

Chapter 6

Our last line of defence: The SANDF: mandate, activities and key personalities



The SANDF is South Africa's last line of defence, for use when diplomacy, the intelligence services and the military's own attempts at deterrence have failed. US author James F Dunnigan called armed forces "one more bargaining chip in a state's international diplomacy. If war comes, the armed forces have failed in their primary purpose: to appear too strong to be successfully attacked."



The SANDF's mandate is to...

- Defend against Aggression: To provide a self-defence capability according to international law against any threat of aggression that endangers the stability of South Africa.
- Promote Security: To provide for the internal and external deployment of military forces to enhance security in support of decisions by the executive.
- Support the People of South Africa: To provide support to South Africa's population or other government departments in operations and activities other than war, by using collateral utility.¹

From whence is this mandate derived?

The above is derived from the Constitution, the Defence Act, the Defence White Paper, Defence Review and the Strategic Business Plan.

When may the SANDF be deployed?

The employment of the SANDF is governed by the Constitution, 1996, and the Defence Act, 2002.

201. (1) ...

(2) Only the President, as head of the national executive, may authorise the employment of the defence

¹ From the Strategic Business Plan FY2004/5 to 2007/8, the DoD Annual Report FY2003/4 and the SANDF's Military Strategy.

force

- a. in co-operation with the police service;
- b. in defence of the Republic; or
- c. in fulfilment of an international obligation.

Table 6.1: The Constitutional prescription regarding the deployment of the SANDF

CHAPTER 3

EMPLOYMENT AND USE OF DEFENCE FORCE

Employment of Defence Force

18. (1) In addition to the employment of the Defence Force by the President as contemplated in section 201(2) of the Constitution, the President or the Minister may authorise the employment of the Defence Force for service inside the Republic or in international waters, in order to-

- (a) preserve life, health or property in emergency or humanitarian relief operations;
- (b) ensure the provision of essential services ;
- (c) support any department of state, including support for purposes of socio-economic upliftment; and
- (d) effect national border control.

(2) When the Defence Force is employed for any purpose contemplated in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) of subsection (1), the President or Minister, as the case may be, must inform Parliament promptly and in appropriate detail of the-

- (a) reasons for such employment;
- (b) place where the Defence Force is being employed;
- (c) number of people involved;
- (d) period for which the Defence Force is expected to be employed; and
- (e) expenditure incurred or expected to be incurred.

(3) If Parliament does not sit during the first seven days after the employment of the Defence Force as contemplated in subsection (2), the President or Minister, as the case may be, must provide the information required in that subsection to the appropriate oversight committee of Parliament on Defence.

(4) If the Defence Force is employed by the President for any purpose contemplated in section 201(2) of the Constitution, the President must also comply with subsection (2)(e).

(5) Parliament may by resolution within seven days after receiving information contemplated in subsection (2) from the President or the Minister-

- (a) confirm any such authorisation of employment;
- (b) order the amendment of such authorisation;
- (c) order the substitution for such authorisation of any other appropriate authorisation; or

(d) order the termination of the employment of the Defence Force.

(6) An order contemplated in subsection (5)(b), (c) or (d) does not affect-

(a) the validity of the authorisation up to the moment of the passing of the resolution by Parliament;

(b) the validity of anything done by virtue of the authorisation up to the moment that the amendment, substitution or termination of the authorisation takes effect; or

(c) any right, privilege, obligation or liability acquired, accrued or incurred as a result of the authorisation for the employment of the Defence Force, up to the applicable moment contemplated in paragraph (b).

(7) (a) If authorisation by the Minister in terms of subsection (1)(a) cannot be obtained in time to avert imminent danger to life, health or property, the Secretary for Defence, with the concurrence of the Chief of the Defence Force, may, in accordance with a standing arrangement delegated by the Minister in this regard, authorise the employment of the National Defence Force for purposes of that subsection.

(b) The Secretary for Defence must inform the Minister as soon as possible of such authorisation and provide the Minister with the information referred to in subsection (2).

(c) The Minister may cancel the authorisation if he or she disagrees, in which case subsection (6) applies with the necessary changes.

(d) If the Minister agrees with the authorisation, subsections (2), (3), (5) and (6) apply with the necessary changes.

Employment in co-operation with South African Police Service

19. (1) The Defence Force may be employed in co-operation with the South African Police Service in terms of section 201(2)(a) of the Constitution in the prevention and combating of crime and maintenance and preservation of law and order within the Republic.

(2) If the employment of the Defence Force in co-operation with the South African Police Service is authorised as contemplated in subsection (1), the Minister must give notice of such employment by notice in the *Gazette* within 24 hours of the commencement of such employment and, upon such employment being discontinued, within 24 hours of such discontinuation give notice of the discontinuation by notice in the *Gazette*.

(3) Service in co-operation with the South African Police Service-

(a) may only be performed in such area or at such place as the President may order at the request of the Minister and the Minister of Safety and Security;

(b) must be discontinued in such area or at such place as the President may order at the request of the Minister and the Minister of Safety and Security or when the President deems it expedient for any other reason; and

(c) must be performed in accordance with -

(i) a code of conduct and operational procedures approved by the Minister;

(ii) such guidelines regarding-

(aa) co-operation between the Defence Force and the South African Police Service; and

(bb) co-ordination of command over and control of members of the Defence Force and the South African Police Service, as the Chief of the Defence Force and the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service may determine.

