

The Shamrock
SA Irish Regiment
Private Bag X2
Bertham
2013

Website: www.sairish.webs.com
eMail: irish.regiment@gmail.com
Fax: 086 652 7643

January 2014
Volume 9

In This Issue.

- 1) **2014: Our Centenary Year**
- 2) **From the Editor.**
- 3) **From the OC's Desk.**
- 4) **From the Honorary Colonel.**
- 5) **Regimental Events.**
- 6) **Did you know?**
- 7) **From the Pipes and Drums.**
- 8) **Regimental News – SA Irish proudly formed part of Operation Prosper.**
- 9) **News from the SANDF – SANDF supports Madiba's commemoration and funeral.**
- 10) **News from the SANDF – Review of the SANDF in 2013.**
- 11) **News from the SANDF – Realistic Reserve training.**
- 12) **News from the SANDF – URTP heading for KZN in 2014.**
- 13) **International News - Piracy attacks in West Africa expected to double in 2014.**
- 14) **International News – Rooivalk performed well in combat.**
- 15) **From the Chaplain.**
- 16) **South African National Orders- Order of Ikhamanga.**
- 17) **Photos from Operation Prosper.**

Rest in Peace Madiba- The Regiment pays tribute to our former Commander-in-Chief during Operation Prosper



The Shamrock



The official newsletter of the SA Irish Regiment

2014: Our Centenary Year

By the Editor
Information courtesy of
Lt. D.W. Chambers and Wikipedia

100



Years

1914 - 2014

The South African Irish was formed at the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 when three officers (Major George Twomey, Captain J. Jeffreys and a Captain MacDonald) met at the Irish Club in Johannesburg in order to raise an Irish regiment from among the citizens of Johannesburg and its surrounding areas.

After a request to The Union Defence Force (UDF) Headquarters, authority was granted to form the regiment and Lieutenant-Colonel Brennan was appointed as its first commanding officer. Major Twomey was appointed as its recruiting officer. The wife of General Louis Botha (a lady of Irish descent with the maiden name of Emmett) was appointed as the regiment's first honorary colonel.

Although the Regiment was raised on 9 September, its first parade was held on 1 December 1914 and it is generally regarded as the Regiment's birthday. The battalion, consisting of six companies, first formed up at Booyens Camp in Johannesburg 1 December 1914.

After training, the regiment was made part of 4 South African Infantry Brigade (part of the Northern Force) and embarked from Cape Town to the (then) German South-West Africa on 21 December 1914.

On 25 December 1914 the Force landed at Walvis Bay and went into action immediately. The Regiment itself first came into contact with their German enemy on the following day, barely three months after it was raised.

At the end of the campaign in South-West Africa, Active Citizen Force regiments were by law not permitted to proceed to other theatres of war as such. Special war service units were thus created to fight in East Africa and Europe. Volunteers from the South African Irish Regiment were formed, together with members of other units, into the composite 9 South African Infantry Regiment. 9 SAI campaigned in East Africa, where it earned the honours Kilimanjaro and East Africa 1916-17.

The SA Irish were formally disbanded on 31 December 1919. On 29 January 1921, at a ceremony in Johannesburg, the regiment was posthumously presented with the King's Colour by Prince Arthur of Connaught, the (then) Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, in recognition of its service in South-West Africa.

At the outbreak of World War II in 1939 the 1st South African Irish Regiment was reformed through the efforts of Major Twomey, Captains Jeffreys and Cullinan (the latter was the son of Sir Thomas Cullinan, of diamond fame).

Although the unit was designated as the 1st South African Irish a second battalion was never formed as the men intended for this second battalion were drafted to the first. In practice, the usual designation for the regiment was thus the South African Irish Regiment.

The South African Irish Regiment initially consisted of a regimental HQ, a Support Company and three infantry companies; a pipe band was later added.

After a period of training, the regiment was mobilized on 16 June 1940 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D.I. Somerset. It was grouped together with 2 Regiment Botha and 3 Transvaal Scottish to form the 5th South African Infantry Brigade. In July of the same year, the brigade was shipped to Kenya via the port of Durban to become part of 1st South African Infantry Division.

After concentrating at the town of Gilgil in Kenya, the regiment took part in the invasion of Southern Abyssinia on 1 February 1941, part of the East African Campaign; it distinguished itself during the fighting at El Gumu, Hobok and Banno in early February as well as during the capture of Mega on 18 February.

