

SAMHS COMMAND INFO BULLETIN



Issued by the Office of the Surgeon General

INTRODUCTION

SG has instructed that this Command Bulletin be read out at Weekly Command Briefings in all Units and Formations no later than five days after the date of the Bulletin.

Speech by L N Sisulu, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans on the occasion of the Department of Defence Budget Vote

Chairperson
Ministers and Deputy Ministers
Honourable Members
Invited guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I know now what Marcus Brutus felt when, in urging his comrades to seize a fleeting opportunity in an armed conflict, he uttered the immortal words:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures. (IV.ii.269–276)

I do not only relate to this intellectually – I have been there and I can attest that we took the tide at its height. After a number of difficult decisions, buttressed by a great deal of hard work, we can report to the soldiers and the country that we are now “on such a full sea, we are now afloat”.

Chairperson, we dedicated this year to our Military Veterans. Men and women who have delivered us to this place in history. This year, we celebrate the 50th year of the formation of the largest non-statutory force, Umkhonto we Sizwe, whose enormous sacrifice we will ensure is never removed from the minds of our people. We celebrate an even more eventful occasion, that of the 100th anniversary of the Ruling Party, the African National Congress, which, by some strange coincidence is also the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Defence Force of South Africa, under whose banner WWI and WWII was fought and under whose banner our men lost their lives when the SS Mendi sank, taking down with her some 616 men, who died singing. Singing the selfsame song, no doubt as Solomon Mahlangu would have sung as he ascended the gallows in Pretoria, paraphrased, “I die that my sacrifice and my blood should feed the tree of freedom”.

My staff and I are very privileged that we live to witness, when historical events conspire to remind us of the enormous responsibility that history has imposed on us, the current generation. This is our “burden of the present”. But we will make sure that we rise to that responsibility. The tree of Freedom did indeed blossom and now we have a Defence Force that is united in its goal. On 27 April 2012 the South African National Defence Force came of age. We turned 18.

This budget vote is dedicated to all those who sacrificed their lives to bring about the democratic South Africa that we all live in and enjoy. This is a dedication to our military veterans and in particular, former President Nelson Mandela as the first Commander in Chief of uMkhonto we Sizwe and the first Commander in Chief of the South African National Defence Force of the democratic dispensation of this country.

To the founding fathers of uMkhonto we Sizwe, such as Chief Albert Luthuli and O R Tambo, to the Rivonia trialists and in this case particularly Mr Andrew Mlangeni and Ahmed Kathrada. to the uMkhonto we Sizwe Commanders of the Luthuli Detachment, who fought two wars with the Rhodesian Forces, to Joe Modise, the first Minister of the South African National Defence Force, to Chris Hani, our Moses who lead us home, but did not live to see the promised land, to all our Military Veterans.

The vision of the Defence Force of our country has been inspired by such luminaries and thus we celebrate their unwavering vision of the creation of that which we are.

Ordinary people, accomplishing extraordinary things, creating an extraordinary country. South Africa owes a debt to her veterans that can never be repaid. Winston Churchill’s words about the Battle of Britain come to mind at this point, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

During my address to this House last year, I indicated that the whole of this year would be dedicated to our military veterans. We have and continue to live every day of the year in their honour and have sought to reflect our gratitude in what we do. May they know that in our hands the democracy we fought for is safe, our soldiers are disciplined and well taken care of. In our hands their dreams of a brighter future will be realised for generations to come.

Chairperson, today we come here to report to the people of South Africa on the progress we have made. It was in the detailing of this progress that even I myself was amazed at the ground we have covered.

The first commitment I made to the Defence Force on assumption of duty as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans was the creation of a new dispensation that would ensure a better life for our soldiers. Today I will report that the dispensation is in place. Today I will also report that the Defence Force is once again a disciplined force. Today there is no stain to the integrity of the Defence Force and that is how it should be, because they are the absolute and final guarantors of democracy.

As a Defence Force we run an organisation of people whose very uniform is an indicator of that which is the best in our society. I am very proud of my soldiers. When they erred I did not hesitate to put my foot down. When they do good, I am proud that South Africa has the kind of people we have in them.