Table 6.2: The Defence Act on the employment of the SANDF. The relevant sections of the Constitution can be found in Chapter 2.

According to the SANDF's Military Strategy, what are the missions that flow from the above?

The missions postulated for the SANDF for the next year, as postulated in the Military Strategy is:

Defence against aggression

- *Show-of-force*. A demonstration of the readiness of the force to engage in one or more missions. This could, for instance, be done by means of a training exercise.
- *Pre-emptive operations*. This is an attack initiated on the basis of a belief that an enemy attack is imminent or under way. (Within the limits of international law regulating the use of force.)
- *Repelling a conventional onslaught*². Military operations launched in order to protect and defend South Africa, its citizens and national interests against aggression committed by forces of another state or group of states, excluding the use of nuclear weapons.
- *Repelling of an unconventional attack*. Operations conducted against guerrilla or para-military groupings conducting operations that are in conflict with the Constitutional order of South Africa.
- *Repelling of a non-conventional attack*. Operations to curb attacks by a-national (not belonging to a specific nation), sub-national (groupings within a country) or meta-national (groupings that span more than one nation, for example multi-national companies or cartels) forces. Examples are religious fundamentalists, warlords or groups trafficking in illicit drugs, piracy, weapons or undocumented migrants. These can be groupings from within or outside South Africa.
- *Defence against an information attack*. Defensive measures against an onslaught on South Africa's military information, information-based processes and information systems.
- *Defence against a biological and/or chemical attack*. Defensive measures against the employment of biological agents or chemical products by an adversary to produce casualties in man or animal and damage to plants or matériel, to obtain military advantage.
- *Special operations*. Special operations are operations of a specialised nature that are conducted by specially trained and equipped military forces. Special Operations will normally be conducted jointly with different Services, while the

² The word "onslaught" although a valid term in its own right, here appears to be a crude translation of the Afrikaans, "aanslag". "Attack", "aggression" and "strike" might be better terms to use. The term has been replaced below.

authority for these deployments will mainly be granted at the highest or even political level.

- *Protection of foreign assets.* Examples of foreign assets that need protection include embassies, high commissions, consulates and related facilities.

Promoting Security

- *Supporting military foreign relations.* Military foreign relations could include attachés, own personnel attending courses, foreign students attending own courses or any other activity that will enhance the peace and security-building measures between countries.
- *Defence against an information attack.* Defensive measures against an onslaught on alliance's military information, information-based processes and information systems in which South Africa participates.
- *Sub-regional, regional or international peace support operations observers.* A military observer is a person mandated by an international organisation to observe a treaty, military cease-fire, an international organisation or the execution of a United Nations Security Council resolution.
- *Peacekeeping.* Peacekeeping operations describe the activities of the United Nations in the field. Modern peace-keeping operations normally involve both military and civilian personnel who are tasked with monitoring and assisting with the implementation of agreements reached between belligerent parties. Such activities are also mandated under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. They take place with the consent of the conflicting parties and do not involve the use of force (other than in self-defence) by the peacekeepers.
- *Peacemaking.* Peacemaking is primarily a diplomatic process/activity, which is conducted with the aim of bringing hostile parties to a negotiated agreement through peaceful means.
- *Peace-enforcement.* Peace-enforcement describes activities where, in terms of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the Security Council deems it necessary to use armed force to maintain or restore international peace and security in situations where the peace is threatened, where a breach of the peace occurs, or where there is an act of aggression.
- *Peace-building.* Peace-building may occur at any stage in the conflict cycle, but it is critical in the aftermath of a conflict. In essence, peace-building is mainly a diplomatic/developmental process.
- *Humanitarian intervention.* The provision of safe areas or corridors to ensure the safety of populations caught up in areas of conflict.
- *Search-and-rescue.* The use of aircraft, vessels, specialised rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land or at sea.

- *Disaster relief and humanitarian assistance*
 - *Disaster relief.* The provision of support for the preservation of life, health and property in emergency situations which exceed the capacity of the civilian authorities.
 - *Humanitarian assistance.* The provision of support to alleviate human suffering.

Supporting the people of South Africa

- *Maritime support.* Support to other state departments which do not have the capacity to execute their maritime responsibilities. It currently consists of the following:
 - The provision of surveillance and enforcement support to the relevant authorities for the protection of marine resources.
 - The provision of assistance in the protection of the marine environment against pollution.
 - The provision of transport assistance to the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to the Prince Edward Island group, Gough Island and the Antarctic.
 - The provision of hydrographic services for the purposes of the Navy, South Africa's mariners and to other mariners in terms of regional and inter-national obligations.
 - The promulgation of radio navigation warnings, notices to mariners, and tidal and related meteorological data to mariners in terms of international obligations.
- *Border-line control.* Border-line control is the application of border control between identified ports of entry, such as a border control post. Border-line control includes control between designated ports of entry, as well as airspace and maritime control. Border-line control is a SA Police Service function in which the SA National Defence Force currently assists.
- *Cooperation with the SA Police Service.* The SA National Defence Force may in certain circumstance assist the SA Police Service. This assistance excludes police functions such as criminal investigation, arresting suspects, preparing dockets and involvement in the criminal justice system.
- *Search-and-rescue.* The use of aircraft, vessels, specialised rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land or at sea.
- *Disaster-relief and humanitarian assistance*
 - *Disaster relief.* The provision of support for the preservation of life, health and property in emergency situations which exceed the capacity of the civilian authorities.

