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3rd Edition
2005



Imagine a woman who believes it is right
and good she is a woman

A woman who honours her experience
and tells her stories

Who refuses to carry the sins of others within her
body and within her life

Imagine a woman who believes she is good
A woman who trusts and respects herself, who
listens to her needs and desires,
and meets them with tenderness and grace

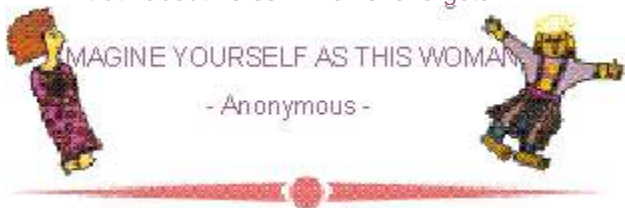
Imagine a woman who has acknowledged the
past's influences on the present
A woman who has walked through her past,
who has healed into the present

Imagine a woman who authors her own life. A
woman who exerts, initiates and moves on her
own behalf, who refuses to surrender except to
her truest self and to her wisest voice

Imagine a woman who names her own gods. A
woman who believes her body is enough, just as
it is, who celebrates her body and its rhythms and
cycles as an exquisite resource

Imagine a woman who honours the face of the
goddess in her changing face. A woman who
celebrates the accumulation of her years and
wisdom, who refuses to use precious energy
disguising the changes in her body and life

Imagine a woman who values the women in her
life. A woman who sits in circles
of women, who is reminded of the
truth about herself when she forgets



The front page is a tribute to our women in the SA Air Force and depicts the Top Warrant Officer Achiever, WO2 Emma Lekalakala, and Top Non-Commissioned Officer Achiever, F Sgt Karin Steyn, for the Year 2004. Surrounding them in a watermark imprint roundel are some of the women in the SA Air Force who contribute to making this a formidable force with competent and competitive uniformed and civilian women.

Cover design: Capt J.P. van Vuuren
Main Centre Picture: WO2 Christo Crous
Watermark Pictures: Photographers 5ASU



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- 03 - Chief of the Air Force message
- 04 - Dear **AD ASTRA** Reader
- Meet the Team
- 05 - The SA Air Force goes straight up
- 06 - Mountain flying in the heart of the Drakensberg
- 07 - **EXERCISE NEW HORIZON 7** hosts Sergeant Major of the Air Force
- 08 - 09 - The AgustaWestland A109LUH
- 10 - 11 - **SAAF** participation in recent shows and exhibitions
- Discipline is the aim - to drill is the game
- 12 - **AD ASTRA** visit to Denel Assembly Line
- Vital assistance from SAAF to SAHMS
- 13 - Siyandiza Young Falcons aviation camp
- 14 - The Siyandiza aviation open day
- 15 - Peace of Mind with Greenlight from Old Mutual
- 16 - 17 - 2005 South African Air Force Board poster
- 18 - 19 - Wife of the Chief of the SAAF
- Focused and efficient
- 20 - Passionate about ABET
- Booklet on Protocol guidelines
- 21 - Sport and recreation fanatic
- Away from home
- 22 - 23 - Technical women in the SAAF - striving for excellence
- 24 - Let the music play
- They have their eyes on you
- 25 - Air Force Reserve Volunteers that make a difference
- 26 - First woman as multi-engine flight instructor
- Women with an urge to fly
- 27 - Female pilots making a difference
- 28 - She checks your language!
- Leading by example
- 29 - A day at the greens with Old Mutual
- SAAF Fund News

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Chief of the Air Force

message



*For want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe the horse was lost;
For want of the horse the rider was lost;
For want of the rider the battle was lost;
For want of the battle the kingdom was lost;
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.*

Anonymous

In my message in the previous edition of *AD ASTRA* I mentioned that the SAAF of the future would be a vibrant, tactical Air Force capable of prompt and swift deployment on the African continent and beyond. To this I added that such deployment implied operating in joint forces and multinational teams, and in environments hostile to man and machine. It would require us to be flexible and would demand that we do more than is usually expected of us.

Implicit in this vision is a tacit assumption that, in such teams, our Air Force would naturally be the best.

The materialisation of this vision will, however, not come about of its own, but together we can make it happen and there exists no doubt in my mind that we have the collective potential to do so. To succeed, however, we shall need to accept certain principles as fundamental - two of these being implied in the quotation above. The first is that, however small the missing link may be, it nevertheless constitutes a disruptive break in the chain. The second is that the full contribution of each and every member of the Air Force, however humble his or her status, is essential for corporate success.

It is therefore incumbent on all members of the SAAF to give of their best with passion, commitment, discipline and competence, never for one moment losing sight of the truth that every contribution they make is important.

The first half of the year 2005 is already something of the past. Does our self-assessment of our achievements thus far this year completely satisfy us? Have we worked with commitment towards the strategic objectives of SAAF Vision 2012 and have we adopted and put into practice the set of core ethical values of the South African Air Force? Have we consistently accepted responsibility and taken pride in our job while regarding mediocrity as unacceptable?

If the answer to such questions is an unqualified YES, then our assumptions that our Air Force of the future will indeed be the best in the team and that we *are* in fact making progress towards Air Power Excellence may well be justified.

LET US JUST DO IT!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Gagliano'.

**(C. GAGIANO)
CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE: LIEUTENANT GENERAL**



“Have we worked with commitment towards the strategic objectives of SAAF Vision 2012 and have we adopted and put into practice the set of core ethical values of the South African Air Force?”

Dear Ad Astra reader

"Wathint 'abafazi wathint' imbokodo". When you strike a woman, you strike a rock, they say. I cannot but agree with this statement.

The month of August mainly focused on Women. By the time you read this edition, Women's Month will be something of the past, but the contributions by and upliftment of women continue. We felt that we would also like to contribute to our women in the SAAF and in this edition of *AD ASTRA* a contribution is made to some.

We know that women must have the same rights as men - although they were oppressed for many years and are still today ill-treated in some communities and cultures. After interviewing a few exemplary women, the conclusion can be reached that SAAF women will not allow any obstacle to stand in their way and will embrace any challenge with confidence and dignity.

Starting from page 18, you will find that women are unique in many ways - after all, we all have or had

mothers and they are the women that brought you and me into life. They are the ones that cared, nurtured and cherished us. So remember that women are special people - regardless of whether she is a spouse, a mother or a friend - love them and you will be rewarded! On page 5 the SAAF goes straight up at the IMAX and on page 6 the ALO III was deployed for the last time in the heart of the Drakensberg. On the center pages you will find the 2005 Air Force Board Poster and, as a loose insert, our promised poster, one of the SAAF's new aircraft - the AugustaWestland A109 Light Utility Helicopter.

Enjoy reading the *AD ASTRA* - it is your magazine! Until next time!

PERASPERA ADASTRA!

The men and women who bring you the final product which you are currently holding in your hand are without a doubt a *dedicated team*.

Maj James du Toit, the Editor, joined the SAAF on 1 January 1986 and worked in the finance division until 2001. For the last three years he has gained valuable experience while working as the editor of the *MILMED* magazine - for SAMHS. In April 2005 he joined the *AD ASTRA* team where he wishes to add value to this proud publication.

Capt J.P. van Vuuren is a Reserve Force member and has served in the SA Army for fourteen years. He has fifteen years' experience in graphic design, photography and the printing trade. He is responsible for the layout & design of the magazine. He also has nine years' web-design and development experience and currently serves as the SAAF Intranet/Internet Content Manager at Air Command.

WO2 Christo Crous is an Air Photographer with eighteen years' experience in photography and video production. He has been commissioned as photographer to the CAF Office and the *AD ASTRA* magazine.

CO Maryke Lynn studied journalism at RAU and joined the SAAF in 2005 as a journalist for the *AD ASTRA* magazine. She wants to expand her career and fulfill her dreams in the SAAF by becoming a helicopter pilot at 15 Squadron.

The Language Specialist, **Karen Muller**, is a Language Practitioner at the SAAF Headquarters and she is also an accredited interpreter. Before joining the SAAF she worked at the Department of

Meet the Team ad astra magazine

Arts and Culture. Her valued support and dedication to the magazine are highly commendable.

Trainee journalists **Thuli Dube** and **Tshidi Baloyi** are interns, studying at the Tshwane University of Technology and have been appointed to work at the magazine for their practical phase. These two ladies contribute immensely to the editorial success of the *AD ASTRA* magazine. 🌍



The Ad Astra Editorial Team - standing fltr: Capt J.P. van Vuuren (Graphic Design), Ms Tshidi Baloyi (Intern), WO2 Christo Crous (Photographer). Sitting fltr: Maj James du Toit (Editor), CO Maryke Lynn (Journalist), Ms Karen Muller (Language Specialist) and Ms Thuli Dube (Intern)
Photography by WO2 W. Koekemoer


The SA Air Force goes **straight up**

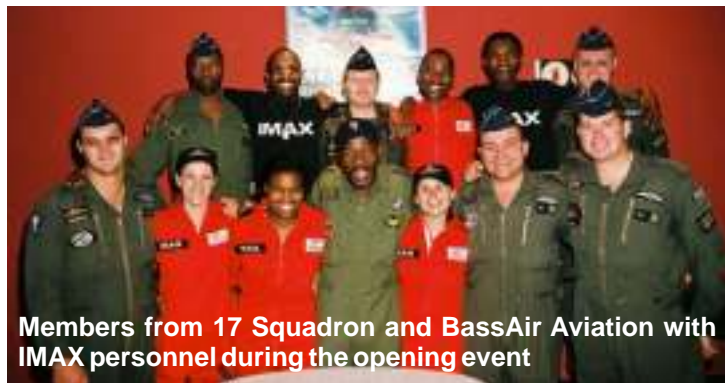
By Capt J.P. van Vuuren, *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photographs by WO2 Christo Crous

The SA Air Force saw itself going “straight up” as the giant screen IMAX Theatre at Menlyn Park Shopping and Entertainment Centre launched their latest IMAX experience, ***Straight Up! Helicopters in Action***, on the morning of 23 July 2005. The opening ten minutes saw a visual documentary of the SA Air Force and SA Police Service. The IMAX Theatre invited local organisations, the SAAF, the SAPS and BassAir Aviation, to participate in the launch event in order to showcase their skills and expertise to the Pretoria public.

