

The Shamrock
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2013

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The Shamrock



The official newsletter of the SA Irish Regiment

From the Editor

From: The Editor

As we approach possible pre deployment training, the editorial staff for the Shamrock wants to wish everyone involved the best of luck with the selection process... and remember to write some articles for future publications while on deployment.

We also want to congratulate the SA Irish Pipes and Drums for finishing third in the SA Championships in July.

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 latest SA Soldier magazines 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

We have now approached the phase where deployment is becoming a reality. I want to wish everyone involved the best of luck with the selection process.

We can all be very proud of all our accomplishments so far this year, but we must ready ourselves for the challenges faced with all phases of preparation for possible deployment.

I want to remind every member involved that you are in the public eye and your conduct must be beyond reproach at all times. Remember your deeds during these deployments are

writing the future history of this great Regiment.

Train hard, never lose sight of your goals and objectives and above all, stay safe. Make your Regiment proud.

I SALUTE you!

- Faugh a Ballagh!

Lt Col. M.A. Bennett

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From the Honorary Colonel

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

As the South African Irish Regiment prepares for possible deployments, I have no doubt that those involved will bring honour to our country and to the SA Irish Regiment through their professional conduct.

My best wishes goes to everyone involved with this endeavour to bring peace and stability to the Southern Africa region and the border areas of our country.

We must never lose sight that your calling as soldiers are dangerous. You must focus on your training that should never happen to the SA Irish Regiment on deployment that your actions will be both honourable and professional in the face of overwhelming odds.

I have the utmost confidence that my Regiment's die hard spirit and the spirit of Sidi Rezegh will ensure that you will be properly prepare for any dangers that we might face on deployment in the future.

Train hard and fight easy.

- Faugh a Ballagh!

Col. B. Molefe

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Regimental Events

By: *The Editor*

- 9 September** – 99th Anniversary of the Formation of the Regiment.
- 28 September** – Leader group shoot at Army Gymnasium, Heidelberg.
- 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*

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military decoration awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy" to members of the armed forces of various Commonwealth countries, and previous British Empire territories.

The Iron Cross was the highest military decorations of the Kingdom of Prussia and Germany from 1813 to 1945.

The only person ever to be awarded both the Victoria Cross and the Iron Cross was ironically an Irishman.

Surgeon William Manley was awarded the VC of actions in the Waikato-Hauhau Maori War, New Zealand in 1864.

Manley was awarded the German Iron Cross for tending the wounded under fire during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

He eventually retired as Surgeon General.

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From the Pipes and Drums.

By: *The Pipe Major*

The SA Irish Regiment Pipes and Drums won the Medley competition and achieved a second place in the MSR.....and overall first place for Drill, Dress and Discipline at the South Coast Highlands gathering -. Faugh a Ballagh!

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 SANDF – The significance of the Reserve Force Logo

Courtesy of the Reserve force Council



DESIGN

The design of the Reserve Force logo represents a cog with the SANDF

logo in the middle which confirms that this is the logo of a military element.

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the cog (which was originally used as a logo by commerce and industry) is twofold as it is internationally used to reflect the relationship between the military and commerce and industry and as such the expansion capability of the Reserve Force.

With the formation of the National Defence Liaison Council (now known as “The Council for Support of National

Defence”) and the recent Defence Provincial Liaison Councils (DPLCs), it was important that the logo of the Reserve Force should represent the close relationship between the SANDF and commerce and industry as the majority of Reserve Force members should firstly be full-time employees within commerce and industry and secondly part-time soldiers.

The logo in itself symbolises the good understanding with the business community in that they will in future be prepared to allow their staff to attend military training and operational deployment.

As in overseas countries, a win win situation is created as the military training that Reserve Force members undergo also positively influences their bearing (attitude, leadership skills, discipline) and functional capabilities in their civilian careers.

The recognition given to commerce and industry in the SANDF Reserve Force logo clearly indicates the importance of the future military-civilian partnership in building an effective Reserve Force and thus effective defence for the Country.

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News from the SANDF – Reserves add value to Army Operations

Written by Kim Helfrich

More proof of the value add provided by the Reserve Force to meeting SA National Defence Force (SANDF) operational commitments comes from Major General Roy Andersen, Chief: Defence Reserves.

More than 14 200 Reserves were called up for duty in the 2012/13 financial year for an average of 61 days each.

“The Infantry Formation made 30 Reserve companies available for deployment in external peace support operations and a further 28 companies were deployed for border protection,” Andersen said, adding that all four arms

of service were making “extensive and effective use” of Reserves.

The wider utilisation of Reserve Force elements in support of the full-time component of the SANDF has been welcomed by SA Army Chief, Lieutenant General Vusi Masondo.

“There is now an awareness of the Reserves as an integral part of the Army in terms of the One Force approach, as never before. This is entirely due to the fact that Reserves are playing an important role in the Army despite all the limiting factors against the rebuilding of the Reserves,” he said.

Apart from external and border protection duties, Reserves have also been called up to support work done by other government departments. An example of this is the customs and excise section of SA Revenue Services.

Masondo is adamant all means at his disposal within budgetary and other constraints will be used to continue rejuvenation and transformation of the Army Reserves so “they can stand shoulder to shoulder with their Regular Force counterparts”.

“The contribution the Reserves make to our military efforts and the nation-building role they play in maintaining supportive and respectful relations with the military and civilian population is fully appreciated. The SA Army cannot do what is expected of it without the support of the Reserves. As part of the One Force its efforts are appreciated in building up an effective and combat-ready SA Army,” said the three star general at the head of the SANDF’s landward arm.

An example of the nation-building aspect of the work done by the Reserves comes from an Operation Corona deployment comprising a battalion of Western Cape Army Reserve Force units drawn from the Cape Town Rifles and the Cape Town Highlanders.

While deployed on the South Africa/Zimbabwe border in and around Musina, an outreach programme initiated by Captain Mark van Zyl benefitted the Masisi community.

After identifying a particular need a duly elected all-soldier committee was established with fundraising as objective number one.

“A team of builders, masons, painters, carpenters and sign writers was soon assembled. The result of their work and that of the fundraisers was the Masisi Community Crèche, furnished with items such as curtains, mattresses, tables, chairs, shelving and microwaves – all acquired courtesy of generous contributions from members of the Dukes. This moved one prominent member of the community to say: ‘I never knew soldiers were capable of doing something like this. In all my life I have never seen such a thing.’” Van Zyl said.