- *Humanitarian assistance.* The provision of support to alleviate human suffering.
- *Support to other government departments.* Providing assistance when other government departments do not have the capacity or during emergencies.
- *Presidential tasks.* These are tasks that are performed by the Department of Defence for national interest or at the request of the President. The tasks include support provided on an *ad hoc* basis when emergencies occur. Examples are: when soldiers are used to curb the spread of foot-and-mouth disease or cholera, the provision of the National Ceremonial Guard, as well as protection and health care of very important persons.
- *Air transport for diplomatic commitments.* The provision of air transport for the President, the Deputy President, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence and, where capacity allows, other cabinet ministers and provincial premiers.
- *Presidential health support.* A comprehensive military health support to the President, Deputy President and other personnel as directed by the President on a 24-hour basis, both internally and externally to South Africa.
- *Maintenance of the health status of members of the SA National Defence Force.* Maintaining the health status of individuals and groups at an acceptable level for the South African National Defence Force to fulfill its obligations.

What is the task of the Chief of the SANDF (CSANDF)?

According to the Defence Act³ the CSANDF –

- is the principal adviser to the minister on any military, operational and administrative matter within his competence;
- must comply with any⁴ direction issued by the minister under the authority of the President as contemplated in section 202 (2) of the Constitution;
- is responsible for formulating and issuing military policy and doctrines;
- must exercise his command by issuing orders, directives and instructions, and by giving commands;

³ S14.

⁴ The word choice is unfortunate. Neither this clause nor any that follow allows the CSANDF to decline an unreasonable instruction or an impossible directive. Yet, the SANDF can only deliver what is possible within the MTEF (Medium Term Expenditure Framework, see Chapter 4). The SANDF may not budget for contingencies. As a result, “ordered commitments” require the SANDF to divert funds from, for example, its training budget. Adjusting the clause to read: “must comply with any direction issued by the minister under the authority of the President as contemplated in section 202 (2) of the Constitution, provided the funding is available or will be made available immediately from the National Contingency Fund,” may the question of unfunded mandates in this instance. It is understood General Siphwe Nyanda resigned in protest in early 2005, a year into a second five-year term, because of the pressure placed on him by the political establishment to deploy forces he did not have.

- is responsible for the direct management and administration of the SANDF in an effective way, including the effective utilisation and the education, training and development of all members of the SANDF, and employees of the Department where so required by the Secretary for Defence;
- is responsible for the execution of approved programmes of the budget for the SANDF;
- must supply the Secretary for Defence with such information with regard to the Defence Force as may be requested by the Secretary for Defence;
- is responsible for the employment of the Defence Force in accordance with an authorisation in terms of s 201(2) of the Constitution and s18(1) of the Defence Act;
- is responsible for the training of members of the Defence Force to act in accordance with the Constitution and the law, including customary international law and international agreements binding on the Republic;
- is responsible for the maintenance of such military response capabilities as may be authorised by the Minister;
- is responsible for the planning of contingencies which may require the use of the Defence Force;
- must manage⁵ the Defence Force as a disciplined military force; and
- is responsible for the development of a nonracial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture within the Defence Force in accordance with the Constitution and Departmental policy on equal opportunity and affirmative action.

Whilst exercising command and control over the South African National Defence Force, the CSANDF is accountable to the Minister of Defence for the following:

- Meeting all scheduled and ordered defence commitments as specified in the DoD Strategic Business Plan.
- Ensuring that the defence capabilities as specified in the DOD Strategic Business Plan for FY2005/06 are contingency ready and cost-effective subject to the constraints imposed by the Defence Vote for FY2005/06 and its medium-term projection.
- Ensuring, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Treasury regulations, that
 - the system of financial management and internal control established for the DoD are carried out within the SANDF;

⁵ The use of the word “manage” is problematic in this context. Military leaders command their forces and manage their equipment. It is easy to blame the lawmaker for the choice of words, but did they write the legislation, or did the department?

- the resources of the SANDF are used efficiently, effectively, economically and transparently;
- the management and safeguarding of assets within the SANDF are regulated; and
- over- and underspending and unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure do not occur.

How is the SANDF organised?