An action-packed live display of helicopters in action commenced after the premiere screening of the film. 17 Squadron, based at Swartkop, in conjunction with the Mountain Club of South Africa, simulated a dramatic drop-line rescue from the roof of the 5-storey high IMAX Theatre. Immediately thereafter the SAPS Air Wing and Special Task Force thrilled the crowd with their action-packed anti-crime simulation.

Straight Up! Helicopters in Action was filmed over 18 months on three continents: North America, Europe and Africa. ***Straight Up! Helicopters in Action*** will give audiences a greater appreciation of the unique nature of vertical flight as they travel along with skilled helicopter crews in the film's series of challenging adventures. ***Straight Up! Helicopters in Action*** celebrates the critical, yet often unheralded, role helicopters play in a turbulent world.

Straight Up! Helicopters in Action is now open to the public. The Menlyn IMAX Theatre is located on the lower first floor, Menlyn Park Shopping and Entertainment Centre. Ticket Prices are R35 for adults and R25 for children, students, seniors and uniformed services. Theatre contact details: (012) 368 1186/8. 



Members from 17 Squadron and BassAir Aviation with IMAX personnel during the opening event



Mountain Flying in the heart of the Drakensberg

By Capt Jono Sterling & Lt Kyle Jonker, 17 Squadron
Photographs by WO2 Christo Crous

The 1st of August marked the arrival of the current Operational Conversion Course (OCC 01/2005) at Dragon Peaks Park for 17 Squadron's week-long deployment in the Drakensberg. Dragon Peaks Park is nestled in the heart of the central Drakensberg near Champagne Castle, in close proximity to the home of the famed Drakensberg Boys Choir.

An integral part of any helicopter pilot's training is mountain flying. Flying in high mountains combines the rigours of both arduous terrain and constantly changing weather, conditions exacerbated by sluggish aircraft responses because of the thinning air at high altitude. As such the SAAF sends all of their helicopter pilots to the Drakensberg for both initial and continuation training.



This splendid photograph by WO2 Christo Crous shows the three Alouette III helicopters in an aerial breakaway at the place known as "Gatberg"



Training conducted consists of slope and pinnacle landings, cargo sling and hoisting, as well as search-and-rescue techniques. Cooperative training was also conducted with members of the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA).

OCC 01/2005 consists of eight members, half of whom fly the ALO III, and the other half the BK 117. The fact that 2 Oryx'es were also present in the mountains during the deployment provided a unique opportunity to showcase some of the Air Force's operational potential, and also provided a platform for some spectacular photos.

On a sad note, the current OCC has been earmarked to be the last to use the ALO III, and as such this deployment marked the last time that the much-loved aircraft was to deploy to the mountains. In recognition of this somewhat solemn occasion, a semi-formal dinner was held to commemorate the outstanding service that this aircraft has rendered to the SAAF during a career spanning 40 years. The guest of honour was Brig Gen Paine, who drove to the Drakensberg to share with the group his experiences on past and currently operated machines. He also shared some thoughts regarding the bright future ahead of the SAAF and the new hardware of which it is to take delivery in the near future. 🌐



Alouette III and BK117 helicopters in flight with the beautiful and scenic Drakensberg mountains in the background

sergeant major of the air force

By WO1 Johan du Preez, Sergeant-Major of the Air Force
Photographs by WO1 Nick Havenga

During the recent Force Preparation Exercise, New Horizon 7, conducted by Directorate Command and Control and its Force Structure elements, I was afforded an opportunity to visit the members who were deployed over a vast area in the Northern Cape region. Travelling by road over a three-day period, accompanied by Command and Control Group Warrant Officer, WO1 Nick Havenga, I started my visit at the "Tent Camp" at Vastrap.



The camp site at Vastrap

It was encouraging and heart warming to experience the high morale and good spirits of all the members staying in the tents, living off "rat-packs" and conducting their respective duties 24 hours round the clock. The neatness of the camp and the discipline of the members are evidence of the members' commitment to striving towards Air Power Excellence.



At the repeater site near Pearson's Hunt



Not only was my visit a very informative and enlightening experience which I thoroughly enjoyed, but the fact that our younger members have the knowledge and skills to operate very sophisticated systems and have the ability to make clear the modus operandi is heart warming.

The perseverance of the members and their ability to take equipment weighing mega tons and place it in areas almost impossible to reach for optimal utilisation is really commendable.

To penetrate the "Rigtersveld" with a 4X4 is daunting enough, yet the members were able and capable after a few hours of hard work and focused effort to place the "Umlindi" radar and associated equipment on this dune.

The favorable reception and support given by the farmers and local inhabitants to members deployed outside the "TAB" and associated sites in support of the exercise to insure stability of communication links are encouraging. Some members were deployed for a period of two weeks on their own at one of the "repeater sites" near Pearson's Hunt. The sympathetic local inhabitants ensured that these members received liberal food supplies.



Cpl Ganda explains the system to WO1 du Preez

"I extend my congratulations to all members that successfully participated in Ex New Horizon 7. Well done and thank you for affording me the opportunity to visit you - WO1 Johan du Preez." 🌐

The Agusta Westland A109 light utility helicopter

"With excellent performances in a huge variety of operating environments, and being the best selling light-twin helicopter in the world, this aircraft offered the SAAF a true force multiplier with regard to helicopter and associated military and humanitarian operations."

**Information supplied by Denel and AgustaWestland
Compiled by Capt J.P. van Vuuren - AD ASTRA magazine**



The small and agile helicopter, known to most simply as the Alouette, and which has been fondly referred to at times as the "draadkar", has for decades been synonymous with the SA Air Force fleet of helicopters. Multi-tasked and used for battlefield support, counter-insurgency and many other capabilities, this admirable helicopter has touched many hearts and minds, and this not only within the SAAF family. However, modernisation of the SAAF's helicopter fleet has always been an unavoidable reality if the SAAF is to take up its rightful place as a leading force, and the SAAF has always prided itself on its front-line technology.

It is therefore no wonder that deciding on a suitable replacement, which was inevitable in our modern times, was a strenuous and highly demanding task which saw the decision made in favour of the new AgustaWestland A109 Light Utility Helicopter (LUH). The AgustaWestland/South African partnership was established in 1999 and Cabinet approved the purchase of thirty Agusta A109 helicopters. An agreement with Denel saw a multiple-phase programme to manufacture the complete A109LUH airframe in South Africa, with systems installed both locally and abroad. With excellent performances in a huge variety of operating environments, and being the best selling light-twin helicopter in the world, this aircraft offered the SAAF a true force multiplier with regard to helicopter and associated military and humanitarian operations.

The AgustaWestland A109LUH was mainly developed to be a light twin-engine helicopter in the 3 000 kg class, which, with the addition of specific equipment, gives the SAAF the ability to select different operational configurations. African conditions hinder most flights and missions in a

specific and sometimes challenging way, but locally manufactured systems and SAAF-specific equipment will ensure that the A109LUH will retain an on-location determined capability in order to overcome this unique environment's natural obstacles. Furthermore, the A109LUH offers the battlefield commander and the helicopter crews that fly it combat superiority and flexibility. When these aspects are combined with the A109LUH's ballistic tolerances, safety features and crashworthiness, the combination is unbeatable.

So what else makes this A109LUH special? There has been no sparing of modern technology, with the A109LUH boasting a titanium main rotor hub with composite grips and blades running on elastomeric bearings, which means a reduction in weight and maintenance. Ease of maintenance and strength are not only crucial, but go hand in hand with the needs of any air force operating in terrains like that of South Africa, which is mostly rough and rugged.

Hot and high conditions require that the A109LUH has to have capabilities to operate constantly and efficiently in mountainous areas like the Drakensberg and other similarly demanding areas. The twin engines are new generation Turbomeca Arrius 2K2 engines, which incorporate automatic engine control (FADEC). This powerful system enhances performance levels, providing the A109LUH with an unprecedented capability in this regard. The luxury of a second engine is very important, as for many years difficult mountain operations were carried out in single-engine helicopters. The SAAF has long been praised for its mountain flying capabilities and the A109LUH has enhanced safety and widened the scope of possibilities in this rugged environment. The twin-engine reliability is assured by a fully separated fuel



The cockpit and avionics are state-of-the-art and as modern as the newest helicopters in the world



The AgustaWestland A109 Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) will replace the Alouette helicopter

Photograph by WO1 Danie de Bruin, 5 ASU



system, dual hydraulic boost system and redundant lubrication and cooling systems for main transmission and engines. The tail rotor is not only very efficient, but also provides high quality handling, particularly during high density altitude conditions. African theatres of operation have always required "wheeled" helicopters for rough bush or mountain landings. The A109LUH is equipped with a wheeled landing gear, which offers safety for unprepared surfaces and mountain terrain landings and take-offs, but beyond that can allow higher take-off weights owing to the possibility of running take-offs and landings. This wheel-type landing gear is also provided with an air oil absorber for each leg for increased crashworthiness.