The outreach initiative did not detract in any way from the border protection tasking of the Reserve battalion. Apart from stopping and handing over numerous illegal immigrants to the correct authorities, soldiers confiscated “dozens of vehicles” and contraband valued at close on R24 million.

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News from the SANDF — Importance of the University Reserve Program stressed

Courtesy of Defenceweb



The importance of the University Reserve Training Programme (URTP) to the future wellbeing of the SA National Defence Force’s (SANDF) Reserve Force has been highlighted by

Brigadier General Debbie Molefe, director: Defence Reserves.

Visiting Potchefstroom where the latest batch of volunteers completed the first stage of basic military training (BMT) she said: “The product of this training will have an influence in the SANDF for the next 45 years”.

Addressing the 123 volunteers from Gauteng and North West tertiary education institutions she urged them to make maximum use of the opportunities offered by URTP in developing their military skills so they can become “part of the proud heritage of the SANDF”.

“You, as graduates and under graduates, will enhance the professional, intellectual and leadership qualities of the Reserves.”

An indication of the quality of person volunteering for the URTP comes in the form of Carl Smit, a B.Com honours student at the University of North West.

For the duration of BMT he forsook his civilian title of Mr for that of Trooper but this did not stop his elation on hearing he had been selected by the SA Institute of Chartered Accountants as one of only 30 students to attend a leadership summit next month.

This, Reserve Force spokesman Colonel Monica Muller said, was “a clear indication” URTP was succeeding in recruiting young leaders with professional qualifications.

With the first part of BMT, including drill, musketry, field craft and regimental duties, completed at Regiment Mooi River the latest URTP recruits will over coming weekends and university vacations finish BMT. Next year they will start with officer formative training as the next step on the

ladder to junior officer status in the Reserve Force.

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News from the SANDF — Navy

commences upgrade of fourth strike craft

Written by Dean Wingrin

The SA Navy’s ambitions to boost its offshore maritime patrol capability took a step forward on Wednesday (8 May) when the fourth and final Warrior-class strike craft left Simon’s Town for refit in Durban, where it will be converted into an offshore patrol vessel.

It was revealed last year that the Navy was keen to retain three Warrior-class (ex-Minister-class) strike craft as offshore patrol vessels (OPV) for as long as possible. The Navy subsequently decided to retain a fourth vessel in service as well, with all undergoing a Life Extension Programme.

The four surviving strike craft, of nine originally received in the in the 1970s and 1980s, are being refurbished and converted into offshore patrol vessels by Durban-based Southern African Shipyards. The work conducted on the vessels relates to electrical, mechanical and general hull maintenance and involves refurbishment, replacement and repainting.

The first vessel, SAS Isaac Dyobha (P1565), arrived in Durban in October last year. Having discharged all her fuel, oils and stores, the vessel was transferred to a floating dock and mounted on specially constructed cradles, where refurbishment began.

The next vessel to undergo refurbishment was SAS Makhanda (P1569), which left Simon’s Town under tow on 3 November. SAS Galeshewe (P1567) arrived in Durban in mid-December, having just completed a patrol off the east coast.

With both SAS Isaac Dyobha (now alongside undergoing short-term maintenance) and SAS Galeshewe (operationally available) having completed their Life Extension Programme and SAS Makhanda almost complete, the stripped hull of SAS

Adam Kok (P1563) left Simon’s Town for Durban on Wednesday, under tow by the hydrographic and oceanographic research vessel SAS Protea.

Since the commissioning of the four Valour-class frigates in 2004/5, strike-craft have been used in the OPV role. Late last year, Rear Admiral (JG) Bravo Mhlana, South African Navy Director Force Preparation, told defenceWeb that “what we are building with those patrol vessels is for the future acquisition of offshore patrol vessels under Project Biro. That is why we must keep those vessels as long as we can when we can transfer crews from those to the new patrol vessels.”

Another motive for refurbishing the vessels is to allow them to be used in the training role. “To ensure our sailors get maximum exposure, we are also going to use those vessels for the young recruits that we receive from (naval training base) SAS Saldanha where we promote a seagoing culture,” Mhlana said.

A further four ex-Mine Hunter vessels are also being operated in the OPV role. These include SAS Umkomaas (undergoing maintenance), SAS Umhloti (operationally available), SAS Umzimkulu (operationally available) and SAS Umgeni (undergoing refit).

The OPVs have also been used for fishery patrols when the patrol vessels operated on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) could not go to sea.

The patrol vessel fleet will be home-ported once the newly upgraded Naval Base Durban at Salisbury Island in the Port of Durban has been re-commissioned.

Rear Admiral Hanno Teuteberg, Chief Director Maritime Strategy, mentioned to defenceWeb in April this year that early Indications are that the life of the OPV vessels can be extended until for at least five years, to coincide with Project Biro, the new build Offshore/Inshore patrol vessel project.

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News from the SANDF — Army

intelligence boost for anti-poaching operations in Kruger Park.

Written by Kim Helfrich

Good intelligence is at the heart of every successful military operation and efforts to tip the balance in favour of those fighting to prevent the wholesale slaughter of rhinos are being boosted by the Army’s 1 Tactical Intelligence Regiment.

The very nature of the work done by these SA Army specialists means it is not possible to divulge their exact modus operandi or where they are deployed, other than to say in the Kruger National Park.

The troop, under the command of Captain Sam Samuels, is based at the SA Army’s main Sand River base in the massive game reserve hundreds of kilometres from its Potchefstroom headquarters. From there teams are deployed in support of other Army elements, the SA Police Service Special Task Force and Kruger’s expanded ranger corps as part of Operation Horizon, a sub-component of Operation Corona, the border protection action.

The 1 Tactical Intelligence Regiment scouts are deployed all over Kruger and surrounding areas working on information received over possible poacher access and exit routes.

Once in position, mostly after long and arduous marches in dangerous and difficult terrain with heavy, cumbersome equipment, carefully hidden observation posts (OPs) are set up and the watching starts. This sees human eyes and ears backed by the Intelligence Formation’s Tactical Intelligence System (TIS) to provide updated information to commanders, either at Sand River or strategically deployed elsewhere in Kruger.

The OPs are manned for up to 72 hours by a single team and they are fully self-sufficient, disturbing their immediate surrounds as little as possible during this time. This adds to their invisibility

and ability to gather good intelligence that will assist in bringing more poachers into the law enforcement net.