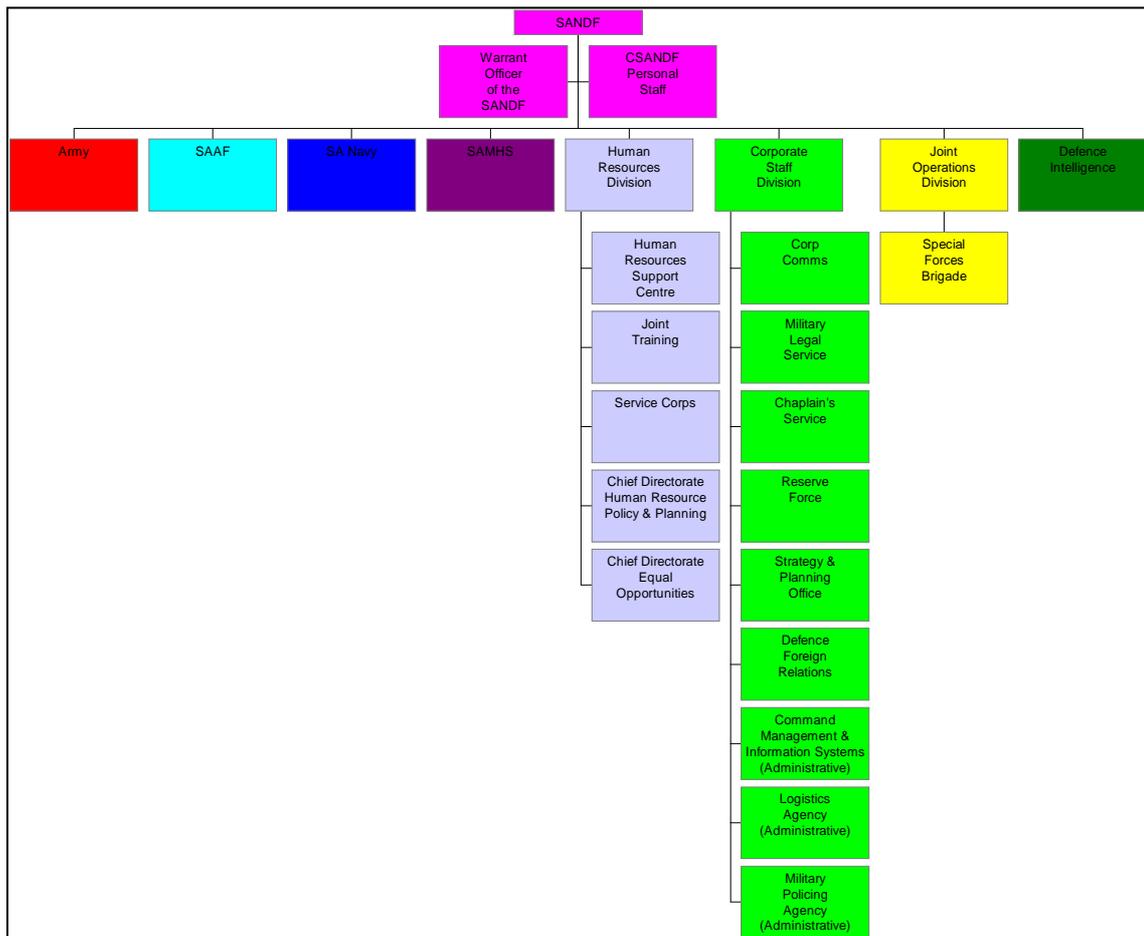


Table 6.3: Organogram: Structure of the SANDF

The SANDF primarily consists of four Services, three combatant and one supporting, as well as a number of inter-service support establishments. The Services are the:

- SA Army (established 1912 or 1956, depending on one’s view⁶);
- SA Air Force (established 1920);
- SA Navy (established 1922 as the SA Naval Service); and the

⁶ See Chapter 9F.

- SA Military Health Service (established as the SA Medical Service in 1979).

A reorganisation in the late 1990s and further, usually unannounced, reorganisations since, have established the following supporting structures:

- Joint Operations Division. The Joint Operations Division is responsible for directing, planning and conducting operations in accordance with the Military Strategy and the “Employ Forces Strategy”. The missions cover all the three military strategic objectives, namely, “Defence against Aggression”, “Support to the People”, and “Promote Regional Security”.
- SANDF Corporate Services Division. The Corporate Staff Division has the provision of a sound centralised staff capability and service to the SANDF as mandate. Reliable and professional service in respect of planning, legal, defence foreign relations, corporate communication, defence reserves and chaplain services are expected. In April 2006 the division also assumed administrative responsible for the defence logistics agency, military policing and management information support to the SANDF.
- Human Resources Division. This division, established in April 2006, has under command the Human Resources Support Centre, Training Command, the Service Corps and the Chief Directorates Policy & Planning and Equal Opportunity, transferred from the Defence Secretariat.
- Defence Intelligence. Defence Intelligence is there to serve the DoD with intelligence in support of operations, planning and policy formulation.

Is the SANDF’s structure clear or is there ambiguity?

The SANDF’s structures are clear and there is little ambiguity. The mandate of each of the Services and divisions are sufficiently distinct and their roles suitably complimentary. However, it can be argued that the creation of the Joint Support Division has created an opportunity to disestablish the SAMHS, or at least, demote it to a component of that division, akin to the Military Police Agency. Establishing the SAMS as an independent service may have made sense in the 1970s when “jointness” was a term yet to be coined. But it makes little sense today, as Exercise African Shield showed in 2003. The medical function in any modern military undertaking must be integrated as a component of the support establishment to work.

Do SANDF leaders command or “rule by committee”?