The A109LUH lends itself to high operational flexibility and easy reconfiguration of differing roles and the compartment can also be used to house additional fuel cells during transport configuration requirements. The functional cabin layout and fuselage provisions makes the A109LUH perfect for humanitarian aid and as a troop and general carrier. The cockpit and avionics are state-of-the-art and as modern as the newest helicopters in the world. The avionics are capable of fulfilling modern military operational requirements under all conditions. The integrated Mission Equipment Package (MEP) includes a day/night and IFR package for single or dual pilot operations with a 4-axis digital autopilot (AFCS).

The glass cockpit was made by utilising three interchangeable 6x8 inch liquid crystal multifunction displays (MFD), allowing for enhanced flight and mission management capabilities. This is a massive improvement on the Alouette, which was

restricted to fair weather operations. Situational awareness and mission accomplishment are enhanced through the sharing of mission information and video sources via two MFDs in order to allow better crew coordination in these facets.

Stand-alone or integrated mission equipment packages include a complete suite of Communication, Navigation and Identification equipment. The suites can also accommodate a full Electronic Warfare package for EW operations. As many helicopter operations make use of Night Vision Goggles (NVG) for night operations, the A109LUH has also been fitted, in terms of its instrument panel, with interior and exterior lighting to be able to accommodate 3rd generation NVGs.

The A109LUH design is fully optimised for cost, performance, maintainability and reliability. These aspects placed it within the financial reach of the SAAF. However, machinery is only as good as the human element that operates it. SAAF ground crews and aircrews are amongst the most capable in the world and, as such, they will blend immediately with the requirements stipulated by the operational needs of this new addition to the helicopter line. For many years to come we will witness the sleek and fast Agusta A109LUH in our South African skies. Undoubtedly it will not have to do much to earn respect, given the profile it already has. The A109LUH will ensure the territorial sovereignty of our nation and it will fulfill its duties in saving lives and will assist effectively in humanitarian roles. 🌐

"Ease of maintenance and strength are not only crucial, but go hand in hand with the needs of any air force operating in terrain like that of South Africa, which is mostly rough and rugged."



By Thuli Dube, Journalist, *AD ASTRA* magazine
 Photographs with the consent of Frances Maher

The Margate Air Show took place on 18 June 2005, where the BK 117 (helicopter), the Oryx from 15 Sqn Air Force Base Durban formed part of this show. Other SAAF planes that were flying were the C185-sky shout from 44 Sqn, AFB Waterkloof, a C208 from 41 Sqn, AFB Waterkloof and the C47 TP from 35 Sqn, AFB Ysterplaat. It was the first time that the Astra landed at Margate. There were approximately 10 000 people at the

Show. The Margate Air Show happens annually and the Air Force hopes to be part of it next year again.

At the Aerobatic Training Camp an unfortunate accident happened. Glenn Dell, the world aerobatic champion flew at a low level over the airfield and made a "Mayday" call. He crashed into a sugar plantation two miles directly west of the airfield. According to Lt Col Wayne Smith, most of the Air Force members saw the accident. There was no civilian helicopter available, so the SAAF BK 117 was tasked to do the rescue. "Compliments to all Air Force members who were involved from the time of the "Mayday call," said Lt Col Smith.

The BK 117 with the South African Military Health Service paramedics arrived at the scene three minutes later. The pilot suffered spinal injuries and was taken to Saint Augustine hospital in Durban. He is said to be recovering well.

At the Air Show various civilians were also involved, namely the Sasol Tigers, Pharos Aviation team, Albatros Team and many more. The SA Air Force members were complimented on stealing the show. 🌐

SAAF participation in recent air shows and exhibitions

Compiled by Lt Col F.J.J. Schoombee
 Photographs by FSgt Henk Honiball

On 25 June 2005 the Air Force once again participated in the legendary Bush Pilot Air Show in Tzaneen, in the Limpopo Province.

The SAAF participated with an Oryx helicopter, an Impala Mk II, the Golden Eagles parachute team and a Cheetah C painted in the National Flag colours. Brain Emmenis ensured that every one present took note of the SAAF aircraft and aircrew that participated in the Air Show programme.

The Siyandiza team from Pretoria, Brig Gen Wallis, Col Ramaremsa and Lt Col Frans Schoombee, organised a very successful aviation awareness programme with 11 selected schools from the local area. Lt Col Schoombee presented basic information about the DOD and of the SAAF in particular. Maj Mokwebu and her team from AFB Makhado put up a very interesting exhibition for the young students to expose them to some of the aviation-related careers within the Air Force.

The flying club can only be commended for the



excellent way in which the SAAF is received and hosted every year. Special thanks must go to Mr Lukas Groenewald, the owner of the local newspaper, the Letaba Herald, for his special contribution towards the success of this event and for all the positive media coverage that the SAAF receives annually. 🌐



.....continued from page 10

Photographs by Frances Maher

Discipline is the aim to drill is the game

In April 2005 WO1 S.J. du Preez, the Sergeant Major of the Air Force, published a bulletin whereby all SAAF uniformed members were instructed to participate on a monthly basis in a compulsory drill period. A practical drill programme covering all ceremonial drill aspects as a continuous training drill programme will be conducted.

Even though members were sceptical at first, with regard to these drill periods, they soon got used to the idea and diligently reported for the period. Members realised that it was not just blood, sweat and tears on the parade ground, but that there is some humour in it too, especially when Generals act as markers and the rest of the Directorate follows. Chuckles rise when members realise that Generals are human too, and they also make mistakes. It does help knowing that these drill sessions are not only for the lower ranks, and it does wonders for the esprit de corps of any group to know that when you go marching, your senior officers are right there with you. As an end goal, the Sergeant Major of the Air

Information supplied by WO1 Dup du Preez, Sergeant-Major of the Air Force

Force believes that at SANDF joint parades the SAAF will stand out, not only in appearance, but also in ceremonial correctness. We will be prompt during all drill actions. This will indicate that we are a ready and prepared force; we will walk tall and proud. The showing of the Air Force will make the Chief of the Air Force proud. Discipline is the aim, to drill is the game! 🌐



AD ASTRA visit to agusta assembly line

By CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist AD ASTRA magazine

On 12 August 2005 the AD ASTRA editorial team had the privilege of visiting the impressive Agusta Assembly Line at Denel Aviation in Kempton Park. During this visit we had the additional benefit of meeting Mr Fabrizio Turconi, the Italian programme manager for the new generation, fully digital avionic Agusta A109 Light Utility Helicopter.

Getting a first hand glimpse and briefing on all the processes and different stages in the development of such a complex system brings one to the realisation of how substantial the transfer of all the

knowledge and tools of trade to South Africa really is.

“Since 2000, when our collaboration with South Africa started, a lot of training, technological transfers and licensing has occurred. This is important for the future production of aircraft and spare parts in South Africa in view of the fact that all parts, with the exception of the main gear box, will be manufactured by Denel Aviation,” Mr Turconi said.

The hospitality we received was outstanding and highly commendable, and we as the AD ASTRA team wish to sincerely thank Denel for hosting us in such a wonderful manner. 🌐



At the Agusta Assembly Line at Denel Aviation in Kempton Park and appearing from left to right are: Mr Laurence Engelbrecht (Denel Final Assembly Co-Ordinator), Mr Sam Basch (Denel Group Manager Marketing Communications), Mr Pietro Putelli (Agusta Representative at Denel Aviation), Mr Fabrizio Turconi, (Programme Manager A109LUH), Mr Cyril Moss (Denel Programme Manager A109LUH), Mr Dawie Uys (Denel Manufacturing Project Manager), Mr Grant Sampson (Denel Executive Manager, Programmes), Maj James du Toit (Editor, AD ASTRA magazine), CO Maryke Lynn (Journalist, AD ASTRA magazine) and Capt J.P. van Vuuren (Layout and Design, ADASTRA magazine)

private generic skills competition

Vital Assistance from SAAF to SAMHS

Compiled by Capt J.P. van Vuuren, AD ASTRA magazine
Photograph by FSgt Gert Oosthuizen, 5 ASU

Two men are seen scuttling about the Oryx helicopter that landed moments ago. Insignia on their flight suits confirm that FSgt Badenhorst and FSgt Beukes are proud members of 19 Squadron, based at AFB Hoedspruit. These two flight engineers were seen constantly checking and examining the helicopter to ensure its serviceability and safety. The commander of the Oryx, Capt Meiring, and his co-pilot, Lt Schmidt, were always well prepared to ferry teams from one point to another. The helicopter team of 19 Squadron, under command of Capt Meiring, played a vital role in assisting with the daily “chopper drills.”

The fifth annual Generic Skills Competition at the Combat Training Centre in Lohatla, Northern Cape, was presented over the period 8 to 13 May 2005

and saw the South African Military Health Service conducting a competition that is aimed at promoting and encouraging excellence in SAMHS units. The competition included several marches, and a total of twenty-three teams were evaluated during these marches on Level 3 First Aid, Map Work, Navigation, Signals Skills, Driving and Maintenance, Observation and R5 rifle shooting. 19 Squadron lived up to its motto of *Fama ex factis* (*Fame through deeds*) in the past and this competition period saw nothing less. We salute you!