At this point I would like to pay tribute to those who work hard to help me shape the Defence Force's image and professionalism and make them the pride of the country.

I welcome to Parliament General Solly Shoke, appointed as Chief of the South African National Defence Force by the Commander-in-Chief in May last year, as well as three new members of the Military Command, ie Lt-Gen V R Masondo, Chief of the South African Army, Lt-Gen T M Nkabinde, Chief of Human Resources and Lt-Gen J T Nkonyane, Chief of Logistics. Together with the rest of the Military Command they are doing a fantastic job!

I also welcome into our fold Dr Sam Gulube, the new Secretary for Defence who was appointed in December last year. And already sterling work has been done and in particular our audit projection is looking good. This is the new senior addition to the team that has worked tirelessly to give me the honour to say: "we serve beyond the call of duty".

We can also report that we now have a new institution in the Defence Force called the Military Ombud. Lt-Gen (ret) Temba Matanzima, a long serving career soldier who was sworn in as our first Military Ombud on Monday 14 March 2012 and will now become a civilian for the next seven years.

We are joined today by some of our young stars who have distinguished themselves as firsts in their own areas, charting a new path, bringing hope.

- Captain Nandi Zama is the first female aircraft Commander on the CASA 212 to be a display pilot. She is also the first female Commander to deploy operationally across our borders.
- Lieutenant Tessa Du Toit is the first female Navigator on Hawks. She is also the first female navigator on SAAF fighter aircraft.
- Lieutenant Tiro Tsotetsi is the first person in the history of the SA Air Force to be awarded all four floating trophies presented to top students at the last Wings Parade graduation for the SAAF's Basic Flying Training Course. Lt Tsotetsi comes from Vosloorus, a township in the East Rand Johannesburg.
- Major Catherine Labuschagne is the first female Gripen pilot.
- Commander Handsome Thamsanqa Matsane, is the first black Submarine Commander, from dry and arid Mpumalanga to Commander of the seas.

This is a sample of what we are in the Defence Force. Our future, our pride, the embodiment of our vision.

Which leads me to the main thrust of our address today. We will give you the vision of the Defence Force for our country. While the President in the State of the Nation explained the country's vision for economic growth through infrastructural development, we will provide you with our vision of the security infrastructure that will underpin defence of the country, support economic growth in national interest and protect the country against its severest silent threat: unemployed youth.

Our vision is to provide a competent, committed soldier, with unquestionable patriotism, a soldier whose goal is to serve and to serve with pride, beyond the call of duty. The soldier will be supported by a competent machinery that will make it possible for him to intervene and protect against all threats. Our vision is to raise the profile of the nobility of the role a soldier plays in our

society and to ensure that society understands and gives back in equal measure respect and gratitude for his work. The vision of a soldier who will take his place and play an important role in the economy of the country, to ensure that we can truly say we are creating a better and safer life for all.

Our vision is of a soldier who is contracted by the State, understanding his full responsibility to the Constitution that requires him to be disciplined. And a State that in return will commit itself to ensuring that the soldier is looked after, within the means available, in equal measure as we demand of him to give to the State. In recognition of the fact that a soldier is in a profession that takes away some of his rights, the State will commit itself to ensuring the soldier is protected and works in an environment that ensures his dignity, that ensures his growth and development and his total well-being is catered for. That his work is recognised and honoured, that the Defence Force becomes an employer of choice and prestige. A soldier who takes part in the development of cutting edge technology. A soldier who will serve with pride in Africa, raise our flag high, saving lives and creating a better continent.

We, as representatives of the State will in turn commit ourselves to giving back what we demand of the soldier. We have created a different dispensation to enable us to do that. We have now concluded our study of this new dispensation, having used the Interim National Defence Force Service Commission to benchmark against international best practice and based on our own experience and research work done in our own environment.

We have taken a number of decisions which are enabled by the new dispensation which come into effect in this and the next financial year.

First: Salaries of soldiers will be adjusted to recognise years of service. Essentially we are de-linking salaries from rank. Because of the sheer size of the Defence Force a great number of our soldiers are trapped in particular ranks with no prospect improvement of their salaries.