The SANDF’s structure is clear, but as explored in the previous chapter, in the context of the DoD, the profusion of committees seemingly create a parallel structure. Who is in charge, the commander or the committee, then becomes a matter of organisational culture and personal preference. Indications are the current CSANDF wants less talk and more action. It is said that one of his first commands was for a cut-back in committee meetings.

What is the rank, racial and gender breakdown of the SANDF?

As part of the public service, the DoD is not exempt from the Employment Equity Act (EEA), although the SANDF is. The late and former Defence minister, Joe Modise argued persuasively that the SANDF be exempted from the Act, and the Department of Labour, Cabinet and, ultimately, Parliament, agreed. As such, representativity should not be a major issue within the department. But that is being naïve. With a nominal role of around 50,000 active duty personnel, the SANDF is one of the larger organs of state (although only a third of the size of the SA Police Service, which is now expanding to 165,000). This has placed the department under considerable pressure to comply. Much of this pressure has come from the minister, who as majority party chairman and a man with presidential aspirations, can hardly be seen to lag in this regard, the more so under a president whose administration is showing near fanatical zeal in making all spheres of life representative of the demographics of the country.

Immigration Advisory Board chairman Dr Wilmot James put it thus⁷: “As practiced, affirmative action as government policy has little to do with talent and everything to do with what is sometimes called representativity, having people with the right complexion or gender in the right places, even at cost of talent itself – and also using apartheid-era labels as a proxy for who was advantaged in the past and who was not. These labels might have had some merit in the past but are misleading indicators of who is in need of support. A poor person with talent is the one that needs assistance and affirmative action must be so calibrated to identify that quality of person. There are occasions, too, when affirmative action becomes a means of advancing the personal interest of those who are eligible in the mechanical sense of it, the consequence of which is to compromise quality and begin the ‘slouching’ to mediocrity, as the writer Joan Didion once put it in another context.”

In the SANDF this has translated into strict race and gender quotas for recruits and for attending promotion courses. Further to this is the effort to make every rank group demographically “correct”. This has been achieved in the senior echelons, but lower down, the middle is still “too” white and the bottom “too” black.

awaited

Table 6.4: The rank, racial and gender breakdown of the SANDF

Meet the chief of the SANDF

General Godfrey Nhlanhla Ngwenya

General Godfrey Nhlanhla Ngwenya was born in Johannesburg on 28th April 1950. He attended Orlando High School where he matriculated in 1970. From 1971 to 1976 he was employed by the then West Rand Administration Board (WRAB) as a Grade 1 Clerk. He is married to Busisiwe Portia and

⁷ Dr Wilmot James, What South Africa needs is a radical overhaul of the system, The Star, Tuesday, September 20, 2005, p12.



they are blessed with two sons Lungile and Duma, and a daughter Ntombikayise.

He joined the ANC and ANC's Military Wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), at the height of a student uprising in South Africa in 1976, his motivation being the brutality he witnessed firsthand while working as a senior clerk at the then Baragwanath Hospital. While in exile he underwent military training in Angola and received his further training in the then German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Soviet Union (USSR).

Within MK, General Ngwenya rose through the ranks and held the following appointments:

- 1978 – 1979: Military Instructor.
- 1979 – 1981: Camp Chief of Staff at various camps in Angola.
- 1981 – 1983: Company Commander at various camps in Angola.
- 1983 – 1988: In command of all MK Forces in Angola.
- 1988 – 1991: Member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC as well as MK HQ.
- 1991 – 1994: MK's Chief of Personnel and Training at the MK Army HQ.

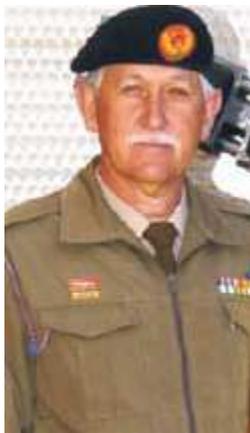
Since integration into the SANDF, General Ngwenya has held the following posts:

- 1994: Appointed as Major General and served as Deputy General Officer Commanding of the then Witwatersrand Command.
- 1996: After completing Joint Staff Course at the Defence College he was appointed as General Officer Commanding of the then Northwest Command in Potchefstroom.
- 1998 –1999: Serves as Chief Director Force Preparation for Chief Army Directorate Force Preparation at Army HQ Office.
- 1999-2000: Serves as Deputy Chief of Joint Operations.
- January 2001: Appointed as Chief of Joint Operations with promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General.
- June 1, 2005: Appointed as Chief of the South African National Defence Force with the promotion to the rank of General.

Since the establishment of the SANDF in 1994 General Ngwenya has attended the Orientation Course for officers, the Senior Army Staff Course (1996) and the Joint Staff Course (1998) General Ngwenya has been awarded with Merit Medal in Silver (MMS).

Table 6.5: CSANDF's biography

Meet the Sergeant Major of the SANDF



Warrant Officer Class 1 JJ Jacobs succeeded WO1 Piet Rohrbeck as Sergeant Major of the SANDF on November 1, 1998. Jacobs joined the SA Army as a clerk in May 1965. He underwent basic training at 1 Special Service Battalion (SSB), Bloemfontein and the Infantry School at Oudtshoorn, graduating in November 1966. For the next year he was an instructor at 2 Armoured Car Regiment. He then returned to the SSB as a tank and armoured car instructor. In December 1976, he was transferred to the School of Armour as an instructor in advanced training.

