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*Official magazine of the South African Air Force  
Incorporating the Nyala Aviation Safety Magazine*

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Front page: SAAF Agusta A109 helicopter demonstrating its medical casevac capabilities

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Private Bag X199  
Pretoria  
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SA Air Force is [www.af.mil.za](http://www.af.mil.za)  
Department of Defence is [www.dod.mil.za](http://www.dod.mil.za)

Tel: +2712 312 2317  
Fax: +2712 312 2801/-3  
E-mail: [adastra@telkomsa.net](mailto:adastra@telkomsa.net)  
Lotus Notes: [DcssAdAstraEd/AirComd/SAAF/DOD](http://DcssAdAstraEd/AirComd/SAAF/DOD)

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#### Controlling Authorities:

Lt Gen C. Gagiano	Chief of the Air Force
Maj Gen F.Z. Msimang	Chief Dir Air Policy and Plans

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Ms H. Greebe (Denel AMG)	Layout



# Chief of the Air Force

## Message



Ever since Aristotle defined man as a “rational animal”, psychologists have attempted to illustrate that men have a capacity for thinking about themselves and their environment, which the other animals have not managed to achieve. I may be excused, therefore, for my speculation in the previous edition of *Ad Astra* as to whether SAAF 90 and the concomitant, long awaited year of the Soccer World Cup in our country, would indeed be a busy one.

Almost a third of the year has passed already and I am sure that for most of us there has been little opportunity to do more than merely keep pace with the demands made on us. Soccer World Cup 2010 has just ended, and while the air defence resources might possibly be stretched to the limit of their capabilities as they monitored and protected the ten soccer stadiums involved in the event, I am nevertheless convinced that the Air Force have not been found wanting.

It is encouraging to recall the many important lessons learnt from the Shield projects and from Operation Kgwele during the forerunners of the World Cup, viz the FIFA Confederations Cup and the FIFA Soccer Draw. Not the least of these lessons was that the Gripen, with its sophisticated radar system and the highly lethal IRIS-T self-defence missile, together with the Hawk, have brought about a substantial enhancement of the combat capability of the South African Air Force. Furthermore, these exercises also introduced a new era of co-operation between the Air Force, ATNS, CAA and the SAPS, and therefore, to all those who were associated in any way with these achievements go my sincere appreciation.

Not long after the Soccer World Cup comes yet another major challenge – the required

(C. GAGIANO)

CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE: LIEUTENANT GENERAL

support to the African Aerospace and Defence 2010 Exhibition at AFB Ysterplaat. This exhibition is a biennial, international showcase for the commercial and military aviation, aerospace and defence industries of, not only African countries, but other countries as well. It is also a premier meeting place for civilian air transport operators from all over Africa. This event grows in stature with each occasion and it can already be said that this, the sixth in the series, promises to be the best thus far. However, this also implies that an even greater input will be required from the Air Force, but again, I have full confidence that every Air Force member who is concerned with AAD 2010 will spare no effort to uphold the image of the SAAF.

We should not, however, allow the emphasis being placed on the Soccer World Cup and on AAD 2010 to detract from the importance of a wide spectrum of activities in which the Air Force is presently engaged and which also call for commitment, innovation and dedication.

One such endeavour is the mutual collaboration which is being built up between the Air Force and the Aviation Industry, and also between the SAAF and other institutions and organizations.

A case in point is the implementation a new approach to the servicing of the SAAF C130 aircraft. By contractual agreement, Denel Aviation has relocated its C130 Maintenance Repair Organisation from Kempton Park to Air Force Base Waterkloof. There, under Denel leadership, this MRO is integrating with the present Waterkloof C130 technicians and the joint team carries out the servicing of the C130's. In the process it also trains the less experienced of the Air Force technicians. Already a 40% increase in aircraft serviceability and a reduction of 70% in downtime have materialized.

Meaningful progress is also being made in other Air Force endeavours to build mutual collaboration with institutions in the Aviation Sector such as ATNS, COMAIR, DENEL and SAA, amongst others. A few further examples of such mutual collaboration are the following:

- Monitored ab initio pilot training of SAAF recruits on light rotary wing aircraft at Starlight, Durban.
- Monitored ab initio, side-by-side pilot training of SAAF recruits on C172 aircraft by the Babcock Central Flying Academy, at Swartkop.
- A joint strategy to optimise that scarce resource, the air traffic controller.
- The identification of areas in which collaboration between the SAAF and South African Airways might be implemented to mutual benefit, and the development of programmes in such areas.
- Participation in the State Partnership Program between the National Guard of New York State, and South Africa, particularly in so far as it concerns our reservists. Closely allied to this is the University Reserve Training concept being implemented within the Reserve Leader Development Programme, which concept promotes collaboration between the Air Force Reserve and certain South African institutions of learning.

What I have mentioned thus far may well become the highlights of SAAF 90, but there are still the bread-and-butter matters to which we must give equally committed attention and effort.

Much still remains to be accomplished during what remains of SAAF 90. Let each of us therefore focus on the words of Winston Churchill: *From the highest to the humblest tasks, all are of equal honour: all have their part to play.*

Dear Ad Astra

# Reader

- CO Solomon Kotane, Editor AD ASTRA magazine -

The successful FIFA Soccer World Cup 2010 came to an end on the 11 July 2010 and has left millions of South Africans, international viewers and listeners gaping for more fascinating football flair and elegance that had characterised the fields of play in the ten pretty provincial stadiums for a month.

The African continent had patiently waited, sometimes vainly attempted, for scores of years, to host the biggest global football tournament of this magnitude. The disparate story has always been the same; i.e. that Africa had no capability, capacity and also that it had been enveloped by internecine wars, which made it difficult to host such important tournaments.

It is pitiful though, that the 2010 tournament had to finish so quickly. But, we are hopeful and reinvigorated that the legacy and collective memories of the historic event would be deeply etched into our minds for many decades to come.

We say "thank you" to all the formations in our society who sleeplessly participated to ensure that the enormous tasks were concluded without many impediments. Additionally, we "thank all" the international participants who assisted us in the preparations and implementation of the laborious plans to ensure success of the tournament.