The crew members of 19 Squadron who assisted the SAMHS at Lohatla, are FSgt Badenhorst, FSgt Beukes, Capt Meiring and Lt Schmidt

Siyandiza Young Falcons aviation camp



Information supplied by Brig Gen James Wallis Compiled by Tshidi Baloyi, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine

The South African Air Force Siyandiza Programme was established to promote aviation awareness amongst the previously disadvantaged youth of South Africa. The programme offers aviation awareness and youth development programmes and informs the youth of career options that are available to them in the SAAF.

Between 26 June and 6 July over 100 students, from Grades 10 and 11, went on camp to do a Primary Course in aviation. This camp was held on behalf of the Air Force Bases in Pretoria. The pupils chosen applied to become Young Falcons and they had to have Maths, Science and English as subjects, which they had to have excelled in. Their principals and teachers also recommended them. The pupils chosen for this camp had to be representative of the demographics of South Africa.

The day before the camp, Brig Gen Wallis, Maj Gen Ngema and Col Lennox welcomed them to the Air Force and briefed them on what the camp was about. Dennis Sibiya, a Young Falcon from Nelspruit, said he would like to be an Air Space Controller. "It would be a privilege to serve my country," he said. Another Young Falcon, Jabu Ndlovu, also from Nelspruit, who wanted to be a pilot, said, "It has always been my childhood dream."

The previous Young Falcons were asked to come and share their experience with the new Young Falcons. These Young Falcons were divided into different bases. The flight leaders of each of the squadrons accompanied the Young Falcons on all their activities to provide leadership to the youngsters, which broadened the pupils' perspective of aviation-related matters.

During the ten days the Young Falcons were exposed to many different aspects of aviation and military life to prepare them for a possible career in the SA Air Force. Some of the aspects covered were navigation, meteorology, principles of flight, aircraft recognition, aircraft instrumentation, propulsion systems and how radio and radar work. They also received instruction in virtual aviation and radiotelephony, which went extremely well.

It was not all classroom work though, as they played a different sport every day. A basic knowledge of drill was also covered. Judging by their performance at their passing out parade on Wednesday 6 July 2005, one would not believe that these young people had had so few drill periods. When these Young Falcons marched onto the parade ground on the final day their proud parents and friends broke into applause. Most of the youngsters were already asking when the next camp was taking place as they had enjoyed themselves so much. These young people have been transferred to units in the Tshwane area for further development and exposure to the SA Air Force. 🌐



Over a hundred students, from Grades 10 and 11, went on camp to do a Primary Course in aviation



When the Young Falcons marched onto the parade ground on their final day, proud parents and friends broke into applause

The Siyandiza aviation open day

By Thuli Dube, Journalist AD ASTRA magazine
Photographs by FSgt Flip Olivier

The Siyandiza Aviation Programme open day took place on 16 June 2005 at Swartkop. The event was opened with a spectacular skydiving show from the SAAF Golden Eagles.

The aim of the open day was to raise the youths' interest in aviation, encouraging them to become pilots, engineers or to join the South African Air Force. It was also made into a family day event, where children from different high schools and primary schools were invited with their families. Children and other guests were given an opportunity to fly in a C47. Most of the children were excited about flying, but others were not so keen. "I couldn't breathe when the plane started taking off, I felt my chest getting tight," said Jabulani, a student from Soweto.

Siyandiza has a two-fold programme for the youth of



Swartkop hosted the event where the youth spent a day of education and entertainment

South Africa. The first programme is that of creating awareness among school learners all over the country. The awareness programme involves visits to schools to inform the learners of a possible career in aviation, with the emphasis on the South African Air Force. The second programme is the Young Falcons development initiative. Those learners in Grades 10 and 11 that are interested in a possible career in aviation are selected, firstly based on their interest in aviation and, secondly, based on their performance at school in maths and science, to attend the Young Falcons development programme. At the event, as part of the awareness initiative, stalls were put up with display material, pamphlets, etc. The Young Falcons were given an opportunity to share with others what they have learned from the

Siyandiza Aviation Programme. The Young Falcons wore their orange overalls, which they are required to wear at every air display or function where Siyandiza is involved. "I joined Siyandiza last year while I was doing Grade 11. I joined because I'm interested in engineering," said a member of the Young Falcons.

The event was fun filled; all who attended the open day seemed to be happy and enjoyed themselves. Besides enjoying the nice food and flying opportunities, the children learned a lot, and it seems most of them may join if they do well in maths and science. 🌐



Children and various other guests were given a unique opportunity to fly in a C47

PEACE OF MIND WITH GREENLIGHT FROM OLD MUTUAL



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Wife of the Chief of the SAAF leonie gagiano

*"After interviewing the charming wife of the Chief of the South African Air Force, Mrs Leonie Gagiano, at her beautiful home, I looked up the words **dedicated, loyal, elegant, self-determined** and **stylish**, and found that these are all apt descriptions of this enchanting woman."*

Article & Photographs by CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist AD ASTRA magazine

She is easy to talk to and is very open about her life and role at the Chief's side. During our interview she answered some questions about herself:

1. Could you please tell us about yourself? I was born in Pretoria and grew up in Polokwane (Pietersburg) where I matriculated at the Commercial High School. I obtained a diploma in secretarial and PA work, as well as in what was known in those days as Office Management. After I got married, I joined the Toastmasters Club of Pretoria, because we realised that public speaking would be a requirement for me if I were to support my husband in his career.

Regarding my family, I can say that my father and mother live in Pretoria and that both are 76 years old and very healthy. They have been married for almost 55 years! I have one brother who lives in Australia with his family, and two sisters who live in Pretoria.

I work as a PA for an attorney who specialises in Aviation Law. From an early stage my career was directly linked to my husband's because of the numerous transfers. Doing this job was, however, an interesting experience, because people look up to you as the wife of a squadron leader or the officer commanding of an air force base. I learnt a lot about people and how to assist them. Later on I became headmistress of the playschool in Langebaanweg. Now, this was a career change of note but, looking back, I can say it provided me with much pleasure and lots of experience.

2. How did you and General Gagiano meet each other and for how long have you been married?

We met at dancing classes in Polokwane many moons ago, when the General was still a second lieutenant. We have been married for 31 years.

3. What does it mean to be the wife of the Chief of the South African Air Force and how do you experience it? How did the General's appointment change your life and what is the job description of the wife of the Chief of the Air Force?

It is a great honour, firstly. We worked very hard for many years to be where we are today. Now that he is in the position I see him much less, but we turn every minute that we do have together into quality time, especially over weekends. Regarding my job description as wife of the CAF, I can say that I do not have one. In fact, I now have a career of my own that stimulates me and allows me to grow. Furthermore, as wife of the CAF, the sky is the limit and I have a lot to do. Anybody in this position should be

able to recognise opportunities to improve the lives of Air Force members.

4. What is the best experience that you've had so far as the wife of the Chief of the Air Force?

The best experience I've had was visiting Brazil with my husband. Brazil is very important in terms of south-south initiatives and cooperation between India, Brazil and South Africa. I enjoyed Brazil very much and the highlights were a visit to the Amazon River and their Air Force Academy - the latter specifically because it is very similar to Langebaanweg.

5. What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

My hopes and dreams for the future include advancing the SAAF's benevolent work by identifying further needy causes in which the SAAF could become involved. When my husband retires we will still be quite young and, I hope, in good health, and he will definitely consider a second career. After that we will both retire, play golf, travel (which we both enjoy) and maybe still build a house at Yzerfontein on the West Coast. Then, last but not least, we would like to visit Antarctica.

6. What is your biggest ideal in life?

I have a few. One of my ideals, as well as one of my husband's, was to design and build this house. This we have done and we moved in on March 24, 2005. My other ideal in life is that, when we retire one day, we will be financially strong enough to maintain our current lifestyle and standard of living.

7. What is a woman's role in the Air Force?

If what you mean is what is the role of a woman whose husband is in the Air Force, it is a fact that Air Force life is not the easiest thing to cope with because some members have to be away from home for long periods. The wives of these men should be supportive of their husbands to keep the relationship strong. They should also make contact with the husband's unit to be supported when in need. They should try to understand the situation and be positive.

8. What would your message to other Air Force wives be?

My advice for women is to be independent! Women should remain in the job market because earning one's own salary gives one independence and a sense of self-worth. It enables one to buy what one wants without having to ask for it. However, maintaining a balance between one's work and one's home life is the key to

.....continued on page 19

success.

I see myself as a workaholic and therefore think that it is very important to reward myself from time to time... because we Air Force wives are wonderful creatures, we can cope with everything, no matter how difficult it is. I believe that women are able to multitask because they can watch TV, reprimand the children or the dog, drink a glass of wine, talk to their husbands and still follow a TV programme while knitting or doing needlework. So, you ladies out there, enjoy life, reward yourselves and, above all, be supportive of your husbands and the South African Air Force, especially when life is not easy for your husbands. With the support you give your husbands, the South African Air Force can only go from strength to strength. Develop yourselves and grow with your husbands. Just look at the achievements of women in South Africa. There is no doubt that the contribution we make is very important to our country and to the SAAF.