5 Brigade, including the South African Irish, then returned to Kenya and embarked at Mombasa on 18 April. The Brigade reached Suez in Egypt on 1 May.

In November 1941 Operation Crusader, the invasion of Libya and relief of Tobruk, began. 5 South African Infantry Brigade, together with the Transvaal Horse Artillery Regiment, took part in the fighting at Sidi Rezegh culminating on 23 November 1941 with the German armour overwhelming the Allied forces, destroying 5 Brigade, and breaking through to the Eighth Army's rear areas on the Libyan border with Egypt. The casualties of the South African Irish were extremely heavy (only 140 men of all ranks survived), including its commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Dobbs who was wounded in the early stages of the battle (he was replaced by Major C. McN. Cochran. Major Cochran then led the remnants of the battalion, along with the remaining five guns of 9th Field Battery eastwards towards the lines of the Scottish (these

were the only guns in 5 Brigade which were not captured!), in an attempt to escape.

In addition, several members of the unit drowned while on their way to Italy by ship as prisoners of war. The survivors of the regiment served with New Zealand forces until the end of November, when they rejoined the remnants of the decimated Brigade at Mersa Matruh.

Due to their heavy losses, the South African Irish and 3 Transvaal Scottish ceased to exist as independent infantry units. In February 1942, the survivors of these two battalions joining together to form a composite battalion and it was later re-constituted as 2nd Regiment Botha under command of Lt-Col Boerstra. 2nd Regiment Botha was then further reinforced with replacements coming from the 2nd Witwatersrand Rifles after which, the battalion moved by rail and in New Zealand troop carriers from Mersa Matruh to El Adem. In this form, the remnants of the South African Irish were once again in action during September 1942, during the fighting at El Alamein.

11 Battery, 4 Field Regiment, South African Artillery, returned to the Union of South Africa in 1943 and was reconstituted as 4/22 Field Regiment, South African Artillery. This unit later returned to North Africa as a component of the South African 6th Armoured Division and also took part in the subsequent fighting in Italy.

The regiment received four battle honours (see below) for its service during World War II, but they were not awarded immediately because, at the time of the publication of the honours, the unit was an artillery regiment - artillery regiments in the South African Army do not carry any honours. However, when the regiment was later converted back to an infantry unit it became entitled to those honours and they were incorporated into the colour of the regiment.

At the end of World War II it was requested that the Regiment be reformed as an infantry unit. However, as there was no intention at that time to establish additional Active Citizen Force infantry battalions, this request was refused. However, as a form of

compensation, authority was granted for the formation of an artillery unit with the designation of 22 Field Regiment (South African Irish), South African Artillery. This unit was formed in June 1946 and it operated until 31 December 1959 as an artillery regiment. However, on 1 January 1960 the regiment was converted back to an infantry unit and regained its old nomenclature, the South African Irish Regiment.

The period from 1960 to 1974 saw the Regiment entrenching its traditions as an Infantry Regiment and during this period received the Freedom of the City of Johannesburg (Nov 1966), and their Regimental Colours (Nov 68). During this Period the Regiment formed and trained "The Hunter Group", a volunteer special force unit, which was the precursor to the Reconnaissance Regiments.

In 1971 members of the Regiment and Regimental Association started the annual visit or "raid" to Barberton. In 1966 and 1971 the Regiment participated in the 5th and 10th respective anniversaries of the Republic.

The period from 1974 to 1988 saw the Regiment being part of 72 Motorised Brigade and being re-established as a conventional force. During these years the Regiment saw active duty in Angola during Operations Savannah and Protea as well as undertaking operational duties during the Border war, together with internal security duties within South Africa; and exercises at the Army Battle School, e.g. Quicksilver and Thunderchariot. In 1987, the Regiment underwent conversion from a motorised infantry Regiment to a mechanised infantry Regiment.

In 1979 the Regiment was granted the Freedom of entry to the City of Barberton because of the WW II training period and the frequent "raids" to the town. In 1984 the Regiment, as part of 72 Motorised Brigade, participated in the parade celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Brigade's Formation.

In 1989, due to the reorganisation of the forces within the conventional force

Brigades, the Regiment was transferred to 81 Armoured Brigade. This year was also the 75th anniversary of the formation of the Regiment and this event was celebrated by a battalion parade in Barberton.

