before the rebels arrived. Nor do MICOPAX, the Central African peacekeeping force in the CAR, or the initial Chad Army contingent seem to have done any better.

But the full Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC) contingent of some 760 troops, strengthened and stiffened by the presence of 600 French troops who can call on fighters from Chad, and by the presence of South African paratroops with the possibility of the full parachute battalion group being deployed, perhaps even with some Rooivalk attack helicopters in support, presents an entirely different situation. The rebels have demonstrated some good operational thinking and good logistics,

but it is doubtful whether they have the strength, the weapons or the stamina for a real fight, and it is not likely that they are stupid.

While the initial South African deployment is quite small, it presents the threat of follow-on forces being deployed, and so its impact may be much more significant to the outcome of this crisis than its modest strength would suggest. Certainly the rebels’ virulent response to the deployment suggests that they have taken the point.

There is, of course, another reason for deploying a small force: The South African Army is already over-stretched and has no troops to spare, and the Air Force’s transport capacity is grossly inadequate, making the entire venture dependent on chartered aircraft, which is not a comfortable thought for any planner or strategist.

What might be the implications of this deployment?

On the positive side the decision to intervene has:

- Demonstrated that South Africa is willing to put its money where its mouth is, which will stand Pretoria in good stead in the AU and at the UN.
- Demonstrated that South Africa is able to make up its mind and act decisively (the request for help came on the 29th, the decision was taken on the 30th, the defence minister was in Bangui on the 31st and the troops deployed on the 1st and 2nd).
- Demonstrated that, despite its dire financial position and operational over-stretch, the SANDF is able to respond promptly and quickly when required (undermined somewhat by having had to charter the transport aircraft, but still a useful point to make).
- Demonstrated the ability by government and the SANDF to make the best of a not very good situation by deciding on a hedged deployment – strong enough to perform the primary mission and to make the desired point, able to be reinforced if necessary, but small enough not to present a critical challenge to the Army.

All of that will serve to strengthen South Africa’s position in Africa and when it speaks of or for Africa in international bodies, and that is to the good.

On the negative side:

• Taking an ‘elegant sufficiency’ approach is always a bet that carries some risk. The rebels may not take the hint, in which case the force will be too small and will either have to be evacuated or reinforced. The former would be embarrassing, but that can be overcome; reinforcement, on the other hand, might prove impossible if charter aircraft cannot be found in sufficient numbers to do the job properly. That would not just be embarrassing, but would very publically expose the SANDF as a ‘paper lion’, able to roar and posture, but not bite.

• Another risk lies in the questionable loyalty of the CAR Army. What happens if it mutinies, as did that of Mali, or changes sides? That would make reinforcement even more complicated.

• The MoU has been extended for five years. Does that mean a commitment to deploy troops for five years? If so, in what numbers? The SANDF is already three infantry battalions short of what it needs to sustain the DRC and Darfur deployments and cover the border – assuming a demanding 1 in 4 deployment cycle rather than the UN standard of 1 in 6. Adding yet another battalion-strength commitment without substantial additional funding would break the Army.

• Any extended and expanded deployment must also only be considered in the context of what is a very complex situation: The CAR does not only present the challenge of government versus rebels, but the additional challenges of other guerrilla groups; Chad-based guerrilla groups that venture into the CAR as the whim takes them; the role of Sudan in perhaps supporting such groups; the activities of the Lord’s Resistance Army; and the fact of Ugandan and other African forces and US Special Forces operating in the eastern part of the country,

hunting the LRA.

So there are some real risks involved in this deployment, but while they are real, none of them are very high, and none of them need be fatal – to the contingent or to South Africa’s standing, with the partial exception of a failed reinforcement attempt, from which it would take a long time and a lot of effort to recover.

Considering the positive and potential negative implications, the overall verdict should, arguably, be a favourable one, but only on the assumption that South Africa actually does intend to accept the role of regional power. If that is not the case, we are wasting effort and money and risking our troops for no good reason.

If South Africa does intend to accept that role, then the government must find the moral courage to fund the Defence Force accordingly, to provide the additional units and the airlift and sealift that such a role will demand.

To be fair, South Africa is playing a substantial role: Two battalion-plus peacekeeping deployments and the commitment of a frigate to the Mozambique Channel, and having previously actually sustained three simultaneous battalion-strength deployments (DRC, Darfur and Burundi) for a decade, as well as a short-term battalion deployment to the Comoros (in 2006) and several smaller deployments. South Africa has also provided troops and aircraft for election support in the DRC and Mozambique as well as in other countries.