9. Would you advise unmarried women to marry men in the Air Force?

Definitely yes, we've had a wonderful time so far.

10. Do you have a role model? Why have you chosen him/her?

My first role model is my mother because she is such a loving, loyal, positive and admirable Christian to whom I can look up at all times. My second role model is Madiba. I have the greatest respect for him and I think he should be a role model for all of us.

11. What is your motto?

My motto is, above all, to be positive in all I do and to give

only of my best at all times.

12. What do you do in your spare time? What hobbies, sports, etc, do you practise?

In our spare time (which is very limited) we do a lot of walking, gardening, talking and working (on office work).

13. Do you have any fears such as acrophobia or claustrophobia, etc?

I have two fears in life: the one is bungee jumping and the other is bats.

14. What good or bad character traits do you have?

My good character trait is that I am a go-getter, and my bad character trait is that I cannot teach people things because I am very impatient.

With her faith, inner strength, very supportive family and a positive attitude, Mrs Gagiano recently stepped out as the conqueror in her battle against cancer. After this tribulation she views their new home and her husband's appointment as Chief as an opportunity for a new beginning. Taken as a whole, Mrs Gagiano describes herself as truly blessed and she is determined to seize every opportunity that comes her way.



She is easy to talk to and is very open about her life and role at the Chief's side

Brigadier General Tersia Jacobs focused and efficient

By CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photograph by Sgt Brendan Stewart, Photographer 5 ASU

The year 2005 marks Brigadier General Tersia Jacobs' twenty-seventh year in the Air Force and she is still enjoying herself thoroughly.

As in the case of so many other women today, the combined pressures and expectations of managing a family and a very demanding job were felt, but in this case it certainly did not take its toll. Her husband, who is also in the Air Force, and her fourteen-year-old son, Steward, are the two most important factors in her life. Over the years General Jacobs taught herself how to combine being a successful wife, mother and director all at once and in the process learned the value of what can be achieved in only five minutes.

On 1 December 2002 she became a Brigadier General. According to her the first two years were "wild, fast and very furious!", but she enjoyed it because she had the experience and knowledge to help her cope with a demanding job. Her appointment as the first woman in a Director Logistics position in the SANDF early this year went by unnoticed, which she took as a huge compliment since it proved to her that her colleagues trusted her abilities as a professional.

As Director Logistics it is Gen Jacobs' duty to formulate

the direction of the South African Air Force through the development of technical philosophies, policies, directives and plans concerning the allocation of resources. In this highly responsible post it is her intention to bring the planners - "the Generals up there" - and the executors of the job together.

In future General Jacobs would like to see more women in the Air Force taking on added responsibilities and, in so doing, becoming empowered. She strongly believes that the best way to learn is through pressure to perform, and that respect is not something that comes with your uniform, but is earned through discipline, dedication and a great deal of hard work.



never too late to learn

By Tshidi Baloyi, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine



Maj Linda Perry is a Human Resources Manager for ABET

Maj Linda Perry, a Human Resources Manager for Adult Basic Education Training (ABET), thinks it is important for people who live in the townships and are loyal to the SANDF to further their education.

ABET is an educational programme, run by the SAAF and UNISA, to help illiterate people further their education. This programme teaches

people life and family orientation skills. They also receive information on HIV/AIDS, personal budgeting and health.

The aim is for the students to take this information back to their families and their communities. The students are given a chance to start their own small, medium or micro enterprises. "The idea behind this programme is to encourage and enable the students to start their own businesses and be able to support themselves and their families," said Maj Perry.

UNISA was chosen to run this programme because of all the research it has done on adult teaching. ABET offers the students four levels of learning, and the fourth level is considered to be equal to Grade 9. Within these four levels the students are taught about running their own businesses, agriculture, technology, travel and tourism. "We empower the students to empower themselves, because education fights poverty," said the Major.



ABET is an educational programme, run by the SAAF and UNISA, to help illiterate people to further their education

The first ABET Learning Centre was started in May 2004 at Air Force Base Waterkloof. Today the SAAF has nine ABET centres around South Africa. The ABET programme has 35 tutors and coordinators, and it caters for 600 students.

At every level the students receive a certificate issued by UNISA. After completing the fourth level, the students can go into Further Education Training (FET), where they can obtain diplomas and degrees. People who want to enrol in this programme do not have to be a certain age. They are assessed and placed by UNISA. They can start at a level at which they feel comfortable and they do not have to pay for the programme. "Many of them, I feel, will succeed. They can bring back a lot of information to their children and communities and they will learn the value of education," added the Major. 🌐

Booklet on Protocol Guidelines

By CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine

Appointment as a Warrant Officer in the South African Air Force is often the highlight of a lifelong career. Such an appointment requires from a member to fulfil an important role in the continuation of traditions. NCOs are gradually exposed in preparation for their role as WOs, but too often we forget about the role of the spouse.

At a suggestion by the former Chief of the South African Air Force, Lt Gen Roelf Beukes, that there was a need for certain information pertaining to protocol for WOs' spouses, the wife of the Sergeant

Major of the Air Force, Mrs Elize du Preez, took it upon herself and WOs Marié Koekemoer and Olma Smit to compile a user-friendly booklet on Protocol Guidelines for the benefit of all Warrant Officers' spouses.

They were commended for the quality of their work and their dedication to completing the task. The booklet is a quick reference guide and designed to fit in an evening bag or pocket. It will be distributed to all the WOs' spouses before the end of September 2005. 🌐

Colonel Lizette Potgieter

sport and recreation fanatic

By Thuli Dube, Journalist, AD ASTRA magazine
Photograph by WO2 Christo Crous

48-year-old Col Lizette Potgieter started playing golf at the age of 13 and joined the SAAF 26 years ago. After she matriculated from Voortrekkerhoogte Hoërskool she went to the Ladies Army College in George. Thereafter she went to the University of Pretoria for four years to study physical education. She then joined the SAAF because she had a preference for discipline, loved the uniform and wanted to serve her country.



Col Lizette Potgieter

Col Potgieter is the SSO Physical Training in Sport and Recreation of the SAAF and has sixteen sport officers reporting to her. She says: "I feel like their mother." Col Potgieter has to ensure that they all perform their duties and is responsible for unit championships; she manages tournaments and is also the sport career manager.

Her motto in life is - *do everything to the best of your ability*. It is Col Potgieter's opinion that people should contribute to the community, try to fit in and make a positive contribution in life. Her message to other members in the SAAF is: "Stay positive, get into shape and set a good example when you are in uniform."

It is therefore not surprising that in the SAAF Golf Club Col Potgieter has won four tournaments, and in one and a half years her handicap decreased from 36 to 5. 🌐

Lieutenant Colonel Portia More away from home

By Tshidi Baloyi, Journalist, AD ASTRA magazine
Photograph by WO2 Christo Crous



Lt Col Portia More left for Kenya in January 2005 to do a Joint Senior Staff Course at the Defence Staff College. She believes that once she has completed this course she will have much to give back to the SAAF. To enhance her knowledge in Foreign Policy, Armed Conflict and Peace Keeping, she is studying for her Diploma in Strategic Studies on Foreign Relations at the University of Nairobi. She says studying in Kenya is the opportunity of a lifetime. She also says that being away from home is hard; not only does she miss her family, she is also trying hard to adapt to the Kenyan lifestyle.

Being the only woman in her class of 48 students gives her a better perspective and a sense of appreciation for the efforts put in place and progress made with regard to gender representivity in the SANDF. She perceives the Kenyan Air Force as being very different to the South African Air Force in the manner in which women are treated, empowered and recognised. Prior to her attendance of the Kenyan Joint Senior Staff Course she worked as Personal Staff Officer to the Chief of the Air Force. Her message to women: "Work hard, do not listen to what the crowd says, concentrate on yourself." These words aptly describe her. We wish Lt Col More all the best in her studies. 🌐

Technical Women in the SAAF striving for excellence

By Thuli Dube, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photographs by WO2 Christo Crous

Being a technician has always been presumed to be a man's job, but things have changed. Women are also starting to venture into the field of technicians, as proven by the technical women in the South African Air Force.

Maj Christina "Nono" Make is the first female black technical officer appointed in the Air Force. She completed her Officer Orientation Course in 1997 and was later detached to the Verification Team Office as Log Officer. She studied at a Technical College to do her N6 in Electrical Engineering, which she completed in 2001, and was later transferred to the Joint Aerospace Project Office (JAPO) at Armscor in 2002.

When she first started working she was faced with a level of stereotypical prejudice because it was considered that being a technician was a man's job. People think that to be a technician you have to be a "tom boy". Advice from Maj Make is: "Be yourself, be good at what you do and nothing else will matter." Some of her duties include providing technical support to the overseas-based Hawk and Gripen offices and monitoring that the aircraft specifications meet the contractual requirements. Maj Make has been nominated to attend the Joint Senior Command and Staff Course next year and is currently busy with her distance phase.



Lt Marlette Cornelissen is an Industrial Engineer at 5 ASU

As an Industrial Engineer she is tasked with projects that allow her to go out and meet people. "I love my job, because I

Lt Marlette Cornelissen is an Industrial Engineer at 5 ASU, AFB Waterkloof. She is involved in systems and processes in the 5 ASU management sphere. Her job is to come up with improved solutions for sub-systems on aircraft designs. She is looking forward to working on the new incoming aircraft, as they will present her with many new opportunities.