During 1991 the Regiment organised the National 50th anniversary of the battle of Sidi Rezegh Parade in Johannesburg. In the same year, due to further restructuring of the conventional forces the Regiment was transferred to Northern Cape Command and reverted to a motorised Infantry Regiment.

During this period the Regiment successfully completed township unrest camps as well as training exercises at the Army Battle School. From 1992 to 1998 the Regiment went through a period of significant decline as the annual intake of national servicemen dried up with the ending of conscription. In 1998, the Regimental muster was only four strong.

In 1999, the Regiment began to recruit untrained members directly from the streets, training them on a part time basis. At the completion of internal training, the recruits were then sent to a regular army training establishment for final assessment and evaluation. The success of this approach led not only to the expansion of the concept, but also the transformation of the Regiment, with not only the first black riflemen entering the ranks, but black Officers and NCO's joining the unit.

By 2004, and Regiment had grown back to two companies in strength and a Regimental HQ, the same size it had traditionally been during the 1950s and 1960s. By 2005, members of the Regiment were being deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in support of UN peace support operations. At the same time the Regiment reached an active strength of 532 members.

2006 saw members of the Regiment again deploying externally to the DRC, whilst domestically the Regiment was tasked with executing conversion training for ex Commando members converting to the conventional reserve following the closure of the ATR.

In 2007 SAIR was again tasked with ATR/ACR conversion, while 2008 saw SAIR providing 50 members to the Wit Rifles company deploying to the Sudan. At the same time, The Regiment received orders to prepare for a further deployment to the DRC in 2009. The Regiment at present stands 16th in order of precedence amongst the infantry battalions of the Reserve Force. This precedence, however, may be elevated if a claim to an earlier date of establishment is officially recognized.

The Regiment is presently preparing for possible peacekeeping deployments in Africa.

The Regiment is also proud to have participated in Operation prosper, as our final tribute to our former Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela's Funeral. Operation prosper was co-incidentally at the beginning of our centenary year.

The original motto of the Regiment in 1914 was that of the Royal Irish Rifles (later the Royal Ulster Rifles), 'Quis Separabit?' ('Who will separate us?'). During World War 2 it changed to 'Faugh-A-Ballagh' ('Clear the way'), which has remained to the present time. The motto echoes the history of the Royal Irish Fusiliers the First Battalion of which was known as the 'Faugh-a-Ballaghs', an honorary title conferred upon them during the Peninsular War (1809-1812).

o0o

From the Editor

From: The Editor

In this first issue of 2014, on behalf of the Officer Commanding SA Irish Regiment and the editorial staff, I wish everyone very prosperous new year.

This year is a landmark in the history of the Regiment, since we will be celebrating our centenary year in 2014. Many activities are planned for our centenary celebration, culminating with the Sidi Rezegh parade at the end of 2014.

This year has already started off with a bang for our Training Wing, with the Regiment already committed to pre-deployment training. Due to Military

Security we can not mention any details, but you know who you are and where you are going, so good luck to all involved.

We were saddened with the passing of our former Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela at the end of 2013, but also proud of the opportunity to participate in Operation Prosper, thus honouring him.

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.

o0o

From the OC's Desk

By: Lt Col. M.A. Bennett

When our beloved Madiba passed away on the evening of 5 December 2013, an overwhelming sadness passed through our country.

Always at the ready, the South African Irish Regiment immediately responded when called on to deploy as a contingency, should the need arise.

As our final salute to our beloved former Commander-in-Chief, we proudly did our part in ensuring that events surrounding his commemoration and funeral services went smoothly and safely, thus granting him the honour of a dignified farewell.

Rest in peace Madiba, you have been an inspiration for us all. With his memory in our hearts we move on towards a brighter future.

- Faugh a Ballagh!
Lt Col. M.A. Bennett
o0o

From the Honorary Colonel

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

On the evening of 5 December 2013 the saddest moment in our country's history occurred, with the passing of our former Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela.

Although, at age 95, his passing was not unexpected, the sadness still remains.

I am proud to say that my Regiment paid its last tribute to our beloved former president by participating in Operation Prosper. Through our participation in this operation we ensured that his memorial and funeral gave him the dignified tribute that he so richly deserved.