Jacobs was promoted WO1 in February 1980 and appointed Sergeant Major of the SA Armoured Corps. While in this post, he was seconded to northwest Africa where he taught the Moroccan military the skills necessary to operate the Ratel infantry fighting vehicle and Eland armoured car. His next appointment was Squadron Sergeant Major to the independent 10

Armoured Car Squadron at Oshakati in Namibia in December 1981 and later as Regimental Sergeant Major of the headquarters unit of Sector 10, the major military command in Ovamboland. In January

1985 he returned to Army Headquarters and the task of SA Armoured Corps sergeant major. In 1986 he was again in a training post, schooling the next generation of senior NCOs as Sergeant Major, Training. In January 1987, he became Command Sergeant Major of the SA Army Logistic Command. In April 1993 he became Warrant Officer, Inspector General, DoD, a post he held until late 1998.

Jacobs was born in 1948 in Klerksdorp, now in the North West Province. He graduated from the town's Schoonspruit High School in 1964. He is married with two children. His medals and decorations include: The Pro Merito Decoration, Pro Merito Medal, Military Merit Medal, Pro Patria Medal, The Southern Africa Medal, The General Service Medal, the Unitas Medal, and the 10, 20 and 30 years Good Service Medals.

Table 6.6: The WO of the SANDF's biography. Source: Introducing WO1 Jacobs, www.mil.za/media/salut/introducing_wo1_jacobs.htm, dated 9/2/99.

SA National Defence Force (1994 – present)

Chief of the SANDF

- GEN Godfrey Nhlanhla Ngwenya June 1, 2005 – present
- GEN Siphwe Nyanda* June 1, 1998 – May 31, 2005
- GEN Georg Lodewyk Meiring* November 1, 1993 – May 31, 1998

SA Defence Force (1957-1994)

Chief of the SADF

- GEN Georg Lodewyk Meiring* November 1, 1993 – April 30, 1994
- GEN Andreas J “Kat” Liebenberg November 1, 1990 – October 31, 1993
- GEN Johannes J “Jannie” Geldenhuys* November 1, 1985 – October 31, 1990
- GEN Constand Viljoen* October 7, 1980 – October 30, 1985
- GEN Magnus Andre de M Malan* September 1, 1976 – October 6, 1980
- ADM Hugo H Biermann April 1, 1972 – August 31, 1976

Commandant General of the SADF

- GEN Rudolph C Hiemstra January 1, 1966 – March 31, 1972
- GEN Pieter H Grobbelaar January 1, 1961 – December 30, 1965
- CMDT GEN Stephen A Melville September 25, 1958 – December 31, 1960
- CMDT GEN Hendrik B Klopper September 23, 1956 – September 24, 1958

Union Defence Force (1912-1957)

Chief of the South African General Staff

- LTG Christiaan L de Wet du Toit March 16, 1950 - September 22, 1956
- LTG Leonard Beyers May 2, 1949 – March 15, 1950
- LTG Sir HA “Pierre” van Ryneveld May 2, 1933 – May 1, 1949
- MG Andries JE Brink October 1, 1922 – May 1, 1933
- BG JJ Collyer October 14, 1914 – September 20, 1922

Inspector General of the Union Defence Forces

- BG Sir HT “Tim” Lukin July 1, 1912 – October 13, 1914

Commandant General of the Active Citizen Force

- BG Christiaan F Beyers July 1, 1912 – October 13, 1914

Table 6.6a: Previous Chiefs of the UDF, SADF and SANDF. * Alive at the time of writing, February 17, 2007.

SA National Defence Force (1994 – present)

WO1

- WO1 JJ Jacobs November 1, 1998 – 2006
- WO1 Piet Rohrbeck - October 31, 1998
- WO1 Jan Holliday

SA Defence Force (1950-1994)

Union Defence Force (1912-1950?)

Table 6.6b: Previous WOs of the UDF, SADF and SANDF

What is “rank” and why does it matter?

Rank allows for the systematic grading of seniority and authority within organisations. Within the military, the use of rank and visible insignia are almost universal: the Chinese People's Liberation Army up to the 1980s and the Soviet-era Red Army of Workers and Peasants (between 1918-1935) are rare examples of militaries that consciously abolished the practice – if only for a while.

It is likely that most organised militaries, throughout history, have used a system of military rank, as the larger the military, the more anonymous and generic leaders below the commanding general tend to be – highlighting the importance and need for such a system. The authors of the wikipedia entries on military rank argue the use of formalized ranks came into widespread use with the Roman legions after the introduction of reforms by the consul Gaius Marius which was completed around 60 BC. The system largely fell into disuse after the fall of the Roman Empire.

When ranks re-emerged around the 17th Century, they were initially few in number and restricted to officers – those who held an office granted by the sovereign. The numbers have increased with time and have come to include warrant officers and non-commissioned officers⁸ (NCOs). It bears mention that these developments were highly casuistic, leading to a myriad of systems, many still in use today – and not always compatible – not even in the same country or military alliance.