Intelligence troopers deployed as part of the Operation Horizon force have to face dangerous wild animals including lion, buffalo, elephant and highly venomous snakes while on duty. These, however, are nothing compared to “unwelcome ticks” that find their way into the most uncomfortable places, “even inside our camo” one trooper said.

With 216 rhino already having fallen to poacher’s high-powered assault and hunting rifles this year, the intelligence gatherers know their observation and stealth skills have to be finely tuned at all times. This not only to provide good information to their fellow soldiers but also to ensure they do not land up in the rifle sights of an unscrupulous poacher.

“Poachers are not afraid of the dark and we man our OPs 24 hours a day. We are also extra vigilant when it’s full moon. Poachers call it the African torch and make use of the better night visibility to find their targets. Luckily for us, the full moon also allows us to see better in the dark,” another trooper said.

Sightings made from intelligence-manned OPs have seen rangers and police patrols intercept gangs of poachers before any killing could be done.

“We are not always this fortunate but have been able to lead anti-poaching patrols directly to where weapons have been left behind by poachers in their rush to exit the park. We have also managed to play a role in recovering poached rhino horn.

“It still is disturbing to see a slaughtered rhino without its horn but we are confident we are contributing positively to the fight against poaching,” the trooper said.

The contribution of Major Jennifer Jonker of the SA Army Intelligence Formation in gathering information for this article is appreciated.

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News from the SANDF – Army acquisition programmes to be “pushed” – Defence Minister

Written by Kim Helfrich

While Ministerial pronouncements in general are not an “Open Sesame” Nosiwiwe Mapisa-Nqakula’s words that there will be a “push” on a number of acquisition programmes for the SA Army in the current financial year should raise spirits at Army headquarters in Pretoria.

The landward arm of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) has been ignored in the only major defence equipment acquisition since democracy and it is using equipment and vehicles that are, in many cases, well past their use by date.

Top of the want list for the major component of the SANDF has been and still is, a new infantry fighting vehicle to replace the ageing Ratel under Project Hoefyster with Project Vistula close behind. Vistula will see the again ageing fleet of Samil trucks replaced by modern vehicles, in all probability based on the German Mercedes-Benz chassis and drivetrain supplied by its South African subsidiary, to give the Army new cross-country tactical logistical and support vehicles.

Other heavy vehicles manufacturers and suppliers believed to be pursuing Vistula are Navistar, BMC, Renault Trucks Defence, BAE Systems Land Systems South Africa, Iveco Defence Vehicles, Rheinmetall Mann and Ashok Leyland.

Speaking during her budget vote debate in Parliament, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans said she was “concerned that despite an expressed commitment to improve the landward defence capability and despite funds being allocated in the past, very little progress has been made.

“This year we have ensured decisions on key projects are finalised and we are currently at contracting stages for the

acquisition of various landward defence capabilities.”

The new infantry fighting vehicle, called the Badger, is based on the Patria AMV but will in all probability be fitted with a Denel land systems turret. A development contract for this vehicle was signed in 2007 but indications are that a production contract has not yet been finalised.

When first mooted way back in 2004 Project Vistula envisaged the acquisition of between 2 500 and 5 000 vehicles in the 4x4, 6x6 and 8x8 categories to cover all the tactical transport needs of the various Army formations. This includes armour, engineers, air defence, infantry, signals as well as support elements such as engineers. While no official confirmation of numbers has been forthcoming it is believed to have been cut substantially.

Mapisa-Nqakula also used her time at the Parliamentary podium to assert her and her department’s commitment to a viable and competitive South African defence industry.

“It is a matter of concern that over the years South Africa is gradually losing its influential position as one of the industry leaders in defence innovation. Because of this the department must play a direct role in the restructuring of the defence industry to ensure it focuses primarily on the requirements of the SANDF,” she said.

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News from the SANDF – Name changes on the way for Reserve Force units

Written by Kim Helfrich

A number of regiments and units in the SA National Defence Force’s (SANDF) Reserve Force are in line for name changes.

This, according to SA Army Chief Lieutenant General Vusi Masondo, is in

line with the continuing transformation of the landward force.

“There is nothing sinister in it. It is a voluntary process supported by the reserve environment,” he said.

“The aim is to acquire a level of synergy among all role players with units and regiment names reflecting cohesiveness and regimental pride among all reserves.

“The process allows for acknowledgement of military heroes of the past, makes provision for South African military history currently not reflected in this environment and also accommodates regimental uniqueness.”

Major General Roy Andersen, SANDF Reserve Force Chief, is the driver of the project for which no timeline has been set.

Among units probably up for name changes are Transvaal Scottish (with a source indicating the “Transvaal” could be dropped and the regiment becoming known only as “The Scottish”), the SA Irish Regiment, Regiment De La Rey, Regiment Christiaan Beyers, Transvaal Staats Artillerie, Transvaal Horse Artillery, Regiment Oranjerivier, Regiment Westelike Provinsie, Regiment Potchefstroomse Universiteit, Natal Mounted Rifles, Natal Carbineers and Natal Mounted Rifles.

Other units, including 4 Maintenance Unit, 11 Field Postal Unit, 19 Field Engineer Regiment, 71 Signal Unit and Johannesburg Regiment, could remain as is because the names do not have apartheid or colonial connotations.

Among names which have been suggested, according to various newspapers, are Limpopo and Mpumalanga regiments rather than peoples’ names. One of the guidelines is for suggestions to avoid peoples’ names in the best interests of nation-building and growing a strong regimental tradition and pride among Reserve Force members.

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News from the SANDF — SANDF Misconduct intolerable

Courtesy of Defenceweek

South African National Defence Force (SANDF) peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have had 93 cases of misconduct brought against them, something defence minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula says is unacceptable.

Four SANDF members convicted of sexual misconduct while serving under the United Nation’s mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) have been dismissed from the SANDF, the Department of Defence said in a statement.

In response to a written Parliamentary Question today, Mapisa-Nqakula said that there are 93 cases involving members of the SANDF serving under the MONUSCO mission in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

“Other cases where offences were not of a sexual nature but required necessary disciplinary actions be taken against members, the harshest possible sanction has been handed down,” the minister stated.

“The SANDF is supposed to be a ‘disciplined military force’,” stated opposition Democratic Alliance party shadow defence minister David Maynier. “Of the 93 cases, most shockingly, at least 23 involve rape, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and assault of women. These include, for example alleged sexual molestation; rape and murder of a Burundian girl; sexual abuse and exploitation; and sexual abuse and misconduct.