To the members that participated in this operation, I say thank you. To those that are still in preparation for future operations during this year, I say our thoughts and our Prayers go with you.

We must always remember that our lives are that much richer for having known him. As long as we remember him he will never truly be gone.

- Faugh a Ballagh!
Col. B. Molefe

o0o

Regimental Events

By: The Editor

1 December 2013 - Start of the Regimental Centenary Year

22 February - Combined Mess Formal Dinner (By Invitation only)

8 March - Leader-Group Table 1 Shoot

10 May - Leader-Group Table 2 Shoot
12 July - Leader-Group Adapted Table 2 Shoot

13 September - Leader-Group Table 3 Night Shoot

11 October - Freedom of the City of Barberton parade

1 November - Leader-Group Table 2 Proficiency Shoot

8 November - Freedom Regiments Parade

9 November - JHB Remembrance Parade – JHB Cenotaph

23 November - Sidi Rezegh Commemoration Parade

29 November - Regimental Association Ball

1 December 2014 - Regimental Birthday (100 Years)

o0o

Did you know?

By: The editor

Although the Regiment was formed on 9 September 1914, it was not gazetted until later that year.

The Regiment's First parade was held on 1 December 1914 and it is generally regarded as the Regiment's birthday.

On 25 December 1914 the Regiment at Walvis Bay and went into action immediately against German forces the following day, barely three months after it was formed.

o0o

From the Pipes and Drums.

By: The Pipe Major

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

12 April – Lyttelton Manor Gathering – Pretoria

3 May – South Coast Highland Gathering – Amanzimtoti, Kwazulu Natal

17 & 18 May – Celtic Fest – Johannesburg

31 May – De La Salle Gathering – Johannesburg

14 June – Pretoria Boys Gathering – Pretoria

28 June – Gathering to be advised

12 July – St Benedict's Gathering – Johannesburg

26 July – Benoni Gathering (South African Championships) – Benoni

Date to be Advised - SA Irish Gathering and beating of retreat.

8 November – Freedom Regiments Parade

9 November – JHB Remembrance Parade – JHB Cenotaph

24 November – Sidi Rezegh Parade

o0o

Regimental News – SA Irish proudly formed part of Operation Prosper.

By: The Editor



On the evening of 5 December 2013 our great leader and former Commander-in-Chief, Nelson Mandela passed away.

It was a fitting tribute by the South African Irish Regiment that we participated in Operation Prosper to safeguard the commemoration and funeral services of our beloved Madiba.

A Company of 127 members under the command of Maj. D. Katz deployed at Alpha Base, ready for any eventuality should the need arise.

To all those that deployed in our final salute and tribute to Madiba... WE SALUTE YOU.

Editorial Note: You can see photos from Ops Prosper last pages of this newsletter.

o0o

News from the SANDF – SANDF supporting Madiba's commemoration and funeral.

Written by Kim Helfrich

The SA National Defence Force (SANDF) shifted into top gear only hours after former President Nelson Mandela died at his Houghton, Johannesburg, home on Thursday 5 December 2013.

First into action was the SA Military Health Service (SAMHS), which had been responsible for the former president's health care since he was admitted to a Pretoria hospital in June 2013 with a recurrent lung infection.

A SAMHS detail collected his body and

moved it by road convoy to 1 Military Hospital in Thaba Tshwane in the first SANDF involvement in arrangements for the various functions before the final interment of South Africa's first democratically elected President at Qunu in the Eastern Cape on Sunday 15 Dec.

The involvement of the South African military in all events around Mandela's death has been meticulously planned under the code name Operation Imbeko. When it became reality it was changed to Operation Uxolo. Operation Prosper formed part of contingency plans for assistance to the SAPS should the need arise.

As South Africans came to grips with the fact that the 95-year-old former freedom fighter was no longer part of the national landscape, SANDF Chief General Solly Shoke cancelled a medal parade set for Friday 6 Dec, and ordered all soldiers on leave to return to their bases and units immediately.

Since Sunday 8 December at least six Gripens from 2 Squadron have been based at AFB Waterkloof flying regularly along the Johannesburg/Pretoria corridor on aerial surveillance and security taskings. At least one of the Swedish fighters was spotted carrying a Thales Digital Joint Reconnaissance Pod (DJRP). At least two Augusta A109 light utility helicopters, probably from 17 Squadron at AFB Zwartkop, were also seen doing surveillance on this route at various times during Sunday and Monday (8 & 9 Dec).