The Defence Force Service Commission is tasked to deal with this as a matter of priority. We expect it will take 8 months for the work to be done, but by the next financial year the salaries of the soldiers will reflect all of that, within budgetary limits. This will be a much needed breakthrough that soldiers have been burdened with. It is now within our sights. We are afloat.

Second: A soldier gives his entire time and life to the State. The State takes on the responsibility to look after him, as a unit of his family. The children of the soldiers are therefore our responsibility. When their mothers are deployed in the DRC or Sudan, we should ensure that the children's welfare is not compromised. To that effect therefore, all children between the ages of 3 months to five years will be taken care of by the DoD, within the existing framework of free primary school care criteria for deployed soldiers. Every base, every facility will have to provide Crèches or Pre-schools. Gone are the days when men were soldiers and women stayed at home to look after the children. We have a responsibility to free our women soldiers to pursue their careers in the same way as men have always been free to do that. The necessary policy to support this has already been drafted and approved. And therefore this takes effect this financial year.

Third: Every soldier will be able to convert his training into academic qualifications. We are restructuring our training programme to align it to SAQA's requirements so that the totality of courses undertaken by soldiers would qualify as commensurate tertiary qualifications.

A system to ensure that all officers are academically developed as graduates will commence

during the in-year. The professionalisation of the officer through a learning path of Military Professional Education and Training will result in all young officers being in possession of a Bachelor's degree by the time they are promoted to the rank level of a major by 2020. Subsequently Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme graduates will attain a Post-graduate Diploma or Honours Degree that pave the way for Executive National Security Programme graduates to obtain Masters Degrees. These degrees will be awarded through Institutions of Higher Education accredited by the Council of Higher Education.

This means that no soldier will leave the Defence Force, should they choose, unqualified. He will leave with a certificate that can advantage the soldier, should he seek an alternative career. It also means that no Colonel will be without a certificate and no General without a degree. The cumulative training will not have been in vain and the net effect for us will be a professional Defence Force.

Fourth: Provision of high quality, reliable and right-sized accommodation for our soldiers' accommodation is our singularly most urgent priority. It is for this reason that I have commissioned a Defence Estate Reforms Programme that will rationalise Defence estate and ensure that there is internal capability to plan, provide, operate and maintain all properties belonging to the Defence Force.

The final part of the implementation of the new dispensation will be the upgrading of living conditions of soldiers at all bases. We intend to partner with both the private and the public sector to ensure a practical and effective approach of implementing the above programme. On Tuesday 15 May 2012, I met with leaders of the property development and construction industry to share with them the vision of the Ministry with regards to the provision of accommodation for soldiers, and the industry showed strong willingness to participate in this vision.

However, I need to stress that it is the responsibility of every soldier to ensure that the environment where they stay, represents their sense of pride. Soldiers are required to keep their bases in spotless condition. These are now our responsibility and we no longer have the excuse of blaming the Department of Public Works for broken windows. The Officers Commanding would therefore have to structure the bases in such a way to ensure proper management of our properties and ensure that it is kept in conditions only soldiers can do.

Fifth: Soldiers sacrifice enough with the unique nature of military life and the financial hardship that sometimes accompanies their career. There are numerous soldiers in the SANDF who unknowingly sacrifice their financial future in addition to all the other sacrifices they make by not investing in an essential asset of home ownership.

A Housing Allowance Scheme will be tailor-made to suit the organisational uniqueness of the SANDF and a housing subsidy scheme will be investigated and implemented. A Housing Guarantee will be provided to all members applying to purchase property to the value of 20% of the Home loan. Currently members are negotiating interest rates with financial institutions for housing loans on an individual basis. Financial institutions are giving interest rates based to individual members based on their financial profile. We intend to negotiate a pact with financial institutions where we as the employer can stand part guarantee to negotiate more favourable rates with financial institutions in a collective manner.

No soldier should ever again retire without a house and the asset it provides.

Sixth: As I have indicated, we now have a Military Ombud, the first of its kind in our country and the product of a law initiated by Parliament.