“It is completely unacceptable for the members of the SANDF, who are supposed to be a disciplined military force, to begin to mirror the behaviour of the national defence force and rebel groups, in the DRC.”

Business Day reports that the 93 charges brought against SANDF troops took place between 2003 and 2011 and

range from murder to drunkenness, but most were sexual in nature.

“Minister Mapisa-Nqakula has expressed her personal intolerance to ill-discipline in the ranks of the military, particularly as it relates to reported incidences of the abuse of women and children,” the Department of Defence (DoD) said in a statement.

“She has made it clear that conduct unbecoming will be dealt with in the strictest compliance with the law and that there is simply no room for criminality and ill-discipline in a highly professional force like the SANDF.

“The Minister has further welcomed an invitation from the UN Women’s desk to partner the SANDF in the training of peace-keeping troops with an emphasis on the Response to Conflict Related Sexual Violence prior to deployment in conflict regions.”

The SANDF and UN Women have conducted training with deployed peacekeeping forces since September 2012 and continue with the training programme at the SANDF’s Peace Mission Training College in Pretoria.

In her report on SANDF misconduct during UN peacekeeping missions, Mapisa-Nqakula indicated that no members of the South African contingent within the UNAMID mission in Sudan were being investigated or charged for misconduct.

South Africa has peacekeeping troops deployed in Darfur, Sudan, and the DRC. An SANDF contingent will be part of the UN Intervention Brigade in the DRC, which for the first time in UN peacekeeping history, has an offensive mandate to actively stop the M23 rebel group. The Brigade has already started patrolling the DRC and will expand to at least 2 500 troops from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania.

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News from the SANDF — South Africa 6th biggest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The latest available figures on United Nations peacekeeping deployment numbers put South Africa at number six, a long way behind number one Ethiopia, which has more than 6 300 troops currently in field in Africa.

The East African country tops the list of troop contributors from the continent at 6 369, followed by Rwanda (4 213), Nigeria (4 142), Ghana (2 573) and Egypt with 2 561, all ahead of South Africa's 1 756. The seventh largest African troop contributor to UN peacekeeping operations is Senegal with 1 311 with Tanzania coming in at number eight with 1 059.

The country with the largest current overall involvement in UN peacekeeping operations worldwide is Pakistan with 1 228 more troops deployed than Ethiopia's 6 369 and 5 841 more than South Africa. The south Asian country has a total of 7 597 soldiers wearing blue berets and helmets. Bangladesh (6 921), India (6 736) and Nepal (3 564) are the other major troop contributors from the Asian region with South American country, Uruguay (2 118), next best on the list.

The international body is currently running 15 peacekeeping operations and one special political mission at various levels with half of them in Africa.

They are: MINURSO in Western Sahara, MINUSMA in Mali, MONUSCO (DRC), UNAMID (Darfur), UNISFA (Abyei, Sudan), UNMIL (Liberia), UNMISS (South Sudan) and UNOCI (Cote d'Ivoire).

Other UN peacekeeping operations are in Haiti, Afghanistan, the Golan Heights, Cyprus, Lebanon, Kosovo, India and Pakistan.

In total 77 702 soldiers are deployed worldwide on UN peacekeeping missions and operations with 12 553

police and 1 844 military observers as support.

Cost-wise the UN has approved resources totalling \$7.33 billion for the July 2012/June 2013 financial year to be spent on all its peacekeeping operations worldwide. UN member states still have to put \$1.83 billion into the world body's coffers to reach the budgeted figure.

South Africa currently has military personnel deployed for peacekeeping and related tasks in Africa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in Darfur and aboard a frigate in the Mozambique Channel. A South African National Defence Force (SANDF) contingent will be part of the UN Intervention Brigade in the DRC, which for the first time in UN peacekeeping history, has an offensive mandate to actively stop the M23 rebel group. The Brigade has already started patrolling the DRC and will expand to at least 2 500 troops from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania.

South Africa's commitment to peacekeeping and stabilisation in Africa, compared to the other African countries with troops deployed for that purpose, places it 9th out of 24 major contributors (who have deployed a company or more), in terms of the actual number of troops deployed, according to defence analyst Helmoed Romer Heitman. South Africa ranks 22nd out of 24 in terms of the number of troops deployed relative to economic strength.

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News from the SANDF — SANDF not neglecting its environmental responsibilities

Written by Kim Helfrich

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF), faced with ever increasing demands for its services in the face of tight budgets, is not neglecting its environmental responsibilities.

As one of the largest land users in South Africa, the SANDF has custodianship

over about 420 000 ha, the majority of it for training purposes, such as the SA Army Combat Training Centre at Lohathla in the Northern Cape and the SA Air Force bombing range at Roodewal in Limpopo. These and other training areas are home to many species of fauna and flora as well as, in some instances, buildings and other structures of historical and cultural value.

The Environmental Services sub-department in the SANDF Logistics Division has the overall task of ensuring proper environmental practices are in place not only on training grounds but also at bases.

Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM) aims to enhance the SANDF's ability to sustain long term, cost effective training by implementing sound management practices for land, maritime and aerial ranges to ensure their continued use and minimise environmental damage.

"To ensure this balance is met, the negative impacts of military activities are managed by way of ecological management measures including wildlife and veld management, effective zoning of training areas and land rehabilitation," SANDF head of communications, Sipiwe Dlamini, said.

With wildlife common on many training grounds and ranges, including Roodewal; AFB Overberg in the Western Cape; Wallmannsthal north of Pretoria and the Hoedspruit and Makhado air force bases in Limpopo, the SANDF's conservation corps' officers and enlisted personnel have no shortage of work.

While wildlife is not listed as an asset on the SANDF register, it is utilised to perform tasks which would otherwise further deplete an already tight budget. As an example antelope and buck assist in keeping vegetation growth to acceptable levels without having to resort to veld management including controlled burning. This cuts down fire danger which is exacerbated by the use of live ammunition and flares during exercises.

When wildlife populations grow and

exceed the carrying capacity of specific areas, scientific surveys are undertaken and extraneous animals removed to ensure harmony of growth, both as far as vegetation and wildlife is concerned.

“Overall, when it comes to conservation we do more than our bit,” said Captain (SAN) Adri Liebenberg, SANDF Environmental Services senior staff officer.