Expectations were that close to, if not more than, 100 heads of state and eminent persons from all over the world have arrived and continued to arrive in South Africa to pay their condolences to the man known fondly as Madiba.

United States President Barack Obama, along with former presidents Jimmy Carter, George Bush and Bill Clinton with a host of high level government representatives and close to 30 members of the US Senate have made the journey to South Africa. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon was another who joined a list of high level dignitaries that literally runs from A (Afghanistan) to Z

(Zambia). Other notables in the country include African Union chair Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, European Council president Herman van Rompuy and Minister Amb Samir Hosay, representing the Arab States League.

The majority of national leaders and eminent persons are expected to attend today's memorial service at the FNB Stadium in Soweto. The Department of International Relations and Co-operation had at the time of publication not indicated how many dignitaries would attend the official State funeral at the Union Buildings on Thursday or the final laying to rest ceremony at Mandela's home village of Qunu on Sunday (15 Dec.).

Afrikaans daily Beeld reported on 10 december that snipers and electronic jammers would be working in and around the Soweto venue for the memorial service with Gripens overhead to ensure security at the stadium where the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup final was played.

A similar situation was expected to be in place starting 11 December when Mandela's body is moved along what will be a heavily secured route from 1 Military Hospital to the Union Buildings where it was announced that he would lie in state for three days from 11 to 13 December.

No definitive information was released by the SANDF's Corporate Communications Directorate but all indications at the time were that the Presidential Guard and its accompanying VIP Protection Unit would be heavily involved in this part of the national commemoration. Reliable sources within the defence sector have told defenceWeb snipers, both military and from the SAPS task force, were also be deployed at strategic sites along the route the cortege would follow daily.

Indications were that around 15 000 SANDF members took part in all events around Mandela's burial.

While it could not be confirmed, some military watchers have said a Valour Class frigate would also be deployed

along the coastline to provide further security.

o0o

News from the SANDF – Review of the SANDF in 2013

Written by Kim Helfrich

When those in overall command of South Africa's military, from Commander-in-Chief President Jacob Zuma, his Defence and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula and SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Chief General Solly Shoke, review the force's performance over the past 12 months it should result in more than a certain amount of introspection.

There was both good and bad for all four arms of service with the bad, in the form of body bags arriving at AFB Waterkloof, the most extreme.

On the good side, sterling performances by South African air- and ground-based elements deployed in the troubled Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) showed the SANDF still has it what it takes.

While the men and women in uniform, as well as the civilian component of the SANDF, by and large acquitted themselves reasonably and in certain cases, exceptionally, well of the tasks assigned them, there are areas for concern.

The sight of body bags being carried off the cargo ramp of a 28 Squadron C-130BZ at the end of March brought home forcibly just what the cost of South African foreign policy could be. The 13 troops from 44 Parachute Regiment members who died in the Battle for Bangui were later joined on the fatality list by two more Regiment members who succumbed to wounds sustained in the Central African Republic.

These 15 deaths served as a timely reminder of the need for proper planning, in terms of logistic support, as well as the importance of good

intelligence.

Shoke subsequently indicated the lessons learnt in Bangui would be taken to heart and they were when officers involved there assisted with training of the South African contingent that is now part of the UN’s first ever Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in the DRC.

The plus side of the ledger was bolstered by two specific performances, again both beyond South Africa’s borders.

In the DRC a SANDF sniper racked up what is considered by experts to be one of the longest successful kill shots and the home-grown Rooivalk combat support helicopter proved to be too much for the M23 rebel group, which has long been a thorn in the side of FARDC (DRC government forces) and the UN Mission in that country.

A single successful sortie by a pair of 16 Squadron Rooivalks is viewed by military observers as the turning point that led to the M23 retreating. It also marked the Rooivalk’s first ever combat since the helicopter entered service with the SA Air Force.

While the SANDF has yet to officially comment on the more than two kilometre shot by the South African sniper deployed as part of the FIB, military watchers said it was the sixth longest confirmed successful sniper shot in military history.

Equipment-wise, the SA Army will be breathing much easier now that all the paperwork is finally completed and Denel Land Systems can start production of its long-awaited replacement for the Ratel infantry fighting vehicle: the Badger.