What is the difference between an officer, warrant officer and non-commissioned officer?

In short, there is a division of seniority, labour, responsibility and accountability. Officers hold a commission from the sovereign and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) do not. Warrant officers hold a warrant, rather than a deed, of commission. In the case of South Africa, an officer's Deed of Commission (see Table 6.7) and a Warrant Officers' Warrant of Commission is signed by the President and Minister of Defence. NCOs are appointed by the Chief of their respective Services.

Whereas commissioned rank in the South African National Defence Force was conferred upon you on (date), I hereby commission you in the name of the Republic of South Africa, to serve your country as an officer, with loyalty, courage, dignity and honour, to discharge your duties and responsibility with zeal and diligence and to set a good example to those placed under your control.

Table 6.7: The wording of a South African officer's Deed of Commission. The Deed is signed by both the President of the Republic and the Minister of Defence. Not just pretty words... It is granted to both

⁸ Those wanting to read more on the subject are advised to visit wikipedia and enter “military rank” in the search field. Hours of entertaining reading are likely to follow.

regular and reserve officers and, based on its content, remains in unlimited force indefinitely, or until an officer is cashiered (stripped of rank), dies, or resigns his commission. After the 1914 Rebellion, Captain Jopie Fourie was shot by firing squad for rising against the Union government without having resigned his commission. An interesting question is to what extent a reserve officer can be expected to observe the above in his/her everyday life.

Officers

The Wikipedia observes that any holder of an office or of a post may bear the title *officer*. “Generally, the word officer implies a rank, and degree of decision-making responsibility, higher rather than lower in a chain of command and reporting. However, in some organizations that use the term, all but clerical workers are termed officers” (police departments and the diplomatic service).⁹ In law, a *commission* is a patent which allows a person to take possession of a state office and carry out official acts and duties.¹⁰ “Although the term commissioned officer is a military term, civilian officers of the government such as judges, justices of the peace, (police), and cabinet ministers also are commissioned, as well as many others. A commission does not appoint a person to an office. The appointment occurs before the granting of the commission itself; however, the commission is necessary for the person to exercise the office.”

An officer holds a position of responsibility. “Commissioned officers derive authority directly from a sovereign power and, as such, hold a commission charging them with the duties and responsibilities of a specific office or position. Commissioned officers are typically the only persons in a military able to exercise command (according to the most technical definition of the word) over a military unit. Non-commissioned officers in positions of authority can be said to have control or charge rather than command per se, although the use of the word command to describe any use of authority is widespread and often official,” the Wikipedia observes.

“Commissioned officers generally receive training as leadership and management generalists, in addition to training relating to their specific trade or function in the military. Most developed nations have set the goal of having their officer corps university-educated, though exceptions exist to accommodate officers who have risen from the non-commissioned ranks. By contrast, non-commissioned members tend to receive relatively little training prior to the commencement of their active service in the military and much of their training is done on-the-job. Education standards for non-commissioned members are typically lower than for officers (with the exception of highly technical trades) and members only receive leadership training as they are promoted to positions of responsibility. In the past (and in some countries today, to a lesser extent) non-commissioned members were almost exclusively conscripts, whereas officers were volunteers,” Wikipedia adds.

Non-commissioned and warrant officers

⁹ Officer, wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Officer>, accessed October 18, 2005.

¹⁰ Commission, wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commission>, accessed October 18, 2005.

“A non-commissioned officer is a person holding a position of authority who has obtained it by promotion from within the enlisted ranks. They will have received some leadership training, but their function is to serve as leaders within their area of trade speciality and they are not generally considered generalists.

“In some ... militaries there exists a third grade of officer known as a Warrant Officer. A Warrant Officer may be simply a high-ranking non-commissioned officer whose position has been affirmed by warrant from the bureaucracy directing the force, or may be a separate grade altogether, sometimes actually holding a commission (known as a "Commissioned Warrant Officer").” The SA Navy had commissioned warrant officers among its number in the 1960s.

The non-commissioned officer corps is regarded as the metaphorical "backbone" of the military and experienced NCO corps is a key component of Western-style armies. “By contrast, the weak NCO corps of the modern-day Russian armed forces, and those modelled after it, is widely blamed for the general ineffectiveness of those militaries. The Russian Federation has recently recognized this problem and plans to develop a fully professional NCO corps,” Wikipedia¹¹ reports.

“Typically NCOs serve as administrative personnel, as advisors to the officer corps, and as both supervisors of, and advocates for, the lower-ranking enlisted personnel. The NCO corps includes all the grades of sergeant and, in some militaries, corporals and warrant officers. The naval equivalent includes some or all grades of petty officer, although not all navies class their petty officers as NCOs.”

Non-commissioned officers – A US Army NCO explains

In the military, there are officers, enlisted, and warrant officers. NCOs are the leaders among the enlisted soldiers, and they pretty much take care of everybody and make sure everybody does what they're supposed to. They train, can order enlisted soldiers to perform duties and such, and they often advise officers and commanders who are wise to take their advice. When you join the military, you start by "enlisting," which is to voluntarily join. You can stay enlisted, or you can elect to go for officer training, which then prepares you to be an officer (Lieutenant, Captain, Colonel, General, etc.) Officers are senior in rank to all enlisted soldiers.