The SANDF’s Base Environmental Management (BEM) system aims to sustainably manage military resources needed to provide cost effective support and equipment. This entails proper management of buildings, responsible water and energy use, integrated waste management as well as ensuring cultural and historical resources are properly maintained.

One example of this is Operation Vuselela, a joint venture with the Department of Water and Environmental Affairs’ Working for Water programme. It provides work for military veterans on military properties where they remove alien and invasive vegetation.

The military has also collaborated with the SA National Biodiversity Institute in localised programmes to remove the South American pom-pom weed from military bases and roads entering them in Gauteng, North West, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal.

Environment for Operations (ECOps) aims to ensure adverse effects of military activities on the general environment are avoided or mitigated throughout any specific operations. This has seen an Environmental Services conservation officer deployed on certain continental and in-country operations to ensure environmental concerns are addressed from the earliest stages of planning.

“By doing this the environmental management concept becomes fundamental to decision making in both exercises and operations,” Dlamini said.

The 35-strong corps of environment and conservation officers allocated to Environmental Services is also very much hands-on when it comes to

environmental education and awareness. Regular workshops are staged on bases to stress the importance of saving particularly water and energy as well as cutting down on waste, from household and barracks level through to offices.

This has seen spin-offs involving communities adjacent to military bases where the recycle and re-use mantra has gone further than those in uniform.

Environmental Services has also worked with a US Army team to compile a management manual for live firing areas. Liebenberg sees this as a compliment to the SANDF’s environmental expertise.

“We are only a small cog in the overall military machine but that we are still operational is tribute to those in overall command who recognise the need for effective environmental management,” she said.

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News from the SANDF — SAAF crisis caused by underfunding.

Written by Kim Helfrich

With the country’s military watchers united in their view the SA Air Force (SAAF) is fast approaching crisis point in terms of operational ability, the finger is - again - being pointed at underfunding.

Some, including respected defence analyst Helmoed-Romer Heitman, have gone as far as suggesting the sale of certain air assets, including the Hawk Lead-In Fighter Trainers and Agusta light utility helicopters.

Such comments follow the news that 14 out of 26 of the Air Force’s Gripens have been placed in storage and that most of the A109 light utility helicopters have been grounded.

Heitman is on record as saying government must decide what it wants its military to do and fund it accordingly.

On the aircraft maintenance side, the United Association of South Africa (UASA), a trade union representing workers in, among others, the transport, manufacturing and engineering sectors, has added its voice to the list of those seeing the SAAF in crisis.

Some its of members were among those retrenched when a SAAF maintenance contract with Denel Aviation was not renewed earlier this year. The contract was not renewed because it was apparently in contravention of the Public Finance Management Act and left a large gap in maintenance operations of the air force. More than 500 specialist aircraft technicians were affected by the termination.

In February, SAAF Deputy Chief Major General Jerry Malinga said termination of the Aero Manpower Group contract was a “serious knock” for the airborne arm of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF).

Speaking at the annual Air Force Day parade in February, he pointed out the SAAF was “in good shape considering the restrictions it has to live with”.

UASA spokesman Andre Venter points out some consequences of the lapsed contract are already starting to show.

“Most notably only 10 out of the 26 Gripen fighter jets, bought as part of the Arms Deal at the princely sum of R40 billion, are serviced to fly while the rest were either mothballed for long term storage or are being cannibalised to keep the others flying. The same is most probably experienced regarding aircraft serviceability at most other squadrons. No transfer of skills is taking place or will take place until such time the proposed agreement (to end March 2014) with Denel is signed for aircraft maintenance.

“It has become a sad day in the proud history of the SAAF, that not only aircraft, worth billions, are being mothballed due to technical incapacity but also as to what the future holds for the SAAF capabilities in the near and long term future,” he said.

His statement follows the revelation earlier this week that at least half of the

SAAF's fleet of Agusta light utility helicopters cannot fly due to a lack of funds. This could see at least 18 current Agusta pilots lose currency on the aircraft type. SANDF Communications Head Siphwe Dlamini would not comment other than to say: "We do not discuss operational matters and the SANDF's state of readiness".

Keen military watcher and author Darren Olivier said the latest developments are what happens when an air force is allocated a minuscule peacetime flying budget that gets drastically cut from last year and then is forced to carry out two rapid, large scale and expensive deployments to countries thousands of kilometres away.

"Once the operational budget has been totally emptied, emergency ad hoc funds are not allocated from the National Treasury's contingency fund as expected. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans didn't even know what reporters were talking about when they asked her about ad hoc funding," he wrote on a local aviation chatroom.

He also points out the SAAF definitely needs more equipment.

"The need for new transports to replace the 50-year-old C-130BZs, maritime patrol aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles won't go away just because the operational budget has been squeezed."

Opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) party shadow minister of defence and military veterans David Maynier is another who feels the SAAF "cannot go on like this. We have to get to the bottom of what is really happening in the air force".

He plans to request a meeting of Parliament's joint standing committee on defence to discuss the crisis in the SAAF.

Maynier points out that while a large portion of the Agusta fleet is grounded, VIPs, including the President and the Defence Minister, continue to use SAAF Oryxes.

"Between 2009/10 and 2012/13 the SAAF undertook 590 helicopter flights for VIPS at a cost of R50.9 million. The

SAAF is in danger of being reduced to an airborne taxi service for VIPS."

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News from the SANDF — SANDF's Monusco troops to be part of DRC intervention brigade

Written by Guy Martin

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) troops currently serving with the United Nations mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Monusco) will become part of the new UN intervention brigade that will combat M23 rebels.

Dr Sam Gulube, Secretary for Defence, said in June that the South African troops in the DRC are currently part of the Monusco deployment, but will be moved into the intervention brigade. He said that moving them from peacekeeping to peace enforcement will "change the dynamics of the DRC conflict."

"We are going to use the same number of troops in the intervention brigade," as the SANDF has with Monusco, Gulube said. He told journalists that South Africa had since July 2012 been finalising a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations that will allow South African troops to be transferred to the intervention brigade, which for the first time in UN history has an offensive mandate, against armed groups threatening peace in the DRC. The intervention brigade will focus its main energy on combating the M23 rebel group in the eastern DRC.

Gulube said that SANDF officers had been sent to Brazil to train in jungle warfare ahead of the deployment to the DRC, as the SANDF would most definitely encounter jungle warfare conditions.