It is common knowledge that the World Cup had also deserted us with 31 days of footages of the beautiful sceneries of the cities, towns, stadiums, fauna and flora of South Africa, as they were aired and flighted to the multitudes of people by the bouquet of radio and television channels of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and other global media. We are, however, all grateful for and cherish the commitment to service exhibited by the personnel of the SABC during the period. We take our hats off for all of you!

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and all the security

cluster members, which included the military joint operations with the: South African Air Force (SAAF), Government Departments, South African Police Services (SAPS), the Navy, Security services and other safety units, showed unparalleled commitment, dedication and magnanimity to their work. We salute them all for the exemplary patriotism and unselfishness in executing their work.

The end of Operation Kgwele on 11 July 2010, as the safety campaign was called, marked the conclusion of the largest airspace security and support ever held in South Africa. It was the largest in scale, extent of deployment and time. Also, it is a SAAF's success story for all times.

It is rare that 2 400 SAAF members are brought on strength for an operation.

But, in this occasion, they were. More than 65 000 non-scheduled flights requested flight authorisation whilst 12 800 aircrew members were screened.

In excess of 50 aircraft interceptions were conducted from over 300 combat air patrols in order to safeguard the 64 football matches of the event. In addition, the hours flown in support of the ground forces delivered incredibly positive results for the SAPS in the fight against crime.

More than 2 000 flight hours were logged under Operation Kgwele. And, parallel with this feat, a myriad of other day-to-day activities were still taking place including VVIP flights, training, search and rescue and other general readiness practices.

Doubtlessly, the six spectacular weeks of soccer have shown the bare professionalism and excellence of the SAAF. We salute each and every ad astra - second edition 2010



CO Solomon Kotane, Editor

member for your excellent efforts in supporting the operation and ensuring that South Africa delivered a World Cup experience of which everyone in the country is proud of. Viva South Africa Viva!

More than anything else, South Africa and, indeed, the rest of the African continent, would be forever indebted to the legacy of FIFA 2010 World Cup for speeding up and strengthening the process of unity and reconciliation among all national groups in the country. There were many "first" time events experienced as a result of World Cup 2010.

But, what appeared to have pleased everyone was when South Africans of all hues held hands together proudly raised the national flag and sang common songs together and even played together. We salute you all South Africans and we encourage you to maintain the spirit of oneness and democratic visions for many years to come.

# SAAF Support to SAPS in OPERATION KGWELE

## FIFA World Cup

- Information supplied by Brig Gen Lombard, Officer Commanding Air Force Command Post -  
- Photograph by Frans Dely -

The South African Air Force (SAAF) has been tasked by CJ Ops to support the SAPS with the execution of the safety and security aspects during the FIFA World Cup 2010. These aspects can broadly speaking be divided into two distinctive categories namely; to ensure the air space security of the venues during the event and secondly to provide air support to surface operations be it land or sea during the event. The participation in these two areas will be briefly elaborated on.

### Air Space Security

The core business of the Air Force is the provision of an air defence capability for the nation. This makes it the only force able to ensure air space security during the event. The scale of the operation as well as the complex nature of the air space and high traffic volumes expected makes this intricate operation totally dependant on excellent co-operation between the SAAF, Air Traffic Navigational Services Company (ATNS), SACAA and the aviation community.

Fighter aircraft, radar systems, helicopters, electronic warfare capabilities are but some of the systems that will be deployed on a hitherto unknown scale during this event. Air Defence Identification Zones as well as venue restricted airspace areas have been proclaimed via SACAA that will enable the SAAF to manage their air space security with the available air and radar assets as well as visual observation posts supplied by the SA Army and SA Navy.

Aircraft entering, or flying within the areas will be required to have aircrews screened by the ICC as well as request flight authority from the Air Force before filing flight plans for their flight. The Air Force will then monitor compliance to the flight plan and clearances provided and act with intercept aircraft against any transgressors. Transgressors will be guided to land at airfields where they will be further managed by a reception force led by the SAPS.



***FNB Stadium, better known as Soccer City during the 2010 FIFA World Cup Soccer, situated west of Johannesburg***

Every event at every city will be covered during the entire period of the FIFA World Cup 2010. Exercises (Exercise SHIELD) have been held at every relevant city during the past two years, which has allowed the final plan to be developed with some confidence of success. These exercises will culminate in SHIELD 6, which will be a national exercise, in April 2010. This exercise will simulate the busiest 4-day period during the World Cup and will include all the relevant stadiums and cities.

### Air Support

This area covers all the relevant air assets to transport forces that require to be rapidly moved in support of the surface safety and security. It includes transport aircraft such as the C130 for moving national standby forces to a required point of interest as well as

helicopters that can be used to deploy the forces rapidly by air landing or fast roping into a complex area.

Helicopters can also be used for evacuation and rescue operations during disaster management. In addition to this maritime reconnaissance aircraft, the C47MP and the Lynx helicopter will be used to assist the SA Navy with maritime security during the event. The airborne real time video capability, including infrared, will be used in real time, provide video footage of ground incidents to the Provincial Joint Operations Centres (PROVJOC). The various transport aircraft will be extensively used to transport personnel and equipment during the event. Certain Air Force Bases will be used as diversionary airports as well as to handle overflows of civilian aircraft for the purposes of parking and in some cases even movement of passengers.

## Hon Kgalema Motlanthe

# Deputy President at SAAF HQ

- By CO Solomon M. Kotane, and photographs WO1 Cristo Crous, Air Force Command Post (AFCP) -

The Deputy President, Hon Kgalema Motlanthe, was on 9 July 2010 at the South African Air Force (SAAF) headquarters informed by the SAAF

authorities that accurate intelligence and good protective measures were the two key components prioritised during the duration of the 2010 World Cup.



The Deputy President was accompanied by: Ministers Lindiwe Sisulu (Minister Defence and Veterans), Deputy Minister of Defence and Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, Chief of the South African National Defence Force (CSANDF), Lt Gen Godfrey Ngwenya, Maj Gen Job Ngema, Chief Director Policy and Plans

Mr Motlanthe, who was shown all the intricate computer simulations, was further told about the taut and extensive safety measures that were networked fifty kilometres around all the stadia. He also learnt that there had been

negligibly few incidents of aircrafts trespassing in the demarcated areas. Some of the aircraft that were intercepted and brought down for questioning of the pilots, had either attempted to cross the stadium boundaries without proper scheduling documents or without legitimate papers at all.