The first of 238 Badgers will be delivered to the landward arm of service in 2015 with the final vehicle’s delivery date currently set for 2022. Sadly, the delay in finalisation of the production contract has meant a drop of 56 in the number of Badgers to be built.

By all accounts the Navy has coped with its problems of manpower, platforms and a shortage of finance. While it did not take part in the year’s

major naval event – the Royal Australian Navy International Fleet Review – successful exercises were concluded on both the east and west coast of Africa. The maritime arm of service was also the mainstay of Operation Copper, the Southern African Development Community three nation counter piracy tasking in the Mozambique Channel.

Support in this operation was provided by the SA Air Force via a C-47TP and Oryx helicopter.

The airborne arm of the SANDF dispelled many of the rumours about its ability to put aircraft on the line – and in the sky – when no less than 10 jets (five Gripen and five Hawks) taking part in the Air Capability Demonstration at the Roodewal Bombing Range in September (no Gripens were airborne during the May edition of the Air Capability Demonstration).

This highlight apart, the SAAF saw a large portion of its Agusta A109 light utility helicopter fleet grounded, the cancellation of a maintenance contract with Denel Aviation’s Aero Manpower Group and more latterly a public relations debacle when a long planned aviation and lifestyle show at AFB Ysterplaat was cancelled less than two weeks before the event.

oOo

News from the SANDF – Realistic Reserve training

Written by Kim Helfrich

Efforts to make training as realistic as possible with the resultant positive spin-off for those doing it, while working within the constraints of limited funding, has seen two KwaZulu-Natal Army Reserve Force units think out of the box and come up with a winner.

“Army Reserves are limited by budget as to how much training can be done a year and we took a conscious decision to get the best value for our money and time available,” said Lieutenant Colonel Kenny Lowe, Natal Carbineers Officer Commanding.

This led to the unit approaching Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, the KZN provincial conservation agency, with a request to use parts of its flagship Hluhluwe iMfolozi Game Reserve for training.

“As a strange environment with real dangers and challenges the benefits of training in the reserve would be raised to another level. It would also give an accurate indication of how unit members will cope with certain situations on deployment,” he said.

Junior leaders from the Carbineers and 84 Signal Unit set off for the reserve after a refresher training period and according to Staff Sergeant Johan Kruger of 84 Signal Unit “anticipation turned to apprehension” when the military convoy entered the reserve and drove past giraffe, buffalo and elephant.

The “apprehension” factor was markedly increased when setting up camp was interrupted by roaring lions and the coughing hyenas.

The “real life” environment of the reserve saw the group of junior leaders putting skills into practice doing patrol formations, observation posts, listening post and vehicle checkpoints in and around iMfolozi during the 10 day exercise, dubbed Machibini.

Prior to work proper starting the group was fully briefed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife personnel on what to expect and what to do if wild animals were encountered during the course of patrols or while on observation or listening post duty. As an extra safety measure a ranger was delegated to accompany each stick while on patrol. Natal Carbineers junior leaders on patrol during Exercise Machibini That Machibini achieved its aim was clear from comments of those on the exercise.

“The exercise was impressive. We were able to learn more about how important we are as the first line of safety of South Africa to secure not only people but also our wildlife,” said Corporal Hazel Ndaba of 84 Signal.

“Exercise Machibini was an eye-opener and we learnt a lot. We did night patrols

and gained plenty of experience. We were also surrounded by lots of wild animals and had the opportunity to understand their behaviour,” was the comment of Signaller Promise Bhengu.

Exercise signal training officer Captain Ndumiso Majosi echoed Bhengu saying: “We learnt a lot about different wildlife. Now we also know when they are angry and this was thanks to the rangers. Their input made the experience even better.

“I would like to see the SA National Defence Force and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife go big on this in future. It was a fruitful exercise.”

Final word on the out-of-the-box exercise came from Lowe who said the real life training got members both excited and enthusiastic and pushed them to their limits.

“As the exercise progressed it became clear to all involved why procedures and drills are important and have to be followed. The need for good teamwork was also a vital component of Machibini.

“We had the opportunity train with night sight equipment and drivers practiced and improved their 4X4 driving skills. All round the experience was a positive one.