Gulube said that the next four to six weeks will involve transferring South African troops to the brigade and assessing the requirements of those troops. "That's where I am now. I've

been told to use what I have," he said, when referring to the resources and equipment the contingent would need.

He noted that R6 to R8 billion rand is available in the Special Defence Account (SDA) for capitalisation expenses (excluding salaries etc.). "Enhancement of our landward forces is critical for the success we wish to achieve, especially regarding peacekeeping missions."

In June it was reported that 1 300 soldiers from 6 SA Infantry battalion and supported by elements from Special Forces, paratroopers and engineers had flown to Goma in the eastern DRC. Department of Defence head of communications Siphwe Dlamini said the movement "was a normal rotation of the UN's Monusco mission in the DRC," but neglected to mention that these same troops would be transferred to the intervention brigade.

The more than 3 000 strong brigade will be commanded by Tanzanian Brigadier James Mwakibolwa, and will comprise Malawian, South African and Tanzanian troops. It is anticipated it will be fully operational by September to start execution of its offensive operations mandate. Deployment of the brigade, the first for the world body in more than 65 years of peacekeeping operations to be given an offensive mandate, was authorised by the UN in March.

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News from the SANDF — CSANDF launches aid trust

Courtesy of Defenceweb

An initiative led by SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Chief General Solly Shoke has already been supported to the tune of R2 million by two of the country's glamour soccer clubs.

The SANDF Education Trust will assist dependents of soldiers killed during the course of military operations since the establishment of the force on April 27, 1994.

"Recent tragic incidents, including the

loss of life in the Central African Republic and the Kruger National Park, gave impetus to the initiative," said SANDF Director: Corporate Communications Brigadier General Xolani Mabanga.

Thirteen members of 1 Parachute Battalion were killed in the Battle for Bangui in March with two more wounded parabats succumbing to their injuries later in 1 Military Hospital. A month later a 15 Squadron Agusta A109 crashed in the Kruger National Park while on Operation Rhino anti-poaching duty. Three members of 5 Special Forces Regiment were killed along with the two-man flight crew.

Late last month Shoke went live on national TV to accept pledges from Dr Irvin Khoza, chairman of Orlando Pirates, who is also an honorary colonel, and Kaizer Motaung, the Kaizer Chiefs chairman.

"I would like to convey my gratitude to the chairmen of two of the biggest soccer clubs in the country for their contribution to the SANDF Education Trust," the four star general said.

Money from the Trust will go to furthering the education of children of soldiers killed or severely injured during the course of their duties, either internally or on external deployment. Children of dead or severely injured soldiers at primary and secondary schools as well as those studying at universities are eligible for assistance from the Trust.

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International News

— New evidence in arms deal corruption report

Courtesy of Defenceweb

BAE Systems has been implicated in further bribery allegations relating to the multi-billion rand arms deal, according to documents obtained by the Sunday Times.

The newspaper reports that BAE Systems bribed former public enterprises minister Stella Sigcau by offering to give her daughter Portia a

marketing job in London, establishing a support budget for Portia for three years and giving her accommodation and hospitality during her studies in London.

The Sunday Times report said it received this information through encrypted faxes and sworn statements from a former BAE Systems staffer. These were submitted to arms deal investigators. The anonymous staffer apparently told the paper that BAE Systems also paid for trips made by Portia, Fana Hlongwana and other politicians to a golf tournament in Scotland.

In a September 1998 fax, Allan MacDonald, BAE's former managing director for Africa and Asia stated that, "the fact we have got Hawk on to the final list is very much due to our friends in the country rather than the quality of our ITP [Invitation To Prequalify] response... One friend who has, and remains, absolutely critical to our ultimate success for both Hawk and Gripen is Minister Stella Sigcau," the document reads. Sigcau was a member of the arms deal cabinet subcommittee chaired by (at that time) Deputy President Thabo Mbeki.

MacDonald told the Sunday Times that he had offered to help Portia find a job after being asked by Sigcau.

In November 1998 a cabinet meeting approved BAE as the preferred bidder for the Hawk and Gripen under the arms deal. BAE and Saab were jointly marketing the Swedish-made Gripen under Gripen International.

Another fax, from Stuart McIntyre, BAE South Africa's executive director, asked BAE to "deny all knowledge or involvement whatsoever" of Portia's "recent job application in the UK," following a request from Hlongwana.

MacDonald previously admitted to receiving five million pounds from Arstow, a company implicated in BAE's commission network.

The Mail & Guardian earlier reported that Arstow was one of the channels BAE used to send more than R1 billion to "marketing advisers" on the South

African arms deal. This emerged from documents obtained from the British Serious Fraud Office's investigation into BAE.

BAE in 2011 admitted to irregularly using a South African joint venture with Saab, which manufactures the Gripen, to channel R24 million to a "South African consultant" - Hlongwane. As a result, BAE agreed to pay a record US\$79 million (R550 million) fine.

BAE and Hlongwane have not denied the fact of the payments, but have denied that they were bribes.

Internal BAE memorandums obtained by the Mail & Guardian apparently show that from the mid-1990s the company was paying "marketing advisers" to help secure arms sales across the globe. In 1995, 225 "brass-plate advisers" got a total of £25 million (R275 million) and 74 "confidential advisers" another £21 million (R230 million).

According to a US State Department investigation into BAE, "In February 1998, respondent [BAE] engaged Uniglobe Aktiengesellschaft, a trust company in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, to create Red Diamond Trading Ltd, an offshore company, located in the British Virgin Islands ... Although not a subsidiary of respondent, Uniglobe structured Red Diamond in a manner in which Red Diamond could not act without respondent's written agreement...

"The purpose of Red Diamond was to facilitate payments to third-party brokers hired by the respondent ... There were approximately 350 covert agreements with 299 brokers. Red Diamond operated with intent to circumvent the normal payments reviews."

All in all, according to the charges, Red Diamond made more than 1000 covert payments to brokers -- another word for BAE's "marketing advisers" -- over the nine years of its existence. This period, 1998 to 2007, corresponds with a massive flow of funds to Hlongwane and a handful of others who helped BAE clinch its South African sales.

Soon after Red Diamond was formed in 1998, it appears to have become the vehicle of choice to pay BAE's "advisers" on the South African deal, which was then being finalised, the M&G said. Among the documents obtained by the M&G Centre is an October 1998 contract between BAE and Arstow Commercial Corporation.