Brig Gen Lesley Lombard, Director Air Force Command Post (DAFCP), revealed to the Deputy President's delegation that his team worked closely with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and other security cluster members. The elaborate aerial security planning and execution were monitored at the SAAF Command Post.

## SAAF Band

# Restoring Hope to Children

- By Amn Nwabisa V. Dlevu, Ad Astra Magazine and photos by WO2 David Nomtshongwana -

The South African Air Force (SAAF) Band performed at the New Hope School on 6 May 2010 in Menlo Park, eastern Tshwane. The band thrilled its audience with popular rhythms and specific melodies that depicted the culture of the SAAF.

and chronically ill children. More than half of the 400 children are picked up from their homes everyday, and 40 learners live in.

The key aim of the visit was to entertain and spent time with the children. New Hope is a school for disabled

Mr Jo Muller, the deputy principal,



said that the school runs the same curriculum that is utilised in mainstream schools, and it takes children from pre-primary school until matriculation. The institute consists of

180 staff members, 60 of whom were educators and psychologists.

One of the teachers who spoke to Ad Astra magazine, Mrs Michelle Grove, has been teaching for about seven years. She stressed the significance of being patient, loving and accepting these children for who they are.

## Mafikeng Lad Becomes

# OC AFB Langebaanweg

- By Cpl Tebogo Kekana, photos by F/Sgt Debbie Guthrie -

The recently appointed Officer Commanding (OC) Air Force Base (AFB) Langebaanweg, Col Motlhokomedi Kenneth Petso, is one of the first two black pilots to receive Military Wings in the former Bophuthatswana homeland.

Although he does not fly at the moment because of his varied work commitments, he said that he missed his days behind the Astra's cockpit. Born in Galeshewe township in Kimberley in 1966, he pointed out that he never imagined that one day he would become a military pilot.

Despite his dexterity, his humble beginnings in the diamond city appear to have sharpened him to respect different nationalities. The other pilot who trained with him was Mr. Thabiso Tolo, who is currently with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

He spent most of his school-life in Mafikeng (North West) with his father (a teacher) and mother, a prominent nurse in the area. "My parents always stressed the importance of education," he noted.

That emphasis on learning, he reckoned, inspired him to seek for employment after matriculation. Consequently, he was employed as an electronic worker for a Motorola Electronic company, where he provided military signals for the former Bophuthatswana (Bop) Defence Force. The firm took him for information technology courses and he said that that was his first encounter with the Bop Defence Force.

Col Petso joined the Bop Defence Force in 1987 and had never regretted that decision to date. "The exposure I got since I joined the military has been invaluable and has taught me not only life skills, but I have learnt that the flying machines that we operate in the SAAF, needed respect. Furthermore, I learnt to respect procedures, because one minor mistake could spell one's doom. I am also comfortable with my patience

level now," added Col Petso.

In 1991, he started the pilot's course with the BOP Air Force and completed it in 1993. The following year, he integrated into the South African Air Force (SAAF).

As one of the first black pilots to receive South African Air Force wings, he has flown the Harvard, Pilatus PC7 MK I, Pilatus PC 7 MK II, C 185, C 208 and the PC12. He completed his Instructor's Course in 2000 and spent 4 years as an instructor at Central Flying School, AFB Langebaanweg.

He was later posted to the United Kingdom as part of Project Maulstick between the years 2004 and 2005, to buy the Super Lynx Maritime Helicopters. His career grew from strength to strength, and the following year he was appointed as Officer Commanding 41 Squadron, at AFB Waterkloof.

In 2008 he started the Senior Staff Course at the Air University at AFB Maxwell in the USA and completed it in June 2009. "That experience was priceless; to me, it was one of my career highlights as I will awarded a chance to learn and embrace other people's heritages and cultures in one year. I would never forget the lessons learnt from the debates that we had with other colleagues during the course," said Col Petso.



**Col Motlhokomedi Petso, Officer Commanding Air Force Base Langebaanweg**

Upon his arrival back at SAAF Air Command, he was appointed as acting Senior Staff Officer for Air Transport Operations.

Since his recent appointment as the OC of the Base, he has shared his vision to change the image of AFB Langebaanweg with members under his command. "There are negative perceptions as to what this Base stands for; I want to set the record straight and start on a new slate. I have also challenged myself to creep out of my Setswana shell and learn to speak isiXhosa because I am already fluent in Afrikaans. That way I know I will be on par with everyone".

Col Petso is married to Neo Dephney.

# Engineers Commissioned

- By L/Cpl Nwabisa V. Dlevu and photos by WO2 David Nomtshongwana -

Nine South African Air Force (SAAF) Engineers were commissioned on 07 July 2010, at SAAF College, Thaba Tshwane. After four years of intensive studying, their mission and the organisation's intention were finally accomplished.

The Chief of the Air Force (CAF), Lt Gen Carlo Gagiano, said that the graduates were privileged to be in the Air Force and to have studied at State expense. Furthermore, he encouraged them to stay and serve for many years to come. He congratulated the engineers on a job well done.

Lt Jaco Loubser, who completed his degree in record time, said that for as long as he could remember he had had a great interest in aviation, and although he had completed his studies, the real work was about to begin. "I am excited about the future," he said. He urged all aspiring engineers to set goals and strive to achieve them.

Lt Mthobisi Mdluli, who would be pursuing a career in the technical field, believed among other things that passion was key to any career path. Lt Sam Nkuna said that it was critical that one prepared oneself and not have unrealistic expectations.

Lt Jonathan Cleary remembered how at the age of fifteen he had decided which career he wanted to pursue. His solution was hard work, particularly in mathematics and science throughout high school.



Lt Thokozani Yende said the secret to completing in record time was prioritising. He intended serving in the Air Force for as long as he could.

Ten years ago the SAAF recruited thirteen engineer candidates; seven of the students completed the course and six withdrew. In 2009 the number of recruits had risen to twenty students, and twelve of them were still studying. Reasons for withdrawal included failing fitness tests for the Officers Forming course.