Perhaps more importantly, South Africa has shown the willingness to act promptly and independently – not just in Lesotho in 1998 when there was a potential threat of instability on its own immediate border, but also in Burundi and now the CAR. Burundi and the 2006 Comoros deployment also demonstrated the willingness and the ability to deploy at very short notice.

But all that must be seen in perspective. As the former AU Commission head pointed out to South African officials a little time ago: “You are a country of 50 million people; with by far the largest

economy in Africa and the 26th largest in the world; and you have two battalions deployed. Burundi has an entire brigade deployed”.

He might have added that Ghana has four battalions deployed on peacekeeping missions, Ethiopia a brigade in Darfur and a half-brigade in South Sudan as well as forces in Somalia; Kenya a brigade in Somalia and a battalion in South Sudan, Nigeria a brigade in Darfur and a half-brigade in Liberia, and Uganda a six-battalion brigade in Somalia.

With South Africa’s economy accounting for at least a third of the economic activity in all of sub-Saharan Africa, it is not unreasonable that others expect more of us. But that brings us back to the key decisions that government must take: Who are we, and what responsibilities are we willing to accept? And are we willing to be serious about those and fund a Defence Force able to meet the commitments we make?

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News from the SANDF – SAS Amatola to resume anti-piracy operations

Courtesy of Defenceweb

South Africa will send a Valour Class frigate to the Mozambique Channel at the end of January as part of its commitment to the African integrated maritime security strategy.

There has not been a South African Navy (SAN) presence in the busy east African seaboard channel for a number of months due to unavailability of suitable platforms. This saw the SAS Drakensberg tasked with anti-piracy patrol duties while frigates were busy with multinational exercises.

While the deployment has not been confirmed yet, reliable naval sources have indicated SAS Amatola will be next to take up station in the Channel. She took part in last year’s Atlasur and Ibsamar exercises and is currently undergoing final preparations for transit to and station in the Mozambique Channel.

A bland official statement from Navy headquarters in Pretoria noted, “early this year a Navy vessel will take up patrol duties in Mozambican waters. Specific details cannot be divulged for security reasons.”

The Navy has maintained anti-piracy patrol duties in the Mozambique Channel since early 2011 as part of Operation Copper.

Other elements of the SA National Defence Force’s anti-piracy effort include a 35 Squadron C-47TP maritime reconnaissance aircraft, a detachment from the Navy’s maritime reaction squadron and SA Army and SA Air Force support based at Pemba.

In May last year maritime reaction squadron member Able Seaman Thulani Mbuli became the first South African fatality in anti-piracy operations. He fell into the sea while disembarking the SAS Drakensberg ahead of inspection of an Iranian registered dhow, targeted as “a vessel of interest” by intelligence. Fellow squadron members attempted, unsuccessfully, to rescue him

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News from the SANDF — SAAF Museum 2013 airshow bigger and better

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The South African Air Force (SAAF) Museum’s annual airshow promises to be better than ever before, with two major drivers encouraging Museum personnel to make the 2013 edition a special one.

In the first place the museum at Air Force Base (AFB) Swartkop in Centurion will be pulling out all the stops in an effort to win the best airshow in South Africa award for the third year in succession.

The second is that this year marks the 40th year of existence of the curator of the country’s military aviation history. “Museum personnel will be pulling out all the stops to ensure May 11 is a memorable day,” Museum ops officer

Lieutenant Colonel Clive Shepherd said.

Last year’s museum airshow had a warbirds theme and expectations are this year’s show will be themed around the museum’s 40th anniversary as well as marking the 50th anniversary of the venerable Alouette II helicopter.

The museum headquarters, with its satellites at AFB Ysterplaat in Cape Town and AFB Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, is not seen as a SAAF operational unit and raises the majority of its own operating budget. This was noted in the 2012 Airshow of the Year award presented by African Pilot.

Apart from being the major Gauteng airshow with a true military flavour, the thousands who attend the May event every year make a substantial contribution to keeping the centre of South African military aviation history functional.

Officer Commanding Lieutenant Colonel Mike O’Connor, like his predecessors Willie Nel, Neil Thomas and Dave Knoesen, spends much of his time juggling operational duties with meeting sponsors and donors.

In this regard he is ably supported by the museum’s honorary colonel, Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale.

The minister has a passion for aviation in general and military aviation in particular and is setting up an adopt-an-aircraft scheme.