The contract promised a commission of 1.5% on the sale of Hawks and Gripen to South Africa. In April 1999, the contract was substituted by another that promised the same 1.5% fee, but with Red Diamond replacing BAE as the principal. In September that year -- with the arms deal negotiations in their final stage -- Arstow signed a contract with another entity, Westunity Limited. The latter promised to "provide the services of Fana Hlongwane, who will use his best efforts to promote the reputation and sale of the product in the territory".

At the time, Hlongwane had only recently resigned as then-defence minister Joe Modise's adviser.

A British Serious Fraud Office list of transfers from Arstow's accounts to Hlongwane through Westunity and another company in Hong Kong showed that the money started flowing almost immediately. An amount of £100 000 (R1.1 million) was paid in October 1999, shortly before the arms contracts were signed, whereas £550 000 (R6 million) was paid in May 2000, after the contracts were signed. By July 2001, Arstow had remitted £4.9 million to Hlongwane's entities.

"The same convoluted pattern -- from Red Diamond to Hlongwane and others, often through several offshore stages -- led to the payment of a staggering total of £103 million (R1.13 billion) in respect of the BAE and Saab sales in South Africa, according to an affidavit by fraud office investigator Gary Murphy that was previously reported on by the M&G," the paper said.

The fraud office's BAE investigation was terminated in 2010 after a settlement in which BAE admitted guilt on accounting-related charges in only one of the matters investigated, the sale of radar equipment to Tanzania.

Other documents show more suspicious behaviour, notably a contract signed between the South African National Industrial Participation company (SANIP) and Hlongwane. The document forced Saab to confirm in 2011 that at least R24 million was paid through SANIP to Hlongwane by Saab's partner, BAE Systems, allegedly without Saab's knowledge. BAE ran the South African company on Saab's behalf.

The Seriti commission is currently investigating arms deal corruption allegations. The Sigcau allegation is one of the things that will be investigated by the Arms Procurement Commission, the Sunday Times reports.

The Commission, under the chairmanship of Judge Willie Seriti, was established by President Zuma to investigate allegations of fraud, corruption, impropriety or irregularity into what is officially the Strategic Defence Procurement Package, better known as the Arms Deal.

It started work late in 2011 and has been given two years to complete its investigations and present a report to the President.

In February the Commission announced a five month delay in its first round of public hearings, due to have started in Pretoria on March 4.

The Arms Deal saw the SA Air Force and SA Navy obtain new front-line equipment comprising 26 Gripen fighters, 24 Hawk Mk 120 lead-in fighter trainers, 30 A109 Light Utility Helicopters and four Westland Super Lynx maritime helicopters. The Navy regained its blue water capability with four Valour class frigates and three Type 209 diesel-electric submarines.

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International News
 — British Army to shrink by a fifth.

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The British Army is to shrink by a fifth and lose some 23 battalions as part of

an economy drive. The transformation will mean that the Service will be better able to meet the security challenges of the future, the government insists.

UK Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: "We have had to make tough decisions to implement our vision of formidable, adaptable and flexible Armed Forces." He told Parliament Thursday Britain's army will shrink its regular trained force to 82 000 from 102 000 by 2020 to save money. This will reduce the landward force to its lowest force level since 1750, the Daily Mail newspaper said.

"After a decade of enduring operations, we needed to transform the Army and build a balanced, capable and adaptable force ready to face the future. Army 2020 will create a more flexible and agile Army. Unlike the past, it will be set on a firm foundation of men and materiel, well-trained, well-equipped, and fully-funded," he added.

"The regimental system will remain the bedrock of the Army's fighting future."

The changes are seen as an essential part of the Defence Vision, stemming from the Strategic Defence and Security Review, and will mean that for the first time regular and reservist soldiers will be fully integrated within a single force structure, a Ministry of Defence (MoD) statement averred. Achieving this will mean that the Army's ability to adapt and respond will be even more effective in the future, the MoD says.

Implementing these changes will involve a long period of transformation for the Army, which will require a generational change in its vision, structure, composition and capability.

Chief of the General Staff General Sir Peter Wall in turn said: "The Army envisaged under Army 2020 will see our forces become better integrated and fully adaptable. It will capitalise on the powerful merits of a modern regimental system to deliver formidable effect when and where it is needed, and will create the best structure for the Army to face the challenges of the future.

"The changes in Army 2020 will demand resilience, flexibility and

genuine adaptability from our talented and committed officers and soldiers. It is inevitable that some units will be lost or will merge but we have done this in a way that I believe is fair across the whole Army."

Driving this change is the need for the Army to redesign its purpose so that in the future it will be able to deliver a contingent capability for deterrence and defence, overseas engagement and capacity-building, while providing the necessary military aid as a UK-based Army to ensure homeland resilience. A central plank of this will be to integrate the reserve elements into the Army structure with more clearly defined roles, as recommended in the Future Reserves 2020 study, the MoD adds.

In the review, the government said it would be more "selective" about future military deployments, and that it would be able to take part in one enduring operation like the Afghanistan or Iraq wars, but not two simultaneously, Reuters added.

The change in emphasis to a more adaptable and flexible Army, capable of undertaking a broader range of military tasks, has required a significant change to the current structure of the Army which has most recently been optimised for enduring operations in Afghanistan, the MoD statement said.

The key elements of this new structure are the Reaction and Adaptable Forces. The Reaction Forces will comprise three Armoured Infantry Brigades and 16 Air Assault Brigade, trained and equipped to undertake the full spectrum of intervention tasks. They will also be responsible for generating a Lead Armoured Infantry Battle Group and Lead Air Assault Group, capable of undertaking short notice contingency tasks. Given the high readiness nature of the Reaction Forces, they will comprise mainly regular forces with approximately 10 per cent coming from the Reserve Forces.

The Adaptable Forces will consist of a pool of regular and reserve forces capable of undertaking a variety of roles including overseas engagement and capacity-building, follow-on forces for future medium-scale enduring

stabilisation operations, our standing commitments, and homeland resilience.

This pool of forces will be under the command of seven infantry brigade headquarters during peacetime which will vary in size and geometry. These headquarters will also be regional points of contact, responsible for the delivery of homeland resilience and engagement with UK society.

For operations, an appropriate force package will be selected from across the pool of forces based on the balance of capabilities required for that specific task. Integral to the Reaction and Adaptable Forces will be the Force Troops which will provide a wide range of support such as engineer, artillery and medical capabilities from a centralised pool of resources, the MoD adds.