This year the SAAF has been able to recruit only two candidates due to budgetary constraints, medical problems and non-arrival for Basic Military Training (BMT). In total, the organisation has in the past ten years recruited 173 engineers; 42 of the learners were studying, 50 had completed the course and 67 had been withdrawn.

set by universities are too high. The University of Stellenbosch requires an Admission Point Score (APS) of 48 and higher, with Mathematics Level 5, Physical Science Level 5, English home language 3 or English first additional language 5, together with Afrikaans home language 3.

The University of Cape Town's requirement is an APS of 39 and higher, with Mathematics Level 7, Physical Science Level 7 and Language Level 6/7. The University of Pretoria requires an APS of 30 and higher, with Mathematics Level 6, Physical Science Level 5, English or Afrikaans Level 5.

This indicates two things: firstly, it may be that the universities' requirements are simply too high; secondly, our basic education system needs to drastically improve in schools in order to prepare the youth for tertiary studies.



According to Warrant Officer Martin Coetzee from Directorate Technical Services and Systems (DTSS), the SAAF offers recruits the opportunity to study at universities in electronic, mechanical and industrial engineering.

Some may also argue that the requirements

The Engineers who were commissioned were:

1. Lt J.D. Cleary
2. Lt T. Leteka
3. Lt M.Mabaso
4. Lt M.P. Mdluli
5. Lt A.M. Nku
6. Lt S.J. Nkuna
7. Lt L.M. Ramabya
8. Lt J.J. Loubser
9. Lt T.B. Yende

# SAAF robbed of young souls

- By Cpl Tebogo Kekana, Ad Astra Magazine, photographs by L/Cpl Nwabisa Dlevu -

Corporal (Cpl) Lephodisa Lebenya of the South African Air Force (SAAF), has warned motorists in the country to drive responsibly at a reasonable speed, while at the same time they should ensure that their vehicles are roughly checked before taking long journeys.

Cpl Lebenya was speaking from his bed at Bloemfontein's 3 Military Hospital, where he is recuperating from a car accident, in which three members of the SAAF died on N3 near Escourt in Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN). The four, who were traveling from Air Force Base (AFB) Bloemspruit to Durban at the time of the



**Sgt Fernando Jerome Rulf**

accident, were members of the 506 Squadron protection unit.

These members were going to assist their Durban colleagues with preparations for an end year function when their military vehicle in which they were traveling experienced a tyre burst on N3, near Escourt in KZN.

The deceased are Sgt Fernando Jerome Rulf, Cpl Abraham Visagie and L/Cpl Mxumanisile Mafu, and a memorial service in their honour was on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 at AFB Bloemspruit.

Sgt Rulf was born in East London on 20 May 1974 and matriculated from

Alvindale High School. He completed his basic military training at the Air Force Gymnasium in Tshwane on 20 April 2009, and worked in the protection unit. He was transferred to 506 Squadron AFB Bloemspruit from Overberg on 20 April 2009. His

## IF TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME

*If tomorrow starts without me and I'm not here to see. If the sun should rise you find your eyes all filled with tears of me. I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today. While thinking of the many things we didn't get to say. I know how much you loved me, as much as I love you. And each time that you think of me, I know you'll miss me too. But when tomorrow starts without me please try to understand. That an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand. He said my place was ready, in Heaven far above. And that I have to leave behind all those I dearly love. But as I turned and walked away a tear fell from my eye. For all my life I'd always thought I didn't want to die. I had so much to live for, so much left yet to do. It seemed almost impossible that I was leaving you. I thought of all the yesterdays the good ones and the bad. I thought of all the love we shared, and all the fun we had. If I could relive yesterday, just even for a while, I'd say goodbye and kiss you maybe see you smile. But then I realized that this could never be, For emptiness and memories would take the place of me. When I thought of worldly things I might miss come tomorrow I thought of you and when I did my heart was filled with sorrow. When I walked through heavens gates I felt so much at home. God looked down and smiled at me from His great golden throne. He said, "This is eternity and all I've promised you" Today your life on earth has passed but here life starts anew. I promise no tomorrow, but today will always last. And since each day is the same there's no longing for the past. You have been so faithful so trusting and so true. Though there were times you did some things you knew you shouldn't do. You have been forgiven and know at last you're free. So won't you come and take my hand and share my life with me? So when tomorrow starts without me, don't think we're far apart.*

*For every time you think of me. I'm right here in your Heart.*

wife, Esmarelda, and children, Keano, Exonophone Gaynor and Ferlin-Josh, are surviving Sgt Rulf.

Cpl Visagie was born in Upington on 14 June 1972 and matriculated from S. ad astra - second edition 2010

S. S. A. J. Ferreira. He completed his basic military training at the Air Force Gymnasium in Tshwane in January 1995. He was transferred from the gymnasium to 506 Squadron at AFB



**Cpl Abraham Visagie**

Bloemspruit on 5 January 2004. He was married to Sarah and also survived by his children; Samantha and Sharlene.

L/Cpl Mafu was born in Soweto on 28 June 1986 and matriculated from Emadwaleni High School in 2005. She



**L Cpl Mxumanisile Mafu**

completed her basic military training at the Air Force Gymnasium in August 2009.

She was transferred from Overberg to 506 Squadron at AFB Bloemspruit on 1 August 2009. Her father, Spotini, mother, Thoko and sister Thembi Mafu survive her.

# Glory on the Shooting Range

- Article and photos by Amn Tebogo Kekana, Ad Astra Magazine -

A member of the South African Air Force (SAAF), Amn Joannette Viljoen yearns to become a professional sniper as she also wishes to represent South Africa at international events. Amn Viljoen, who already excels in shooting, told Ad Astra recently that she came from a family that enjoyed shooting as a sport. This twenty-year old Amn testified that she got her inspiration from her father and brother, particularly the latter, who was already a professional sniper.

She said it all started after her brother had invited her to a shooting event, which made her to consequently love the sport. She further explained that she first held a rifle at the age of six. She, however, also pointed out that she had always had strict supervision from her father.