This will see the corporate world “buy in” to one of the many aircraft at the museum and be responsible for keeping it in display condition.

Sexwale is also investigating how to more involve schools in the museum.

The Friends of the SAAF Museum Association is the major contributor, apart from fulltime and Reserve Force personnel, ensuring the museum’s static displays, airworthy aircraft and its valuable library are all properly maintained.

While there is only one airshow a year, the museum has a monthly flying

training day on the first Saturday of every month.

Aviation enthusiasts from all over South Africa, as well as overseas enthusiasts, flock to the base, just off the Old Johannesburg Road near Valhalla, to enjoy training displays by, among others, the Vampire, Bosbok, Kudu and Alouette II and III helicopters.

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News from the SANDF — New SANDF scam

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has again warned about an employment scam currently centred in the Western Cape.

“There are people luring and misleading the public by promising employment in the SANDF,” Captain (SAN) Prince Tshabalala, SANDF Corporate Communications said.

What is different to previous military employment scams is the offer made. In previous years scammers ‘guaranteed’ entry into the SANDF for amounts varying from R300 to R1 000. This time round a monthly salary of R8 000 is the lure, with no upfront mention of any so-called recruitment fee.

“Money has and will never guarantee entry to the SANDF,” Tshabalala said, urging people approached to report the incidents, with as much information as possible, to their nearest police station.

“People interested in joining the SANDF can obtain career information from recruitment offices or bases. Recruiting is not done on the street.”

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News from the SANDF — SANDF helping Mozambique after floods.

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The humanitarian side of the South African National Defence Force

(SANDF) has again proved its worth in flood-stricken Mozambique where a number of military elements had been working 24/7, helping thousands displaced by floodwaters.

Additionally, the South African Air Force (SAAF) is providing airlift capability to Gift of the Givers. 28 Squadron C-130 transport aircraft have started moving more than 150 tons of food, donated by supporters of the Pietermaritzburg headquartered non-government organisation, to areas most in need.

The SANDF deployment includes Navy divers, SAAF Oryx helicopters and crew as well as primary health care nurses, dieticians and environmental health officers from the SA Military Health Service.

SANDF personnel have been in Mozambique for some time, first assisting in moving flood victims to safety while Navy divers did search and rescue tasks in swollen rivers.

“The joint operation has made it possible for the SANDF rescue team to distribute food as flood levels have been receding and search and rescue operations are now making way for food distribution actions,” SANDF Corporate Communications Director Brigadier General Xolani Mabanga said.

“The SANDF is still on standby in flood stricken areas with helicopters, medical personnel and search and rescue teams.”

Speaking to the Afrikaans daily Beeld, Colonel Andre Pieterse said from the hastily erected aid centre in the country, SANDF personnel had rescued at least 500 people from the raging Limpopo River in Mozambique earlier this in January. This included hoisting people to safety from rooftops and out of trees.

Medicins Sans Frontieres/Doctors with Borders (MSF) is also been active in flood-ravaged areas of Mozambique as well as Malawi and Zimbabwe.

Just how badly South Africa’s eastern neighbour was hit by the heavy rain and subsequent flooding is starkly illustrated by Lucas Molfino, MSF

medical co-ordinator in Mozambique.

He said: “Chokwe gives the impression of being a post-war scene. The majority of the population have been evacuated to temporary shelters. In the centre of town there are obvious issues related to sanitation and public health because of dirty stagnant water and the presence of dead animals on the streets.”

MSF estimates there are around 114 000 people currently staying in 10 transitional camps. Sanitation is a major concern at the largest camp, Chiaquelane, close to Chokwe. There are currently 60 latrines to serve a displaced population of about 50 000 Molfino said.

The two health facilities in the area are out of drugs and malaria rapid tests and attend to about 300 patients a day. There is no ambulance for referrals and the main hospital lacks staff and equipment he added.

The SANDF contingent deployed to Mozambique last week in order to provide humanitarian assistance in the flood stricken areas. The contingent included South African Navy Divers, health professionals from the South African Military Health Services, two Oryx helicopters and a C-130 Hercules aircraft from the South African Air Force. The Maritime Reaction Squadron from the South African Navy is on standby.

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National News — First public hearings into the arms deal in March

Courtesy of Defenceweb

With over three million pages of documentation already in its possession, the Seriti Commission of Inquiry into the Strategic Defence Procurement Packages will start its first round of public hearings in March.