Hammond aims to make up for cuts to the regular army by doubling the number of reservists to 30,000 and boosting their training and responsibilities. By 2020, he expects the combined army of regular soldiers and reservists to reach 120 000, Reuters added.

However, doubts remain whether employers will spare workers for long deployments and whether reservists can really substitute for professional soldiers. Doubts also remain whether employers will spare workers for long deployments. "It is inconceivable that there won't be an impact on force projection Today's plans may provide flexible forces, but it's far from certain that they will provide sustainable military utility," opposition Labour Party defence spokesman Jim Murphy told Parliament.

Former army chief Richard Dannatt told the BBC the army cuts carried risks. "Predicting the future is very difficult, strategic shocks happen, we often don't get it right so let's hope that the next decade is a rather more peaceful decade than the last, but I wouldn't bet on it," he said.

Hammond responded the British Army will still be able to deploy a similar-sized force to that sent to Afghanistan. "Despite what you read in some of your papers, people could be forgiven for

thinking that we are nowhere in the military pecking order. We do have the fourth-largest defence budget in the world and the army is one of the top-performing armies in the world and will remain so," he told reporters.

Brigadier Ben Barry, Senior Fellow for Land Warfare at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said given the 20% budget reduction target, "it is difficult to see a credible alternative plan" to Hammond's. "Taken as a whole, Army 2020 is an imaginative and radical series of initiatives that not only creates new organisations but envisages using both new and existing organisations in new ways. It is perhaps the most radical reorganisation of the army since the end of national service 50 years ago, and has the potential to genuinely transform the army's capability – provided that it is properly led, managed, resourced and politically supported," he said in an IISS blog.

Barry notes some innovative new organisations include grouping together previously disparate intelligence gathering units into a single new intelligence and surveillance brigade. "And a new "security assistance group" will not only keep alive the lessons from developing Iraqi and Afghan forces, but also to be the Army's focus for engagement overseas by acting as a repository of reconstruction, language and cultural experts for overseas engagements."

Units facing the cull are: the 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, the 2nd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards), 3rd Battalion The Mercian Regiment (Staffords), and the 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh (The Royal Regiment of Wales). The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 5th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland will be reduced to a public duties company.

The Armoured Corps is cut by two units with The Queen's Royal Lancers amalgamating with 9th/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) and the merger of 1st and 2nd Royal Tank Regiment.

The Royal Artillery will be reduced

from 13 to 12 units with the withdrawal of the 39th Regiment Royal Artillery.

The Royal Engineers will be reduced from 14 to 11 units with the withdrawal of 24 and 28 Engineer Regiments and 67 Works Group, the Daily Mail adds.

The Army Air Corps will reduce from five to four units as 1 Regiment AAC merges with 9 Regiment AAC.

The Royal Logistic Corps will be reduced from 15 to 12 units with 1 and 2 Logistic Support Regiments withdrawn from the Order of Battle and 23 Pioneer Regiment disbanded.

The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers will be reduced to seven units with the withdrawal of 101 Force Support Battalion.

5 Regiment Royal Military Police will be disbanded.

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From the Chaplain

Read Psalm 91

¹ Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

³ Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

⁴ He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

⁵ You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

⁶ nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

⁸ You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

⁹ If you say, "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels

concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

¹⁴ "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

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South African National Orders — The Order of The Companions of OR Tambo

By the Editor

The Order of the Companions of OR Tambo

This Order is awarded to foreign nationals (Heads of State and Government) and other foreign dignitaries. It is awarded for friendship shown to South Africa. It is therefore an order of peace, co-operation and active expression of solidarity and support. The Order constitutes an essential pillar of international and multilateral relations.

Organisation

This Order can be awarded in three classes:

Class 1 = Supreme Companion of OR Tambo (Gold)

Class 2 = Grand Companion of OR Tambo (Silver)

Class 3 = Companion of OR Tambo (Bronze).

All the awards include four elements: a walking stick, a neck badge, a miniature and a lapel rosette. The last Order consists of three elements: a neck badge, a miniature and a lapel rosette.

Symbolism/design elements

Central motif/symbolism

OR Tambo: OR Tambo played a major role in the growth and development of

the international movement of solidarity against racism and Apartheid. Among others, he established the first Missions of the liberation movement in Egypt, Morocco, Ghana and London. This was a modest start to bring the friends of South Africa together throughout the world in a continuous and sustained mobilisation of the international community in support of a free and democratic South Africa and against the evils of racism, oppression and Apartheid.

Majola (mole snake): The snake that visits babies when they are born. It never harms the baby or members of the family and the only friendly way to drive it away is for the mother to squirt it with her own breast milk. It visits the baby to prepare it for a successful and safe adult life. It comes as a friend and protector. The friendship it expresses is not anchored in a benign demonstration of goodwill but rather an active expression of solidarity and striving to support and encourage long-term success of the young and growing members of the human race. The snake lives on in African mythology because of a classical narrative called *The wrath of the ancestors* by AC Jordan. This narrative subverts the conventional notion of a snake as merely venomous and introduces a broader African interpretation that understands the serpent as a friend and a member of a dynamic ecology.

Elements

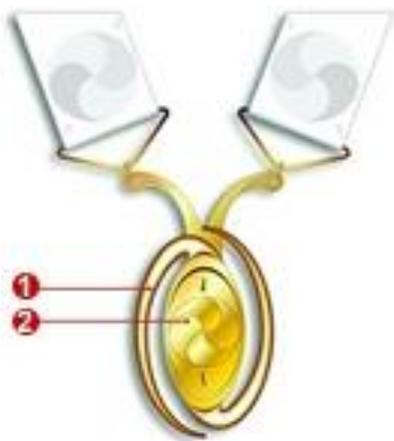
1. **Walking stick** - carved out of dark, indigenous wood it is a symbol of appreciation for the support and solidarity shown, and similarly a commitment to support and stand by the recipient in return.



1. **Majola** - the watchful eye with hooks at both the top and bottom symbolises recognition for the active expression of solidarity and support for South Africa.

The Shamrock

2. A tomoye of four sections - is inspired by the universal ying and yang that speak of a meeting point for diverse spiritual energies.



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SA Irish Pipes and drums at the SA Championships



The SA Irish Pipes and Drums Finished third in the SA Championships.

Photo from the past



After the capture of the fortress of Mega in 1941. Sergeant Majors Brehem, Foster and Owen of the SA Irish Regiment with pose Italian prisoners.