Amn Viljoen, who hails from Feschard, in the Free State, started to take her shooting hobby seriously when she was in Grad 8 at Jim Fouche High School in Bloemfontein. Among other awards, she has held the Junior Shooting Championship for four consecutive years. At the age of fifteen, she won a bronze medal at the British Junior International Championships (BJI). On her second attempt at the BJI in 2007, while she was seventeen years old, she became the overall winner for the under twenty-one and ended up being the world champion with



**Amn Joannette Viljoen prepares her rifle for target practice. She wishes to represent South Africa at international events**

a gold medal. Back in South Africa, she has since won the South African school championship, which carried international status against the United Stages of America (USA).

Amn Joannette Viljoen was born twenty years ago in Feschardt (Bloemfontein) from a family of four; the small-built young lady does not only do well in lifting pots at the base, she also excels at shooting with a 5.2kg Air Rifle 3P at a two-meter distance.

This small-built young lady is not only about shooting, but also does cooking

at the base. She added that she joined the hospitality services in the SAAF in December 2009 as a student chef. "I inherited the love for cooking from my mother at a very young age, I feel very proud when I prepare a mouth-watering dish," said the beaming Joannette.

After cooking lessons, the shy multi-talented young lady hangs her apron at the female quarters and spends time with her father and brother practising karate and indoor Air Rifle 3P shooting (it uses a filled-up gas instead of real ammunition).



# Commissioning Parade

- By Cpl Tebogo Kekana, Ad Astra Magazine, photos by Cpl Wiko van der Westhuizen -

The biannual commissioning parade, which signified the success of twenty-two officer-forming graduates, took place on 18 June 2010 at South African Air Force (SAAF) College in Thaba Tshwane.

**OFC 1 of 2010 included representation from two other services, SA Army and SA Medical Health Services.**

The Officer Forming Course (OFC 1/2010) was unique and was viewed as a milestone in the South African Defence Force (SANDF) as it was the first pilot programme that included representation from two other services (SA Army, and SA Medical Health Services). Furthermore, it was the first time the members who attended the course achieved a nationally recognised qualification.

**Lt Nhlapo was singled out for his outstanding officer character during the course.**

The Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) qualification in military operation is currently the only mechanism to ensure that members undergoing the Military Skills Development (MSD) training in the SANDF would exit with credit-bearing training. Additionally, they would contribute directly to the socio-economic upliftment of the RSA.

**Lt Venter got the Delta Tiger Trophy**

Furthermore, the venture, according to SAAF sources, is regarded as a key operational area, as it is expected to give other training providers in the SANDF the chance to align their training with the needs of Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA).

According to Col J.W. Janse van Rensburg, Officer Commanding (OC) the SAAF College: "The milestone, not only highlighted the inception of the FETC in the SANDF but, due to the unaccredited status of the SA Army and SAMHS training institutions, the occasion left the SAAF as the pioneer



in presenting this programme, because it is fully accredited," he said.

Maj Gen Lucky Ngema, who gave the ranks to graduates, said: "Leadership does not exist merely because of status; you are not a leader just because you have an officer's rank. Leader status is something that one earns from followers on a day-to-day basis. Physical and intellectual fitness are essential attributes of a leader, and so is teamwork and discipline. The SAAF offers you many opportunities to cultivate a lifelong culture of learning. I urge you to make full use of them," he said.

Moreover, the General congratulated those who received trophies during the course and acknowledged the support from family and friends of the graduates. He singled out AFB Hoedspruit's CO Sepedi Mashao, who had won the Air Squadron Sword, the academic floating trophy and the leadership floating trophy.

**CO Mashao receiving her academic floating trophy from Maj Gen Lucky Ngema.**

The Limpopo-born (Ga-Mashashane) CO Mashao, elatedly said she had worked hard during the 22-week-long course. She told AD ASTRA magazine that "determination and hard work coupled with no sleep had finally paid-off."

The Old Mutual floating trophy was given to Lt Peter Nhlapo for displaying outstanding officer characteristics during the course.

The Chief of the Air Force Fitness trophy was handed to Lt Bianca Visser for being the fittest soldier at the end of the course.

The Delta Tiger Floating trophy was awarded to Lt Bronwyn Venter for being a directing staff member who supported learners the most through the transit process.

## The following members successfully completed OFC 1/2010

Chaplain Xolani. Maholwana  
Chaplain L.D. Scheepers  
Major Peter Dilley  
Lieutenant J.C. Arendorp  
Lieutenant D.J. Daffue  
Lieutenant D. Goniwe  
Lieutenant Felicia Jones  
Lieutenant Memory Malefo  
Lieutenant S.N. Maligana  
Lieutenant S. Ngubane  
Lieutenant Peter Nhlapo  
Lieutenant M.S. Saul  
Lieutenant Olwethu Soga  
Lieutenant J. Trzos  
Lieutenant T. Tunzi  
Lieutenant S.S. Vilakazi  
Lieutenant Bianca Visser  
Second Lieutenant G.W.E. Jones  
Second Lieutenant Z.M. Adam  
Second Lieutenant Q. Lostile  
Second Lieutenant A. Mbiza  
Second Lieutenant S.P. Modiba  
Second Lieutenant L.D. Mlandu  
Candidate Officer Sepedi Mashao

# Four Squadrons Change of Command

- By Sgt Thabang Bapela, Ad Astral Magazine and photos by FSgt Lebo Garland, 5 ASU -

Four senior South African Air Force (SAAF) officers were given command of four different flying squadrons, namely: 17 Squadron, 21 Squadron, 41 Squadron and 44 Squadron, during a parade hosted at Air Force Base (AFB) Waterloo on 4 June 2010.

The outgoing Col Rodney King of 44 Squadron, born in Germiston and the youngest of three children, completed his basic military training in 1982 and completed flying training in 1984. His early flying experience included the Harvard and Impala MK1 on the Pilots Course.

Col King held the post of chief flying instructor at Langebaanweg for three-and-half-years. And, he was also a leader of the SAAF aerobatic team and the Silver Falcons for two years, leading the team to 60 public displays.

He also, had amassed over 5500 flying hours and was appointed officer commanding 44 Sqn in 2006 flying the Casa 212 and Casa 235. He successfully completed the Joint senior command Staff Programme at the National War College in 2009. He is married to Michelle and they have two children, Luke and Leah.

Col King officially gave over command of 44 Squadron to Lt Col Ruan Potgieter who joined the SAAF in February 1989 and worked at Central Flying School in Donator as a Flight Line Assistant.