It follows therefore that another advantage to our soldiers is that the grievance procedure now includes the Military Ombud. Monday marked a remarkable moment in the history of our Defence Force when our first Military Ombud, Lt-Gen (ret) Temba Matanzima was sworn in. In our efforts to improve the conditions of service of our soldiers and streamline processes within the South African National Defence Force, we have come to conclude that the Office of a Military Ombud would meet our objectives. Through existence of the Office of the Military Ombud, we hope to harmonise the confluence between military discipline and recourse avenues for complaints and grievances appeals in a manner that is consistent with our democratic enlightenment.

We want to ensure that we have a healthy system for the soldiers. Therefore all Officers Commanding, Chiefs of Services and Chiefs of Divisions have a responsibility that will be written into their annual performance agreements to ensure that the morale of soldiers is their responsibility. They are responsible for the well-being of the soldiers and answerable for that. The Officers Commanding is responsible for the entirety of what a soldier experiences on his base.

Brochure

All benefits that accrue to the soldiers through this new dispensation are contained in a brochure that is being prepared for distribution.

Responsibility of the soldier

We are working on all these benefits for soldiers, but I want to remind them that for every benefit there is a responsibility. I want to remind them that the compact that I enter into with them on behalf of government is that they will be leading lights of society. I demand from them a service to the State that will honour the lives of those who paid the ultimate price for freedom.

In this new arrangement we enter into an agreement that after your training, each soldier will take an oath as embodied already in the Code of Conduct. Ordinary workers don't take oaths, only soldiers do. By taking an oath we commit ourselves to being the calibre of soldier we have in the Defence Force.

Contribution to economic development

As I indicated earlier, we have a vision of a soldier who will take part in ensuring that he provides and supports the necessary infrastructure for economic development, already well enumerated by the President. As part of that contribution, the Chief of the SANDF has initiated an investigation on how the SANDF can appropriately support the developmental agenda of Government with particular focus on rural areas. The dispersion of defence facilities leans towards an ability to interface with rural communities. In this regard I have approved a concept whereby the SANDF will use its footprint in rural and semi-rural areas in terms of units, land and spending of resources in conjunction with local communities, rural towns, provincial governments and other stakeholders to augment and catalyse rural developmental initiatives by providing nodal points or hubs from which community engagement, stakeholder co-ordination and structural requirements toward creating viable sustainable local economies can take place.

To give effect to this the DoD will have to revise the current procurement policy. The idea is to embed units in their local economies and thereby further strengthening the linkage between elements of the Defence Force and the communities within which they reside. This will be to the benefit of small and micro businesses as well as small scale commercial and emerging farmers in rural areas. The SANDF involvement will be configured without adversely affecting their core business. C SANDF will appoint a project team to develop this concept further in order to operationalise it as soon as possible.

We will use our bases as a foot print of development wherever we are. A few years ago the President had been invited by President Yoweri Museveni to hand over a facility that was used by MK soldiers to the Ugandan Defence Force. The SANDF and Department of Public Works had upgraded the facility to provide a clinic and a school for the local community situated around the base. The President turned to me to indicate that this was a remarkable benefit for any community living around a base and hoped we were doing it too. I was too embarrassed to tell the truth that we were not doing it. Now it is at the centre of our development programme. Wherever we are, we will ensure the community benefits from our infrastructure, our schools, our clinics. We will empower them in training them for agriculture produce that we will purchase for our own use. We will upgrade our roads, opening up the rural areas to enjoy the benefits of development.

Maritime Security and its Importance for Economic Growth.

I indicated to you that our Maritime Security Strategy will remain a priority for some years.

South Africa's coastline spans 3 000 km, in 3 oceans, located on a major strategic shipping route. Almost 80% of the country's trade volume is by sea. We also have extensive off shore interests, namely islands, marine and offshore oil and gas resources. Our ports are visited by 12 000 ships per annum, carrying 200 million tons of freight (both imports and exports and R37 billion is spent per annum on maritime transport.