As an Industrial



Maj Christina "Nono" Make is the first female black technical officer appointed in the SA Air Force

don't do the same thing over and over again," she said. When she first started at the SAAF in 1999 she did her Basic Military Training and Officers Forming courses in her first year. From there she went to the University of Pretoria to study engineering. She completed her studies in 2003 and she is currently studying for her honours.

Sgt Johanna Mosime works at 28 Squadron, AFB Waterkloof, as an Aircraft Mechanic. She did her training in Engine and Air Frame. She first wanted to be a motor mechanic, but then chose to be an Aircraft Mechanic. To get to where she is she



Sgt Johanna Mosime works at 28 Squadron, AFB Waterkloof as an Aircraft Mechanic

had to do her basic military training in the SAAF and study at the Centurion College. As part of her training she did Aircraft maintenance, Hanger phase and Squadron phase for a period of three months. She moved from being a hairdresser and cosmetologist to being an Aircraft Mechanic. "Women, and people in general, must not be stereotyped by people saying that being a mechanic is a man's job; any one can do it," she said.



Lt Nadia Scapin is a Cheetah system engineer at D Combat Systems, based at SAAF HQ Unit

Management in Technology at the University of Pretoria. A while back she was involved in designing a glider together with Capt K.G. Gopaul for Siyandiza, but the project was cancelled. "I enjoy working with aircraft; it is a unique opportunity and I am getting a lot of experience," she said.

Another woman who is still under training with the Air Force is **Sgt Veronica Mosiane**. She is an Apprentice Draughtperson at 5 ASU, based at AFB Waterkloof, and will be receiving her qualifications next year in May. When she qualifies she will be the first black female and youngest member to be trained in the Air Force in this mustering. She creates aeronautical, mechanical, electrical and ground-support drawings of all aircraft modifications that need to be done. The requirement for this job is to have an N3 in Mechanical



Sgt Veronica Mosiane. She is an Apprentice Draughtperson at 5ASU

Lt Nadia Scapin is a Cheetah system engineer at D Combat Systems, based at SAAF HQ Unit. She deals with all engineering-related queries and tasks on the Cheetah aircraft. In 1997 she joined the Air Force and then did a four-year course studying for her Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Stellenbosch. At the moment she is busy studying for her Honours in

Engineering and Technical drawing. She is qualified in a Mustering and has an N5 in Mechanical Engineering, which she obtained at the Centurion College. She is busy completing her Diploma at Pretoria West Technical College. Sgt Mosiane also qualified as a Sheet Metal Artisan in 2003.

She feels that "most women in this field worry about what their male colleagues will think or say about them. People will always talk, and this talking must not change your will to succeed in your trade." In her spare time she makes sketches, portraits and does fabric painting. She also manufactures bags and sells them.

WO2 Jolanda Cilliers is an MSC Technician at SAAF HQ Unit. Her responsibilities and tasks are to prepare and supply aviation-related operational and maintenance job cards. She is also responsible for the assurance of data integrity and updating and validating computerised technical management information.

Previously she worked in a radar workshop, where she was introduced to technical work. At the moment she is training for Operational Support and Information System (OSIS) and has already done four courses in this field. In 2002 she was nominated as one of the top ten Warrant Officers in the SAAF.

All the above-mentioned women are sufficient proof that being a technician is not only a man's job. They have proven that the workload is handled equally well, or better, when done by a woman.



WO2 Jolanda Cilliers is an MSC Technician at SAAF HQ Unit



"Women, and people in general, must not be stereotyped, by people saying that being a mechanic is a man's job; any one can do it."

let the music play

By Thuli Dube, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photographs by WO2 Christo Crous

Many performers have proven to be crowd pleasers and will continue to do so for years to come. Here in the South African Air Force we have our very own crowd pleaser - the SAAF Band. Among its 35 members, the SAAF Band has four spectacular female musicians. We had the opportunity to interview two of the four women in the band. Cpl Michelle Jordaan is one of these women and she is the



Cpl Michelle Jordaan

youngest member in the band at 23. Her instrument is the saxophone. She learnt how to play when she was in Grade 8 at Hoërskool Drie Riviere in Vereeniging.

She says she has always wanted to be in the Air Force. "I liked the discipline, it interested me. The music was also a factor." Since she joined the band in 2001 she has had the opportunity to travel with the Air Force for Military Parades and has also performed in concerts. The person who got her

interested in music was her grandfather, who also played the saxophone.

Another female member of the band is FSgt Adele Potgieter. Not only is she a wife and a mother of two, but she also plays the flute and the piccolo. She learnt how to play by taking private lessons. She did her practical exams at the Royal School of Music and also did her Internal Military music exams at the SAAF Band.



FSgt Adele Potgieter

FSgt Potgieter has been a musician for 20 years. She studied for her BA Degree in Arts for three years and worked as a publisher. She joined the South African Police Service Band in 2001. After being in the SAPS Band she worked privately until she joined the SAAF Band in 2004. "I prefer to play in a band because I like the variety of music," she said. These women do add a feminine touch to the SAAF Band, but all members contribute to making this an extraordinary band.

"This is the place to be: we love our jobs and we love the Air Force," agreed three of the passionate female photographers of 5 Air Servicing Unit's (ASU) Photo Technical Services. The mission of this unit is to provide efficient engineering and logistic support and electronic warfare operation services to enhance air power excellence.

Sgt Nicky Claase, Sgt Marinda Spang and Cpl René Naicker are stationed at 5 ASU, Air Force Base Waterkloof, from where they are sent into action, armed with their cameras. Their job includes aerial reconnaissance, as well as the provision of images of all aircraft accidents, special functions and any other Air Force event that they are tasked to cover.

From behind their cameras they get the opportunity to see the world through different eyes and experience flying like only a handful of people ever do. They also have the privilege of being in the front row, photographing celebrities like former President Nelson Mandela and foreign dignitaries on visits to South Africa.

In a traditionally men's workplace like the Air Force, it is sometimes easier said than done to really find your place in the organisation, but these women

They have their eyes on you

By CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist *Ad Astra* magazine
Photograph by FSgt André Bester

proved that they have what it takes. They believe that women should be eager to pick up that spanner, get their hands greasy and demonstrate for all to see that they deserve to be here.



Cpl René Naicker, Sgt Marinda Spang and Sgt Nicky Claase

Air Force Reserve Volunteers that make a difference



Information supplied by Lt Col Brigitte Botes, Air Force HQ Unit
Compiled by CO Maryke Lynn, Journalist AD ASTRA magazine
Photo by Sgt Marinda Spang, Photographer, 5 ASU

Support the
Reserve Force, the SANDF's
Expansion Capability

From as early as the year 1912 reservists have played a significant role in South Africa and this idea caught fire once again with the establishment of the Directorate Air Force Reserve in 2001. The focus of the DAFR is to enhance the regular force capability, as well as to identify and recruit persons with unique expertise or skills needed by the South African Air Force. Thus the Air Force Reserves consist of people from all trades and walks of life.

The management of a human resource database for the Reserve Force that is updated regularly is the responsibility and main task of Lt Col Brigitte Botes, the Directorate's SO1

HR. Lt Col Botes joined the South African Reserve Force after 26 years of service in the South African Military Health Service.

WO2 Marietta "Tannie" Humphries possesses a broad spectrum of civilian and military experience. Shortly after joining the DOD in 1988 as the first female Warrant Officer reservist, she was called up to assist with the Reserve Force administration in the Directorate Human Resource Services. She was also the first female reservist to receive the John Card Medal for 10 years' efficient service in the Reserve Force.

After resigning from the Army Reserve, **Cpl Onica Mphahlele** was officially the first black woman to work in the Directorate Air Force Reserve in 2003. She assisted Lt Col Botes with administrative and

personnel affairs and established a registry within the Directorate. Cpl Mphahlele also became the informal mentor to orientate new members coming into the Air Force Reserve.


Sgt Pilot Majekane, better known as "Pilot of the Air Force", loves the Air Force and its military aircraft that account for her name. During her Basic Military Training, Pilot mastered ceremonial drill so well that she was utilised when VIP guests visited Air Command. Most of her Reserve Force utilisation has been within the Directorate Air Force Reserve and the Directorate Education Training and Development.



Reserve Force Women, fltr standing: Cpl Onica Mphahlele, Cpl Monica Baloyi, WO2 Marietta Humphries, Cpl (now CO) Precious Mazibuko and Sgt Pilot Majekane. Front: Lt Col Brigitte Botes

In 2003 **CO**

Precious Mazibuko joined the Reserves to fulfill a requirement for obtaining her National Diploma in Human Resource Management, in which she has an insatiable interest. At a selection board she was identified as one of three Reserve Force candidates to attend a 2-week Officers Orientation course in July.

Cpl Monica Baloyi applied to join the Air Force Reserve while she was still active in the Army Reserve Force. In the Human Resource office where she is currently being utilised, she strives for 100% client satisfaction at least 90% of the time. Monica also nurtures the idea of flying aircraft one day. These Reserve Force women are truly an asset to the Air Force and their services are greatly appreciated by all. 

Captain Igneet Bedford first woman as multi-engine flight instructor



By Thuli Dube, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photograph by F Sgt Fabian de Booij, Photographer, 5 ASU

"A multi-flight instructor trains students to convert from single-engine flight pilot to a multi-engine flight pilot."

conversion, she then qualified as a multi-engine flight instructor.