Furthermore, he completed pilot training in 1992, and Lt Col Potgieter has more than 3500 military flying hours on a range of aircraft, namely: Havards, Cessna 185s, Cessna Caravan, Impala MK1 and MK2, Astrals and C130s.

Lt Col Potgieter is married to Claire and they have twin boys: James and Marcus.

Moreover, Col Zanile Vellem, Officer Commanding 21 Squadron, also handed over control to Col Rodney King, the then Officer Commanding of 44 Squadron.

Col Vellem was born in Korsten, Port Elizabeth and matriculated at Zeleni High School in King Williams Town. He joined the then Casket Defence Force on March 1981 and underwent military training at 21 Battalion in Lenz, south of Gating.



**Col Zanile Vellem handing over 21 Squadron to Col Rodney King**

He was selected for pilot training in 1983 and sent to Israel. Col Vellem qualified on single and light twin engined aircraft. He flew in the former Ciskei until 1990, when he was sent to 81 Flying School at Lingerie, where he flew the Cessna 172 and Beechcraft Baron 58.

In 1994 Col Vellem was sent to AFB Langebaanweg for bridging training and qualified for SAAF wings in 1996 flying the CASA 212. He joined 44 Squadron at AFB Waterloo in 1997 and continued flying the CASA 212 until January 1999 when he was transferred to the Air Force Command Post.

Col Vellem was posted at the Forward Air Command Post (FACP) Port Elizabeth as Officer Commanding in January 2000 and the unit was closed down in 2003. The following year, he attended the Joint Senior Command and Staff Programme and in January 2006 he was appointed Officer Commanding 21 Squadron.

He is married to Nothando and they have four children, two boys and girls.

Furthermore, Lt Col Harry Cassidy, officer commanding 17 Squadron, also handed over his command to Lt Col Stefan Matthee.

Lt Col Cassidy joined the SAAF in January 1988 and he received the SAAF pilot wings and officers commission in 1990. He served as a Station Pilot on the Cessna

185 at 84 Light Aircraft Flying School in Potchefstroom until 1991.

After completing the rotary wing conversion course on the Alouette III and Oryx helicopter, he served as a co-pilot on the Oryx at different squadrons namely: 17, 19 and 31 Squadrons.

Additionally, Lt Col Cassidy was posted to 87 Helicopter Flying School as an instructor on the Alouette III and Oryx helicopters. He was transferred to 17 squadron as a Flight Commander in January 2001.

Lt Col Cassidy was appointed the Officer Commanding 17 Squadron in September 2006 until December 2009. He handed over his command to Lt Col Matthee who also joined the SAAF in 1988.

Lt Col Matthee started his flying career on Harvards in 1988 as a student pilot and obtained SAAF Wings on the Cessna 185 in 1990.

He started the operational flying career as a pilot at central flying school, in Dunnotar between 1989 and 1993. Lt Col Matthee qualified as a helicopter pilot at 19 squadron, AFB Louis Trichard on Oryx helicopters in 1993.

He has completed numerous operational tours in Mozambique, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

He has 4300 flying hours and he is married to Lynette and they have a son Ruan and daughter Michelle.

The Mafikeng lad, Col Kenneth Petso, the newly appointed Officer Commanding AFB Langebaanweg also handed over his command of 41 Squadron to Lt Col Adriaan van Zyl.

Lt Col van Zyl was born in Namibia and matriculated at Sir De Villiers Graaff High School, Villiersdorp in the Boland.

He joined the SAAF in 1970 and flew the Impalas at Langebaanweg, Harvards at 7 Squadron, Dakotas at 25 squadron, Shackletons at 35 squadron, Transalls at 28 squadron and TP Dakotas at 44 Squadrons.

Lt Col van Zyl has accumulated over 8000 flying hours, of which more than half were in the Border War in the then South West Africa (Namibia), Angola and the former Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

He was promoted to the rank of Lt Col in 1997 and appointed as the Base Aviation Efficiency Coordinator at AFB Waterkloof.



**Members of AFB Waterkloof marching on parade against the aptly rising sun on a day of new beginnings at the base**

And, in 2002 he was transferred back into the operational line as the Senior Staff officer Air at the Regional Joint Task Force, Gauteng North, but the task force was later disbanded in 2003 and was transferred to Air Force Command Post.

Later in 2008, he was detached to 41 Squadron as an Acting Officer

Commanding until he officially took over command from Col Petso on 4 June 2010.

Lt Col van Zyl is a keen sportsman; he represented Boland at the 1969 craven Week and was selected for the South African Schools Rugby team. He is married to Col Lizette Potgieter.

## Air Command

# JSCSP Learners Visit

- Article and photo's by Sgt Thabang Bapela, Ad Astra Magazine -

The Joint Senior Command Staff Programme learners including eight foreign students from Botswana, Brazil, Congo Brazzaville, Egypt, India, Namibia, Uganda and Zambia visited the South African Air Force (SAAF) Headquarters on 18 March 2010.

On arrival Senior Staff Officer Directorate Corporate Staff Services,

Col Eugene Motati welcomed the learners and further wished them a very successful visit to AFHQ expressing the hope that they would find it both stimulating and enriching.

The Chief Director Force Preparation (CDFP), Maj Gen Hugh Paine, presented the strategic overview of the SAAF, and also explained the mandate



**A learner from the visiting course asking a question on the SAAF's Strategic Overview**

of the organisation, which is to provide and manage the air defence capabilities of the Department of Defence (DoD) and to ensure the sovereignty and protection of the Republic's territorial integrity.

Furthermore, Gen Paine said in the

last fifteen years there had been a continuous decrease in budget of the SAAF, and the retention of specialists in the organisation, which is an international dilemma.

He proclaimed the operational roles and concluded by saying that, the South African Air Force needs a capacity that is able to reach beyond its national borders.

Moreover, the aging fixed wing air mobility fleet will pose a serious threat in the near future and innovative leadership is required to deal with the many change requirements he said.

Following CDFP's presentation was the earmarked directorates that presented for forty minutes each, Directorate Command and Control, Helicopter System, Air Transport and Maritime System, Combat and Operations Support and Intelligence System.