Our Department has recognised this threat against the notion of innocent passage and the freedom of the seas, and its concomitant effect on commercial trade, and therefore has been instrumental in the development and subsequent ratification of the SADC Maritime Security Strategy on the 9 August 2011 by the SADC Heads of State.

This is by far the most advanced Naval Strategy that this continent has been involved in. So comprehensive is our maritime security strategy that we have been able, within the shortest possible time, to respond to a request by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to assist in performing the shipping management functions of the DAFFS fleet of vessels with effect from 1st April 2012.

The economic spin-offs from our maritime strategy are amazing. They range from preserving the livelihood of our fishermen to lowering the costs of doing business through our ports, to the creation of a ship building industry in our country, to name but a few.

National Youth Service

In my 2010 budget statement I reminded Parliament about the long-standing policy directive to develop a National Youth Service which would provide support to our youth whose normal social, skills and competence development as well as the development of national pride, loyalty

and patriotism were disrupted by successive apartheid regimes.

Without going into the finer detail at this stage, I am pleased to announce my decision to provide leadership for the development of a National Youth Service as a legally constituted and regulated non-militaristic youth development service which will collaborate and cooperate with all public and private institutions committed to youth skills and competences development. I have also mandated the SANDF, primarily because of its national footprint, logistical and communication capabilities, to develop administrative capability to ensure the effective implementation of the National Youth Service.

The proposed National Youth Service is intended to play a key role in dealing with the consequences of youth unemployment and to the national goal of poverty eradication. The service will not offer training for military engagement, but will draw on the potential of military training to promote discipline, self-esteem, confidence and a sense of belonging to the national community.

Much of this concept of the National Youth Service is borrowed from the Tanzanian model, which has worked for Tanzania for the last 30 years. This is a bold step we are taking and I would like Honourable Members to consider this invitation.

We have currently embarked on the identification, upgrading and refurbishment of some of our training facilities. At the beginning of next year we will have completed our preparations and here comes the part I have been waiting for: We will take 20 000 unemployed youth and turn them into disciplined, empowered young people.

SANDF Reserve Force

We are progressing in transforming and revitalising the Reserve Force. At the end of the previous financial year, the total Reserve Force strength was 26 851 of which 15 316 were called-up during the year. This call-up constitutes a record since 1994. In the previous year (FY 10/11) only 12 300 Reserve Force members were utilised. Continued utilisation of Reserves in both external and internal operations is increasing and the Reserves are being called-up for Peace Support Operations (PSO), Border Protection, training camps as well as staff duties.

The University Reserve Training Programme (URTP) is currently being implemented by the Services at various tertiary institutions. The main purpose of the URTP is to select and train quality students with leadership potential with the objective of enhancing the professional skills of junior leaders in the SANDF for both the Reserves and the Regulars. The first group of 56 URTP students trained by the SA Army completed their Basic Military Training (BMT) in the Free State in January and proceeded to do Officers' Formative Training in April 2012. All the Services have successfully recruited students from the universities of Witwatersrand; Pretoria; Cape Town; Stellenbosch; Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology. These students will commence with basic military training next year.

Defence Review

We have now concluded a draft of the Defence Review. This has been the most extensive engagement that has ever been undertaken by the Minister of Defence in this country. The public interaction on the Defence Review will be concluded in August 2012, which will be followed by a 4 day retreat in September 2012 with all stakeholders to ensure that the process is as

collaborative as possible. I do not foresee many disagreements, because I want it owned by all stakeholders. Should there be any real contentious issues, I will consult on the matter and make a decision on the direction that we will take.

I believe some Honourable Members have been making lame threats that they will write their own Defence Reviews. Banish any such childish tantrums. The Defence Review is the Constitutional responsibility of the Minister of Defence.

The Budget

The current budget is made under a global economic environment that continues to be robust and uncertain, resulting in pressures being exerted on Defence budgets across the world. This requires that we continue to seek to achieve higher levels of efficiency in all our operations and more precise targeting towards the achievement of our key priorities. While this is the case, it is also important to emphasise that the Defence budget cannot afford to take further cuts thereby shrinking the proportion to GDP to levels lower than the current low levels of 1.2 % of GDP as this will impact negatively on our readiness. The discussions and proposals that are being made as society debate the Defence Review document should assist us in determining the direction we need to take and therefore the related resource allocations going forward.