“Both locals and visitors were abuzz with the army on the ground in the reserve. It was a great show of force and a good opportunity for government departments to work together to the benefit of all. I sincerely hope we can do more of this type of training,” he said.

o0o

News from the SANDF – URTP heading for KZN in 2014

Courtesy of Defenceweb

The Reserve Force has targeted KwaZulu-Natal for its next round of University Reserve Training programme (URTP) recruitment.

In its first two years the South African

National Defence Force URTP recruitment teams have visited tertiary education institutions in Western Cape, North West and Gauteng and have been rewarded, in one instance with 43 students from the University of North West’s Potchefstroom campus making the grade.

A URTP recruitment campaign in Gauteng and North West earlier this year drew no less than 925 applications from under graduates and graduates.

An apt example of the type of person sought for the programme is Carl Smit, a B.Com honours student in Potchefstroom. While doing the first part of basic military training (BMT) he was informed he had been selected by the SA Institute of Chartered Accountants as one of only 30 students to be part of a national leadership summit.

This is in line with the URTP Charter which states: “The programme is focussed on developing the leadership potential of young people. This will play a major role in not only developing individual management skills but also in establishing self-awareness, self-discipline and self-confidence”.

Brigadier General Debbie Molefe, Director: Defence Reserves, gave an indication of the importance of URTP to a SA National Defence Force that is increasingly becoming a high technology military. She told the group doing BMT in Potchefstroom their training will influence the defence force for the next 45 years.

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

The URTP charter makes it clear the military skills those who are successfully recruit acquire will stand them in good stead in their civilian careers.

“In the military environment teamwork is essential and students will develop a sense of responsibility and respect towards fellow members in the group. This will not only develop their social interaction capabilities, but will also

facilitate their induction into new career environments.”

Recruitment will take place during March 2014 at the universities of KwaZulu-Natal and Zululand and the Durban University of Technology with selection following in June. Students interested can direct enquiries to defres@telkomsa.net.

o0o

International News – Piracy attacks in West Africa expected to double in 2014

Press release by the Paramount group

Paramount Naval Systems is developing a fleet of multi-role patrol vessels to prevent illegal activity and protect assets and territory.

The number of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea could double next year if governments do not act to protect off-shore assets, according to Paramount Group, Africa’s largest privately-owned defence and aerospace business.

It is estimated that one piracy attack a day has occurred in the Gulf of Guinea in 2013. This figure is set to rise to two a day in 2014.

However, piracy threatens more than just oil and gas assets; criminal gangs at sea are responsible for drug trafficking, arms smuggling, dumping of toxic waste, illegal bunkering and illegal fishing.

This is in addition to the problems caused by the profits from piracy that finance other criminal activity such as terrorism and human trafficking, which have a significant human and financial cost.

James Fisher, CEO of Paramount Naval Systems, said: "As stronger counter-piracy measures have developed in East Africa, criminal organisations have come to see coastal assets in West Africa as soft targets. The result is that the waters of the Gulf of Guinea are now the most dangerous in Africa for merchant shipping.

"West African nations are rapidly developing their oil and gas

The Shamrock

infrastructure to capitalise on existing assets and exploit new offshore discoveries. These assets can serve as the driver of long-term economic development in these countries, boosting industry, creating thousands of jobs and bringing in billions of dollars of foreign investment.

"Unless it is tackled quickly and effectively, piracy could do serious damage to West Africa's oil and gas industry, slowing development for years to come.

"The solution is not to seek international help to solve these African problems, but to build African solutions to them. The development of a strong African shipbuilding industry means it is possible for African nations to find African solutions to the threat of piracy."

In response to growing demand from sovereign governments across Africa and the developing world, Paramount Naval Systems is developing a fleet of multi-role patrol vessels.

The speed and flexibility of Paramount's ships mean they are ideal for a wide range of operations in coastal waters to prevent illegal activity and protect assets and territory.

Paramount presented its multi-role naval vessels as part of the fight against piracy in West Africa at Africa's largest maritime security event, Maritime & Coastal Security Africa, in Cape Town (25-27 November).

Attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Guinea have become the greatest threat to merchant shipping in Africa, surpassing attacks off Somalia in 2012. Currently, there is an average of one attack per day on ships in the Gulf of Guinea and the trend is only worsening. Fisher continued: "To protect national resources, it's essential to invest in flexible and modern maritime resources to patrol coastal waters and effectively counter piracy.