# Flying Training at Swartkop

- By Capt Leon Steyn Research Officer, Air Force Museum -

Sixteen students engaged in SAAF Pilots Wings Course (PWC) 115 recently commenced their flying training at the Babcock Central Flying Academy. This is the second side-by-side flying training course presented by Babcock, but, whereas the the students on the previous course (PWC114) completed their training at the Grand Central airfield, it was decided that this time the programme would be moved to the Swartkop airfield instead.

Swartkop offers many more training advantages than the Grand Central

milieu of the air force flying fraternity and its culture.

The side-by-side training programme, which was introduced in the SAAF during 2009 to precede flying training on the PC-7 Mk II Astra, is conducted on four Cessna 172 training aircraft. The four aircraft of the Babcock Central Flying Academy are specifically dedicated to the programme and are kept at Swartkop on a permanent basis during the week.

The first training flights of PWC 115 from Swartkop got underway on



Airfield, which include less traffic congestion within the Swartkop circuit as well as the proximity of the General Flying Area to the airfield. This equates to less ferry and holding times and more time for actual flying training. The training facility which is located inside 14 Hangar, contain all the necessary lecture and flight ops facilities, while Swartkop itself presents the student with all the essential ATC and emergency services associated with a SAAF base. The new training facility is also close to the Officers's Club at AFB Waterkloof's where the students live in.

Wednesday 5 May and it is envisaged that the flying programme of this course will be completed by the end of September 2010. Provision has been made for flying during the Soccer World Cup and for weather limitations.

Students will be required to accumulate a total of 70 hours flying on the Cessna 172 and, at the conclusion of the course, successful students, that is students who have met the criteria set by the Civilian Aviation Authority, will be rewarded with the advanced Private Pilot's Licence (PPL). The students will then return to Langebaanweg to commence the advanced phase of the flying training programme that includes ground training school and 110 hours of flying training on the Astra. It is only on successful completion of this phase of flying training at Langebaanweg that the candidate officers will receive the coveted Air Force wings and officers' commission from the Chief of the South African Air Force.

Flying out of Swartkop from where 17 and 41 Squadrons and the museum flight operate, will allow students to remain in the military



# Personnel Excellence

- Lt Col W.G. Venter, AOMSS Officer, 1 ASU -

Acknowledging achievements is one of the criteria that is very high on the agenda of the Officer Commanding 1 ASU. The following is an extract from the Officer Commanding's Declaration in the 1 ASU Philosophy document that demonstrates commitment to acknowledging performance: "Our immediate challenge must be to meet our goals, boost morale and we must link merits very tightly to individual performance. Through positive attitudes employees must strive to take responsibility in order to reach ambitious targets in our Centre. We must improve our communications and co-ordination so that it becomes a culture. We must create a live, vibrant and honourable Centre with real commitment to 1 ASU." These achievements are acknowledged by means of trophies and certificates.

### Annual Trophy Award Criteria

A total of five trophies have been designed by 1 ASU to honour its members that have performed outstanding work during the year. These five trophies are exclusively intended for individuals and will be presented annually at the ASU end-of-year function. Members are selected by the 1 ASU Committee based on the monthly nominations and observations throughout

the year. The recipients of the monthly OC 1 ASU Commendation Certificates are automatically eligible for any of the five trophy awards.

**Best Uniform:** The trophy is given to the best-dressed member of 1 ASU. The member must always have a neat and positive bearing and have an above average level of discipline towards seniors, peers and subordinates. A well-mannered disposition must be displayed towards 1 ASU, the SAAF and the SANDF. The member must also excel on a continuous basis in the work environment and while performing his/her regimental duties.

**Best Improvement:** The trophy is given for the improvement of a member on a constant basis throughout the year at 1 ASU. The member's improvement is evaluated over the preceding ten months and is measured in terms of own performance and set objectives. The member must excel on a continuous basis in the work environment and also in additional duties. The results of the improvement must be obvious in his/her immediate environment.

**Productivity:** The trophy is given to the member that is the most productive in his/her field of work at 1 ASU. The member must present an above average and

measurable quality output which needs to include a constant above-average merit assessment.

**Refinement of Procedures:** The trophy is given for the member that constantly refines and upgrades his/her section's procedures. There must be evidence of new successfully implemented procedures within the Division and these must have an impact on 1 ASU and the SAAF. The contents and format must be of a very high standard.

**Allerbest:** The "BEST" in ALLERBEST is an acronym for the following: "Business Excellence through Sustainability and Teamwork" The ALLERBEST Trophy is the highest achievement by a member within 1 ASU. It is the 1 ASU Prestige Award. Members are monitored during the year from January to October. All Members that have received the Officer Commanding's 1 ASU Commendation Certificates during the year are automatically eligible for the ALLERBEST Trophy.

An *Honoris Causa* plaque (Roll of Honour) is situated at the 1 ASU HQ entrance and the ALLERBEST recipient and the two runners-up will have their names placed on the plaque.

## Celebration of vertical flight

# Museum Flying Day

- Capt Leon Steyn, Historian, SAAF Museum -

The South African Air Force Museum celebrated vertical flight when more than twenty helicopters and gyrocopters flew into Swartkop during the Museum's monthly flying day.

The event was held on Saturday 5 June 2010 and was well attended. This proves that the Museum flying days are becoming increasingly popular with the public.

Celebrating fifty years of flight, the Alouette II took centre stage as Maj Gen Hugh Paine displayed the nimble little chopper to the appreciative crowd. The duo even made the Saturday evening news on

SABC TV! Another welcome return to the public eye was the museum's beautifully restored North American P-51D Mustang. The aircraft was repaired to static condition for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War. 2 'Cheetah' Squadron participated in this war between 1950 and 1954 and flew the Mustang and later the North American F-86 Sabre jet.

The South African Air Force operated eight Alouette II helicopters, the first of which was delivered in December 1960. Superseding the earlier Sikorsky S51 and S55 helicopters, which were piston powered, the Alo II was the first turbine-



**Alouette II shortly after delivery to 17 Squadron at Langebaanweg**

powered helicopter to enter SAAF service and saw initial service with 17 Squadron at Langebaanweg. All Alouette IIs were later transferred to the Helicopter Conversion unit at Ysterplaat for use as trainer aircraft, and were eventually withdrawn from service in the early 1970s. The Museum maintains two of these French beauties in flying condition.