The current budget allocation for the 2012/13 financial year is R37, 5bn up from last year's adjusted allocation. It is expected to grow to R39, 9bn in 2013/14 by 6.5% and reach R42332.1 in 2014/15 up by 6%. Changes to the baseline over the MTEF period include R749.2 million for borderline control, R23 million for the establishment of the Office of the Military Ombud and R600 million for the completion of the strategic defence procurement programme.

I need not state the obvious that every literate South African now knows that the budget falls far below the requirement that we wanted to cover all of our borders resulting in a need to prioritise key areas and develop strategies that will ensure we are able to deter and prevent illegal activities in these areas.

Progress on asset management audits

I have had the occasion to brief the Portfolio Committee on Defence on our Audit Outcomes. We expect the Auditor-General to release the full audit in June 2012 and have no intention of killing anyone (except maybe the Honourable Maynier). There will be no Defence blood on the floor. We have done exceptionally well on our Operation Clean Audit. Once we have declared ourselves out of the qualified delinquent status, which we know will be soon we'll enter into serious negotiations with National Treasury about the increase of the Defence budget. No Defence Force anywhere in the world, who has the responsibilities that we have, is as under funded as we are. We need to ensure that we are efficiently funded. Our value to the State in the defence of this country is the factor that should determine the size of our budget. In the past, governments' priorities determined the budget, now it is about the value of the investment to the State.

We have tirelessly spent the last three years to show that we use state resources responsibly.

Finally, as a sign of gratitude to my soldiers, it is my pleasure to announce the payment of a R2 000.00, non-pensionable and non-recurrent once-off appreciation allowance per member to deserving members of the Department of Defence, excluding those who fall in the category of

Senior Management Service and other categories based on a set of qualifying criteria, who contributed to the various successes that were achieved last year. This is a payment to convey my, the government and the country's gratitude for a job well done by officials of the Department of Defence. The payment will be made to the members by the end of the month.

I thank you

Conclusion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Interim National Defence Force Service Commission for the sterling work they have done since their inception in 2009. What started off as a short-term, interim appointment, lasted for almost 3 years. They took the shortest possible time to get to grips with the issue at hand and steered the ship while we ensure the necessary legislative measures are in place for the establishment of the National Defence Force Service Commission. Cabinet appointed the ten Commissioners of the National Defence Force Service Commission yesterday and it is anticipated that the Commission will commence with its responsibilities to advise me on the conditions of service of soldiers on 1 June 2012.

Another thank you has to go to the Nomination Panel headed by Mr Ralph Mgijima, the Defence Review Commission headed by Mr Roelf Meyer and Maj-Gen Roy Anderson for heading an internal Task Team that reprioritised the Department's budget and assisted us to manage it in such a way that we saved quite a bit. Thank you very much for giving your time to the South African National Defence Force.

I would also like to thank Lt-Gen Carlo Gagiano, who will be retiring as Chief of the Air Force at the end of September 2012. He has served with distinction, an officer and a gentleman in every sense of the word. A man of honour who, when things went wrong in the South African Air Force, knew that he would pay the ultimate price when he offered to resign last year and I refused to accept his resignation. I need to repeat, he is an officer and a gentleman. Thank you General. We hope you will accept to stay in the Defence family.

Our recent peace-keeping success in the DRC elections is only comparable with the success that the Defence Force achieved in 1994. Special medals will be handed to Lt-Gen D Mgwebi, Chief of Joint Operations, Maj-Gen W Nkonyeni and the rest of the soldiers for the outstanding work they did to ensure that elections took place in that country and civil war averted.

The Defence Review is before you. Exceptional in-depth research has been done, the rest is up to us all, South Africans have the opportunity to shape the future of our Defence Force.

Allow me to keep the best news for last. All of us have enough reason to be extremely proud of our men and women in uniform. They have outperformed themselves in many spheres, both locally and outside the borders of the country.

I thank you

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