Thirteen weeks have been set aside to hear evidence from 12 witnesses, including former MP Patricia de Lille, now Cape Town mayor, who is widely accepted as being the original whistle blower on corruption and fraud related

to the multi-billion Rand defence equipment acquisition that started in 1998.

Also on the list of witnesses for the March 4 to May 31 Pretoria hearings are long-time anti-arms deal campaigner and retired banker Terry Crawford-Browne, former chairman of Parliament’s Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) Andrew Feinstein and Democratic Alliance shadow defence and military veterans minister David Maynier. Another whose testimony is expected to attract interest is Fana Hlongwane, a facilitator for then Defence Minister Joe Modise, and Richard Young, managing director of C2I2.

Paul Hoffman, Gavin Woods, Paul Holden, Raenette Taljaard, Major General Hans Meiring and Colonel Johan du Plooy make up the dozen witnesses called before Supreme Court of Appeal Judge Willie Seriti and his co-commissioners for the first round of public hearings.

The commission was appointed by President Zuma in October two years ago to investigate and report on allegations of fraud, corruption, impropriety or irregularity surrounding South Africa’s purchase of military equipment including third generation Gripen fighters and stealth frigates built in Germany.

Other military equipment now in service with the South African National Defence force and acquired as part of what is generally termed “the arms deal” are Type 209 diesel-electric submarines, Hawk Mk 120 lead-in fighter trainers and AgustaWestland A109 light utility helicopters.

The public hearings are seen as the third phase of the Commission’s work, with the first being its set-up and infrastructure creation. The second was requesting information from government institutions and departments. This phase also entailed visits to foreign countries where information was gathered and interviews held.

Commission spokesman William Baloyi said the public hearings would be

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conducted in phases, with the first dealing with allegations of irregularity and wrongdoing that have been made public.

“The allegations will be interrogated to determine whether they can be substantiated by fact and to address the veracity of evidence obtained as a result.

“At the end of the first phase of public hearings the Commission will adjourn to analyse and assess the evidence and make provisional factual findings to be incorporated in the next interim report. The second phase of the public hearings will commence after this at a date still to be finalised. In this phase, the commission will deal with information gathered through own investigations. In this phase we expect to call as witnesses some key role players in the acquisition process as well as other people who are implicated by the information available, either as alleged beneficiaries or suspects in the general allegations of bribery, fraud and other illegal activities,” Baloyi said.

Speaking from Cape Town, Crawford-Browne said while he had been told his presence was required in Pretoria in March this has yet to be confirmed by registered mail.

“I have not yet been given exact dates nor have I received formal notification from the Seriti Commission.”

His supplementary submissions, couriered to the Commission on December 12, were returned to him because “nobody at the Commission bothered to respond to delivery advice notices. It has cost me another R175 to re-courier documents they were too lazy to collect”.

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From the Chaplain

Read Romans 10: 9 - 13

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your

faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

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South African National Orders — The Order of Mapungubwe

By the Editor

National Orders are the highest form of recognition that a country can bestow on deserving citizens. It differs from military decorations and medals in that it can be bestowed on civilians. The President as Grand Patron of National Orders awards these National Orders.

The Order of Mapungubwe

This Order is awarded to South African citizens for excellence and exceptional achievement in the international arena, promoting South African interests.

Organisation

This Order can be awarded in three Classes:

Class 1 = The Platinum Order of Mapungubwe (Platinum) (OMP)

Class 2 = The Gold Order of Mapungubwe (Gold) (OMG)

Class 3 = The Bronze Order of Mapungubwe (Bronze). (OMB)

Symbolism / Design Elements

Central Motif / Symbolism

Mapungubwe:

The Mapungubwe Kingdom existed in the northern corner of our country a millennium ago. The Kingdom had a sophisticated state system and developed agriculture. It also developed a mining and metallurgy industry. The Kingdom traded with countries as far as China. During its time, it represented excellence of human thought and ingenuity.

Elements

1. **Four corners of the globe** - symbolise the achievements of South

Africans all over the world.

2. **Rising sun** - the new dawn emerging from Africa.

3. **Mapungubwe Hill** - forms the background, a sandstone hill on mudstone deposit in an arid subtropical area with erratic summer rains.

Excavations showed that excellence grew out of the most difficult natural circumstances.

4. **Mapungubwe rhino** - the now most well-known artefact found in a grave at the excavation site, a gold-plated figurine formed around a soft core, probably sculpted wood, testimony to the excellence of human resourcefulness present in the Kingdom.