"Our multi-role patrol vessels establish a capability that allows African navies to respond rapidly to an array of terrorist and criminal threats by giving naval forces the resources to ensure

they are always a step ahead of the pirates."

Editorial Note: Did you know there are currently 57 people in pirate hands? Or that an average pirate can make up to \$75000 in a run?

With Pirate activities slowly moving south, it is no surprise that our Navy is becoming increasingly involved in anti-piracy patrols.

With many complaints from civilian sectors and investigations around the weapons procurement deals of the 1990's, this editor can not comment on whether we got the best possible deal or not.

What is a fact is that the SANDF has commitments on the African continent and we can not send our sons and daughters into dangerous situations with outdated equipment.

With piracy expected to increase, the taskings of the SANDF is more likely to increase as well. With more resources (not less) needed to protect our shores and shipping routes.

Something to think about...

oOo

International News – Rooivalk performed well in combat

Written by Darren Olivier

On 4 November 2013, at approximately 17h00 Congolese time, two South African Air Force Rooivalk helicopters attached to the UN's Force Intervention Brigade flew the craft's first ever combat mission. The helicopters fired multiple 70mm rocket salvos against M23 rebel bunkers near Chanzu in what is a mountainous region close to the Rwandan border.

Early reports from sources in the area indicate that the action was successful, with the Rooivalks' tactical approach through the clouds taking the M23 defenders by surprise and their rocket fire being accurate enough to disperse them and destroy one of the 14.5 mm anti-aircraft guns that had been

previously used to fire at the Rooivalks and other helicopters.

The attack was combined with a renewed FARDC assault and subsequent claims by the DRC government that the remaining M23 senior commanders have now fled across the border into Rwanda. However this could not be independently verified.

This is the first time Rooivalk helicopters have engaged in combat since the prototype's first flight 23 years ago.

Update: In the days since this combat action, further information has become available on this mission.

DefenceWeb reported that the operation ceased at 18h20 hours after one Rooivalk had fired 38 rockets and the other 17, with sources confirming that these were fired in five separate salvos.

Major Pethias Mdoka, the Force Intervention Brigade's Military Public Information Officer, confirmed the Rooivalk's involvement, telling African Defence Review: "The FIB supported FARDC in neutralising M23 positions at Tshanzu with the use of artillery and Rooivalk attack helicopters at 17H10 on 4 November. By 06H00 the next morning FARDC forces held the ground."

oOo

From the Chaplain

Read Psalm 23

This Psalm is for especially for our Brothers and sisters that will be preparing for the dangers of operational deployment during 2014.

Know that when you are cold, hungry and feel alone (as soldiers sometimes are) that the Lord is with you.

Our thoughts and our Prayers go with you.

Psalm 23, A Psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

o0o

South African National Orders – The Order of Ikhamanga

By the Editor

The Order of Ikhamanga

This Order is awarded to South African citizens who have excelled in the fields of arts, culture, literature, music, journalism and sport.

Organisation

This Order can be awarded in three categories:

Category 1 = Gold

Category 2 = Silver

Category 3 = Bronze.

Symbolism/design elements

Central motif/symbolism

The Ikhamanga (Strelitzia) plant symbolises the unique beauty of achievements by men and women who carry colourful South African aloft in the fields of creativity, arts, culture, music, journalism and sport.

1. **Lydenburg Heads** – (the arts) – the terracotta head represents visual, creative arts, performance and drama.

2. **African drum** – relevant to all cultures and representative of the arts, it symbolises excellent talent in communication and cultural celebration.

3. **Crest/sun** – the crown symbolises a feathered head-dress worn by performers, royalty and respected people. The rays of the sun, which denote power, glory, illumination and vitality, represent the achievements of performers in various fields.

4. **Inner ovals or borders** – (glorification in sport) – they symbolise the acknowledgement of exceptional achievements in various sporting and cultural activities

5. **Roads** – (achievement and success) – portray all roads leading to Africa and the Cradle of Humankind, which emphasises the long, hard road to achievement, excellence and success.



Pictures from Operation Prosper

Photos by: Maj. I.D. Stins, RD



Lt. Maphasa with his kit ready for inspection during Operation Prosper.



Company kit inspection during the ops.



South African Irish Regiment – Operation Prosper 2013

Photo By: Maj. I.D. Stins, RD



Company kit inspection during the ops.