She is the first qualified female multi-engine flight instructor since the Second World War within the SAAF's full-time force component. In addition to her achievement she is also the first female multi-engine transport instructor on an operational SAAF squadron. It takes two years to complete a multi-flight instructor's course. A multi-flight instructor trains students to convert from a single-engine flight pilot to a multi-engine flight pilot. Flying a Casa 212 or a Hercules C130, which are multi-engine planes, is a totally different skill from flying a C208, which is a single-engine plane.

In her spare time she loves playing the piano, and also enjoys reading and cooking. She also believes that in life people must do their best. Her message to other Air Force members is to "take pride in what you do." She has proven that doing your best in life gets you to where you want to be eventually. 🌐

Capt Igneet Bedford, the first female multi-engine flight instructor, joined the Air Force in January 1997. "It has always been a dream of mine to become a pilot," she said. Born on 18 April 1977, she matriculated from Hoërskool Garsfontein and got her qualifications as a pilot in April 1999.

Recently Capt Bedford was one of three members chosen to take a course to become multi-engine flight instructors. In her career Capt Bedford flew a C208 at 41 Squadron until December 2001. She then went to CFS Langebaanweg in September 2002 where she qualified as an instructor. She was transferred to 44 Squadron in October 2004, where, after her Casa 212

Women with an urge to fly

By Hanrie Greebe Photograph by Capt J.P. van Vuuren

Two ambitious young women have recently completed Officers Formative Training on their way to becoming pilots in the South African Air Force (SAAF). They have bubbling energy and enthusiasm with an unexpected perspective on what it means to be female in the SAAF.

CO M.K.L. Ilunga and CO V.J. van Schalkwyk completed their Basic Military Training in November 2004, thereafter spending three months at the SAAF Museum - weeding, putting up posters and being useful in general before they started with the Officers course. Both of them think that the highlight of the course was the long march around Loskop Dam.

CO Ilunga identifies the benefits of the course as: "Group cooperation, the individual's self-discipline and service before self." CO Van Schalkwyk summarises the challenges as follows: "Perseverance is one thing you develop, and this was good, because after seven weeks we started to go out on weekends. Time management is also important, because with all the inspections and studying for tests you don't sleep much!"

What do they think of women in uniform? Neither think that being a female should be "a big deal". CO Ilunga observes that gentlemen are still gallant and want to treat women with courtesy "although we can do anything a man can do." She says that strengthwise there are some men who are not as strong as she is, but the same goes for women.

CO Van Schalkwyk's discipline is reflected in her love for the blue uniform: "I feel my dignity and rights are protected in uniform." Success in the SAAF will depend upon attitude and CO Van Schalkwyk feels that is something one chooses. Both women concur that excellence is not about gender differences, but doing your best as part of a team.

CO Van Schalkwyk is fascinated by helicopters and looks forward to flying the Agusta helicopter, while CO Ilunga can't wait to fly a Boeing 747. She says: "I want to fly the biggest aircraft in the SAAF!" 🌐



CO V.J. van Schalkwyk and CO M.K.L. Ilunga

Female pilots making a difference



The Training Officer, Maj Surita Volland, and Second-In-Command, Maj Amalie von Maltitz, at 111 Squadron

On Saturday 6 August the pilots of 111 Squadron once again, as part of their annual outreach programme, organised “flips” in a Citation for terminally sick children. Since 1994 over 102 children have had the opportunity of flying with this squadron during their training exercises. African Blessing and Chubb sponsored this hour-long flight over the Hartbeespoort Dam, Pretoria and Johannesburg, which the children thoroughly enjoyed.

History was made in 1976 when an all-women squadron was established in the SAAF. Designated as 114 Squadron, it was based at the former AFB Swartkop. For various reasons the strength of the squadron could not be maintained and it was disbanded in 1990. The remaining members were transferred to 104 and 111 Squadrons and today there are still some of the original members serving as pilots in these squadrons. Two of these pilots are Maj Amalie von Maltitz, the 2 I/C, and the training officer, Maj Surita Volland at 111 Squadron.


Maj Amalie von Maltitz had her first flying lesson in December of 1967. She learned to fly because her father wanted to get to their farms in Botswana and the Free State more speedily. 'We even had to scrape open a landing strip in the middle of our mealie field and I had to come in very low over telephone lines to make a safe landing,' she said. Maj Von Maltitz started her career in the Air Force in 1976 and currently has more than 2 000 military flying hours behind her name. She will be 65 years old in September, which means that she will retire and give her full attention to her sculpturing.

Maj Surita Volland started flying in 1982 at Wonderboom Airport and started flying for the Air Force in 1989. Currently she is also a Captain on

domestic flights for SA Express Airways where she flies the De Havilland Dash 8. She has a total of 6 700 flying hours. Maj Volland is a Gr-II multi-engine instructor, and flies the C207 and Citation for the Squadron. She has also been the training officer at 111 Squadron for the past 5 years.

The 22-year-old CO Aileen Swan flies for 104 Squadron. She has now been flying for three years, but only joined the Air Force in June 2004. Currently she is the Logistics Officer at 104 Squadron, but she will be remustered to pilot soon. She joined the Air Force because of its high standard of flying training. “They keep you current with night hours, instrument flying hours, as well as dangerous goods and cockpit resource management courses,” she said.

CO Swan has just finished a two week officers orientation course at the Air Force College and is looking forward to a bright career in the Air Force Reserves.

As the Air Force Reserve Squadron is not a training unit, prospective candidates are required to have a minimum of 500 hours' flying time, hold a valid instrument rating and either own or have access to a suitable aircraft before they will be considered for appointment. 



CO Aileen Swan is flying for 104 Squadron

Karen Muller she checks your language!

By Thuli Dube, Journalist *AD ASTRA* magazine
Photograph by WO2 Christo Crous



Ms Karen Muller, language Practitioner at DMARP

Karen Julienne Muller is a civilian who has been working in the South African Air Force since 2002. Sometimes it is difficult for civilians to adjust to working in the South African National Defence Force, but it did not take her too long to adjust to her environment. As time goes by some civilians do grow into understanding the environment and surroundings, but for others it takes a little longer.

She is a Language Practitioner in the

Directorate Military Aviation Regulations and Policy (DMARP) in the SAAF Headquarters, and is also an accredited interpreter. Before joining the SAAF she worked in the Department of Arts and Culture. She completed her matric at Loreto Convent in 1974, whereafter she went to the University of Pretoria to study for a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Biochemistry. She has two daughters who are both studying at the University of Pretoria.

Her work in DMARP entails editing policy documents and work from the Chief of the Air Force, amongst other things. "I try not to take work home to be able to spend time with my family, and cats." At the beginning of this year she was approached by the editorial team of *Ad Astra* to help with the language editing of articles and she agreed to help out. She says that editing can be tricky, but she tries to keep the journalists' style as is. Editing is sometimes difficult because of the military technical Language and all the different aircraft and ranks, but Brig Gen Page is there to check technical data of aircraft. In the end it is all worthwhile to hold the *AD ASTRA* in your hands and you can say that as an individual you have contributed to making it a success.



Sergeant Cozet Boniface leading by example

Article & photo by Hanrie Greebe, for *AD ASTRA* magazine

Sgt Cozet Boniface was pleasantly surprised when she received promotion to the rank of Sergeant on 1 May 2005. Her superiors recognised a consistent determination to improve her own skills and ardently supported Sgt Boniface when she remustered from Security to Personnel.

Sgt Boniface considers herself privileged to be a member of the SAAF, especially to be a woman in uniform. She says: "If I have to make a comparison with civvy street, our environment is more disciplined and we have more advantages. In the SAAF you get to go to places and obtain much more experience than women out there."

Cozet received her opportunity to work in uniform when she joined the SAAF in 1993 as a security guard at 505 Sqn, AFB Ysterplaat. Cozet wanted to be skilled in the entire Security field. However, she was denied specialisation as a dog handler or VIP protector, for in those years being a female and a Corporal was still a handicap. She recalls: "If you have been in a certain mustering for 10 years or more, you know the work very well. I wanted to learn about other areas within the SAAF and I liked the Personnel environment. In 2003 I applied for remustering and in 2004 Personnel became my new mustering."

Sgt Boniface thinks fondly of her years at 505 Sqn: "At 505 Sqn I developed and grew up. However, in Personnel I deal much more with people and have more opportunities to attend courses and implement

innovative ideas."

Her superiors in the Personnel Section at AFB Ysterplaat, Maj Heini Taljaard and WO2 JJ Pagel, hold Sgt Boniface in high esteem. WO2 JJ Pagel used to work alone and when he heard that Sgt Boniface was coming to Personnel he campaigned to make her his assistant. WO2 Pagel says: "When she started here the Personnel environment was new to her. Now she handles all the legal work. When she receives an instruction she carries it out immediately. She is not afraid to ask questions or to implement innovative ideas."

According to WO2 Pagel, Sgt Boniface has extensive knowledge for someone who has been in the Personnel environment for such a short period. WO2 Pagel also says that Sgt Boniface has a fine sense of humour. To the delight of her colleagues she imitates other people and through her witty remarks she defuses stressful situations. "We work the stress through with laughter," says WO2 Pagel. Sgt Boniface's advice: "If you realise what you can become in life, then you have to grab opportunities as they come along. Otherwise you will get nowhere. It is worth it to fight for what you want to achieve in life!"