# A Prestige Unit

- Information supplied by members of 2 ASU, AFB LBWG -

What makes an unassuming unit such as 2 ASU perform so well that it is able to compete with the “Big Guns” and come out on top? This is a question that has been asked many times to members of 2 ASU as well as by other unit and base commanders since 2 ASU was first awarded in 2008 with one of the most sought after titles in the SAAF and that is; “The Prestige Unit of the Air Force.”

In an attempt to answer the above question, the following is offered: 2 ASU's evidence lies not in the graphs displayed on the walls, but is evident in the level of satisfaction of its people; the quality of leadership; the number of mission ready aircraft on the flight line daily; the level of satisfaction of 2 ASU's primary Clients and, i.e. The PSSM Astra, CFS and the Silver Falcons, as well as the level of confidence that 2 ASU's Partners and Stakeholders have in the Unit; the standard and quality of training provided; etc.

If you want to see graphs, rather let us take you to the flight line, or the training centre, or even to the hangars and workshops. It is of no good to have wonderful books and files and graphs and things displayed for all to view, because this can be seen only as window dressing. If the proof of the pudding is not in the taste then, this should be seen as mere window dressing and a waste of time.

If you have been caught up in window dressing and you are not leaving it now, it is not too late to start. Start by seeing how your measurements can improve the quality of your output in the above areas, vis-à-vis, your key processes. Remember that if you do not have time

for EFQM, it means that you do not have time for improvement. Perhaps too, it could be that you have misunderstood what EFQM is all about. It is not supposed to be an over and above task but a part of your management system. In fact, it could be what your management system revolves around. Consider the following diagram used by 2 ASU since 2008 when the EFQM replaced the SAEM.

In the above diagram, each area has been identified and mapped as well as colour-coded with the EFQM model. Measurement is fundamental to the whole EFQM process and each area is measured, documented and improved upon. It must be stated that even this diagram is continually reviewed for improvement.

The reason for the above measurement is to know where one stands in terms of one's output. This, however, is not where the process stops. If it were to stop here, it would be the same as the dog chasing the car analogy; i.e. dogs chase cars, which is in their nature. But what would happen if the dog caught the car? What will it do with it? In this case, if one was to measure something and also draw a graph reflecting that measurement, one would have to ask the question; “so what?” “Now that we have caught the car, what is next?”

This is exactly where most units or sections stop their process and think that the job is now done. This is far from the case since this is actually where the exciting part of the process starts. What are we going to do with these measurements? I believe this to be the “secret” of success. 2 ASU continually

asks the “so what” question in an attempt to improve on whatever it is measuring. Furthermore, it analyses the outcomes, utilising leading and lagging indicators in order to learn from history, and to predict certain future outcomes.

2 ASU has a very streamlined system, which is supported by all sections and coordinated by the Inspectorate Section. The RADAR system; i.e. **R**esults, **A**pproach, **D**evelopment, **A**ssess and **R**eview, is used to ensure that the process does not stop at any point, but the status quo is continually challenged to see if there is any room for improvement or change. The following diagram depicts the consolidation process.

Although stated very simplistically above, the 2 ASU leadership is dedicated to improving its output and customer satisfaction and has obtained the buy-in from all its members. The process, although complex, has become a lifestyle!

We are grateful that IGAF appreciates the complexity of the system and the effort expended by the members of 2 ASU to keep the system alive and dynamic. Being recognised as not only the ASU of the Year, but the Prestige Unit of the Year, is very satisfying, and at the same time very humbling. 2 ASU remains an unassuming unit with people who love their job and perform it with passion. The members of 2 ASU also know that the successes achieved are but temporary. This fact inspires them to achieve more than they achieved the year before, always looking for new ways of improving their output and performance.

2 ASU members do not receive any special incentives for being recognised as the Prestige Unit of the Air Force, nor do they expect them. Their desire to achieve increasingly better results stems from their passion for their work. Well done to the members of 2 ASU for their achievements and for setting such a wonderful example to the rest of the Air Force. You truly are the SAAF benchmark in EFQM.

2 ASU has been awarded as the ASU of the Year consecutively since 2005 to date, and the Prestige Unit of the Year for the past two years running.



# BMT Pass-out Parade

- Article and photos by Sgt Thabang Bapela -



**M**aj Gen Mandla Mangethe has told members of the South African (SAAF) Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit, Limpopo, SAAF's Command Council had committed itself to encouraging every Air Force cadre to make maximum use of the high quality training, excellent infrastructure, equipment and programmes of the aircraft national organisation.

The Maj Gen was addressing a military gathering during a graduation ceremony of one- hundred-and-sixty-nine basic military candidates held at Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit in the Limpopo province recently. This was the first pass-out parade to be conducted at this base, since the relocation of the Air Force Gymnasium from Tshwane to Hoedspruit last year.

The following trophies were awarded to the students for their excellent work

in different categories:

The floating trophy for the Best Male Shottist was awarded to Amn T. Verwey, while the Best Female Shottist went to Amn S. Cebekhulu. Another floating trophy for the Fittest Male student was presented to Amn C. Beukes and the Fittest Female was given to Amn J. Kotane. The Sanlam floating trophy for the Best Academic Achiever went to Amn M. James with an average of 93.33%.

The floating trophy for the Best Student Overall was awarded to Amn J. Hartt who distinguished himself in the following areas:

Neatness on person, uniform and single quarters, a high standard of parade work, discipline and general behaviour, above average percentage in shooting, attitude towards the SANDF, well a high standard of fitness,

general knowledge and academic percentage.

Finally, the Air Force Gymnasium floating trophy for the best instructor was awarded to Cpl Mzimba, who distinguished himself in the following areas: Neatness on person, uniform and flight, high standard of parade work and class presentation, general flight administration, discipline, as well as his general conduct and disposition towards the SANDF. Cpl Mzimba was born in Daveyton and completed his instructors training course in 2007.

Present at the parade were the Honourable Mayor of Maruleng, Mr Junior Mafogo, the President of Military Veterans, retired Maj Gen Sijake, members of the SAAF Command Council, families and friends of the cadets.