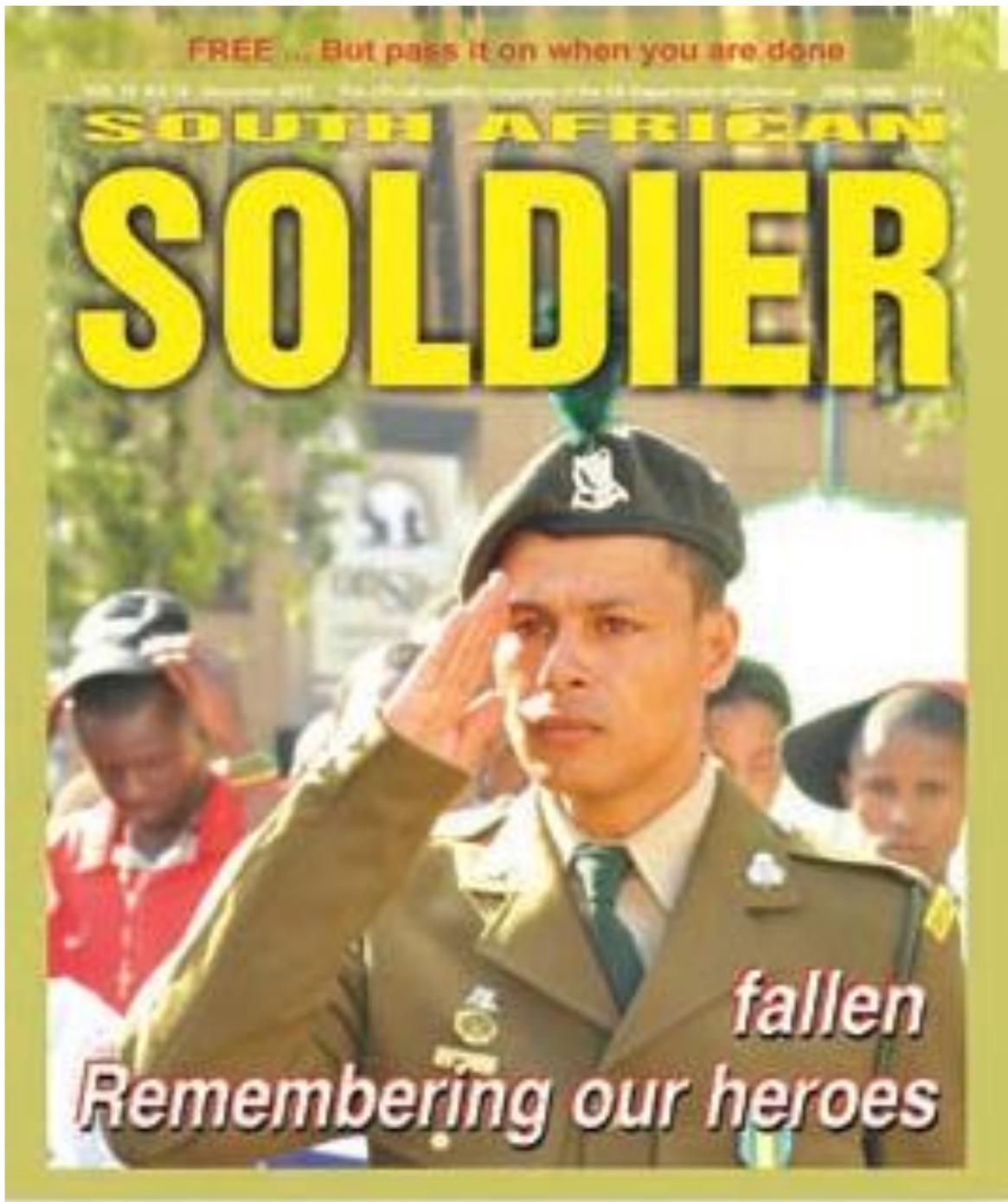
5. **Mapungubwe scepter** - emerging from the gold melting pot on either side; another of the artefacts found in a grave at the excavation site.

6. **Decorated gold melting pot** - the basic symmetric forms on the overflowing gold melting pot symbolise the abundance of excellence, science and creativity, testimony to the earliest achievements in metallurgy.

7. **Furnace** - the purifying and life-sustaining properties of fire, employed since the Iron Age, to advance development and excellence in societies and communities.



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Our own Cpl. Naidoo on the frontpage of the SA Soldier Magazine