Sgt Boniface



A mild winter's day with an occasional light breeze saw Team Ad Astra on the bowling greens at Wingate Country Club in Pretoria on 27 June 2005. The venue was a corporate bowls day hosted in splendour and comfort by our main sponsor and donor, Old Mutual. The second team of Old Mutual (guys in green) came up against the Ad Astra team (guys and girls in blue). Capt J.P. van Vuuren, WO2 C. Crouse and journalists Thuli Dube and Tshidi Baloyi challenged their opponents on a dry and fast winter bowling green.

Team Ad Astra played a tight and sometimes nail-biting game to end on a seven-all draw before the final game. "Lady Luck", however, smiled upon the guys in green and they won the challenge by one wood (one point). All participants acknowledged the fact that the bowls day was extremely enjoyable and agreed that an annual event of this nature would be welcomed. Team Ad Astra might not have won, but great spirit prevailed!

The Regional General Manager for Old Mutual, Mr Rheinard Meyer, received and welcomed the participating teams at an informal prizegiving function and the winners were announced as: 1st, SA Police Services; 2nd, SA Air Force; and 3rd, Old Mutual Team II.

A Day at the Greens with old mutual



Team Ad Astra on the bowling greens at Wingate Country Club in Pretoria. Fltr: Capt J.P. van Vuuren, Ms Thuli Dube, Maj J.V. du Toit, Ms Tshidi Baloyi and WO2 C. Crouse

The Ad Astra magazine would like to thank Old Mutual for a wonderful and entertaining afternoon and we acknowledge the support and friendship given by the "Guys and Girls in Green" and for their being a supportive partner in our future endeavours. 🌍



Information supplied by Brig Gen (Ret) Con van Heyningen

Dear SAAF Fund Members

The Fund has been very fortunate in acquiring 36 weeks' holiday accommodation at Kruger Park Lodge, 1 km from Hazyview. All the weeks owned by the Fund for 2005 have been reserved by members of the Fund. Very positive feedback was received from members who have already been to KPL and, in most cases, these members are already waiting to get their names down for next year. At the annual RCI awards function Kruger Park Lodge again received RCI Gold Crown Status and was rated the best managed resort during 2004/5. The friendly

staff are committed to constantly improving their service and ensuring that your needs are catered for in the most efficient manner possible.

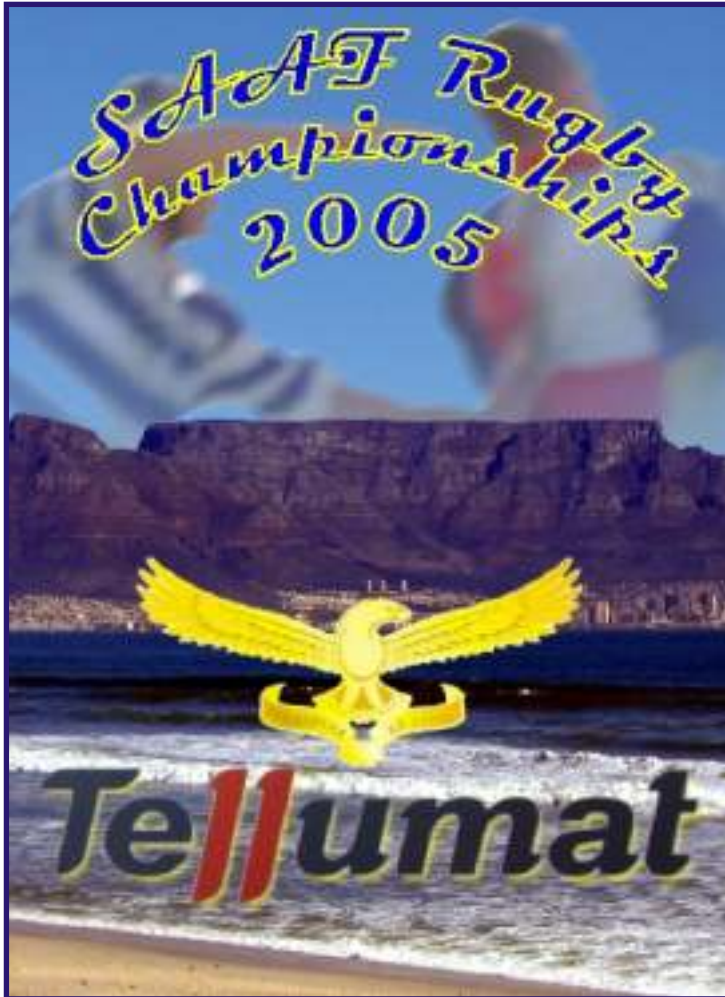
Hippos, impala, white-tailed mongoose and vervet monkeys can be seen on a regular basis. The resident hippos on the property can be viewed from a safe Hippo Hide. However, guests are warned that at night the hippos may roam freely on the property.

Visitors can join in nature walks and view the different types of trees and the abundance of bird life. There are benches placed along the nature walk for your convenience and comfort. Recreational facilities such as tennis, fishing, putt-putt, outdoor chess, kiddies playground and a 9-hole Gary Player golf course are available on site.

A short drive from your luxury thatched cottage will bring you to many scenic attractions in the area, including the Blyde River Canyon, God's Window, Pilgrim's Rest and the Kruger National Park only 15 minutes drive away.

KPL has become a very popular holiday venue for members of the SAAF Fund. For those members out there that have not tasted the experience of staying at KPL, hurry up! Don't delay - make your reservation now.

Contact details: Tel : 012 312 2281, Fax : 012 325 6078, E-mail : affund@absamail.co.za 🌍



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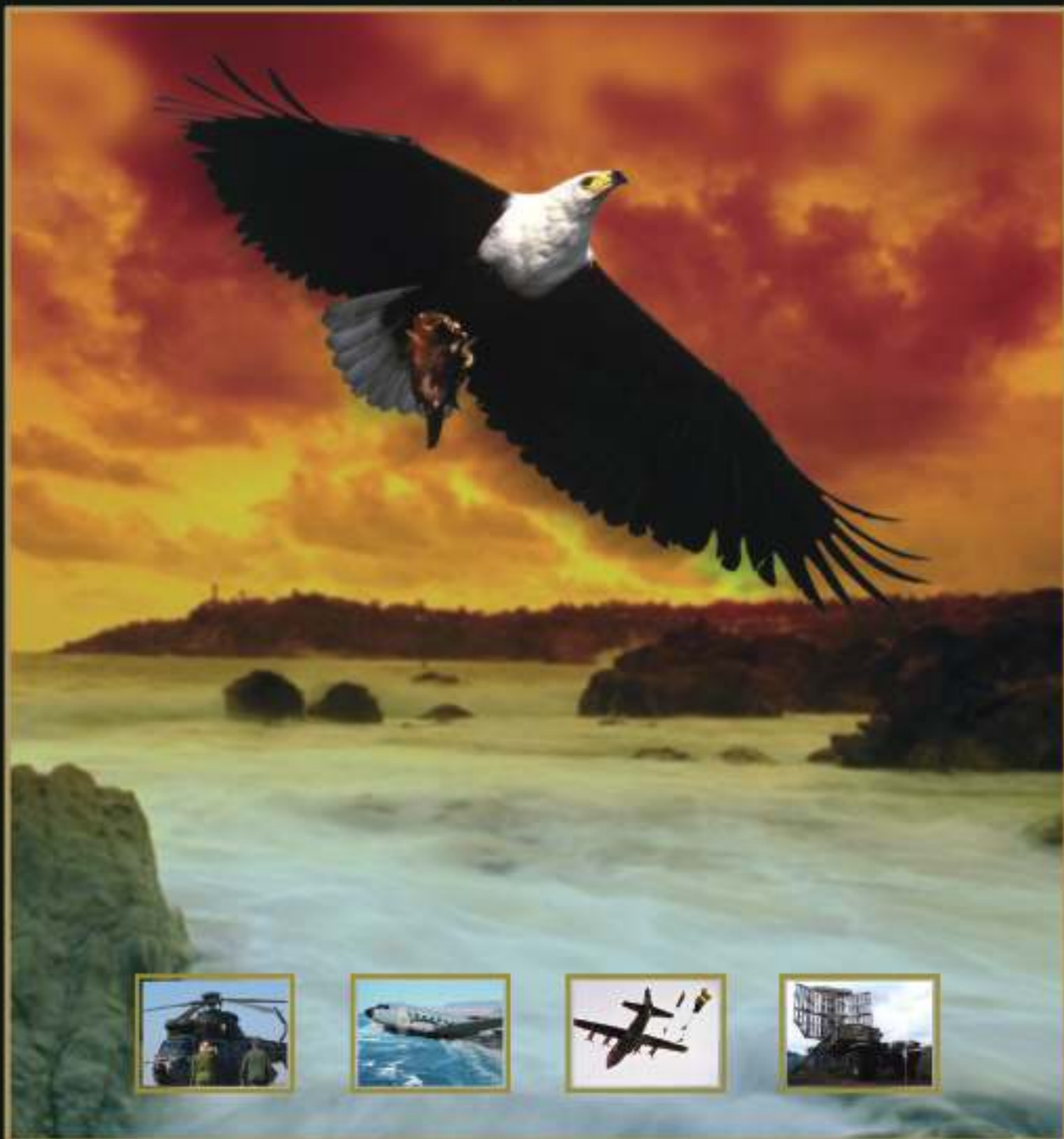
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Designed by Capt J.P. van Vuuren



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