As you rise through the enlisted ranks from private ... to eventually Sergeant, you take on responsibilities. Once you are an NCO, that implies you have leadership responsibility for other enlisted soldiers, especially for their training. (In the US system) there is a Sergeant, then Staff Sergeant, then Sergeant First Class, then Master Sergeant or First Sergeant (that's me), and then Sergeant Major.

A First Sergeant (1SG) is the senior NCO for a company of soldiers (40-200 depending on the unit, we have 140 with about 17 officers). A company is normally commanded by a captain. From Company, up through battalion (BN, several companies), then brigade (several battalions), then division (several brigades), at each level there is a commanding officer and a companion senior NCO. At Company level, that's a 1SG. For BN and above, that's a Command Sergeant Major or CSM.

Officers like to say that NCOs are the "backbone of the Army," and that's because we are the trainers, we lead troops, we get everyone going where they are supposed to, we discipline and correct them. (We often do our own jobs and a lot of the officers' jobs too, truth to tell.)

¹¹ Non-Commissioned Officer, wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Officer>, accessed October 18, 2005.

In the old days, officers were the educated elites, gentlemen of property and breeding. Enlistees were your average working men and labourers, with some specialty trades. Over the years, that's changed dramatically. Officers must complete levels of college education to join and advance, enlisted don't have to but are often as well as or better educated than most officers. Generally, if enlisted soldiers have college, they were often college educated before they joined, while some officers get theirs done while in service. (To advance beyond captain they need an advanced (SA: Masters) degree, and some get them from correspondence or online or other military friendly institutions.) This is true of some enlisted too, but I have found that many college graduates (and even Masters and PhDs) will enlist for some end goal, job training, experience, even a start at a career. Officers often come in with a BA or BS degree and then advance from there. But officers start out with a pay advantage that gets bigger and bigger as they go along.

Table 6.8: "Dadmanly", An anonymous first sergeant explains. From <http://dadmanly.blogspot.com/2005/06/nco-induction.html>, accessed October 18, 2005.

Some have compared the *centurions* of the Roman Army with modern NCOs, officers being latter day equivalents to consuls and legates. "At some levels this comparison may be apt, but a Roman *centurion* was responsible for between 60 and 1,200 men, making him much more comparable to an officer. The Roman *decurion* held a small-team leadership position similar to that of a junior NCO."

In armed forces based on the British model, including South Africa, NCOs are divided into two categories: Lance corporals and corporals are Junior NCOs (JNCOs). Sergeants, staff sergeants, and (in the SA Air Force) flight sergeants, are Senior NCOs (SNCOs).

Warrant officers are often included in the SNCO category, but actually form a separate class of their own. SNCOs and WOs have their own messes, which are similar to officers' messes (and are usually known as Sergeants' Messes), whereas JNCOs live and eat with the unranked personnel.

The SA Navy does not refer to its petty officers and warrant officers as NCOs, but calls them Senior Ratings (or Senior Rates). Leading and able seamen are Junior Ratings.

"Officers, non-commissioned officers, and junior ranks in almost every country of the world are segregated along the lines of the Prussian system of messing, where eating facilities, accommodation, and social facilities are kept separate to ensure relations between various ranks stay strictly professional," the Wikipedia adds.

"Having officers is one requirement for combatant status under the laws of war, though these officers need not have obtained an official commission or warrant. In such case, those persons holding offices of responsibility within the organization are deemed to be the officers, and the presence of these officers connotes a level of organisation sufficient to designate a group as being combatant."

An US NCO induction ceremony

Our Induction Ceremony was very formal, and centred around a declaration of values, Army Values, specifically, which revolve around duty, honesty, integrity, and selfless service. The actual Army Values are typically expressed in about six or seven major values (beliefs or leader characteristics), explained in short paragraphs that are meant to underscore what the Army expects from all its soldiers.

The Induction began with the entrance of the Official Party, consisting of the host, our Battalion (BN) CSM, accompanied a Guest CSM, and our two 1SGs, myself and the C Company 1SG. We opened with an Invocation, which I was invited to deliver, as I have been working with the Chaplain, and no officers were invited to this affair (not even the Chaplain):

Almighty God,

We come to You with thanksgiving tonight, as we assemble to usher into the Noble Corps of Non-Commissioned Officers these seven dedicated leaders. We thank You for their willingness to serve, and we thank You for your divine protection.

Father, we ask that you would be that Rock, that Fortress for these new leaders. Fortify and strengthen them, teach them to be both Your strong hand and caring eye for the soldiers they will lead. Help them honour their oaths, to selflessly serve their Soldiers.

Bless this ceremony tonight, God, and challenge all of the NCOs so assembled, to lift these new leaders up and make them worthy of their charge.

You have called us all to serve, and by Your Grace we do. Amen.

This was followed by an explanation of what an NCO induction represents, and tied this to “What it Means to be an NCO” and a presentation of the Army Values. The Guest CSM spoke, as did our BN CSM. A portion of the ceremony consisted of “A Soldier’s Request,” in which invited lower enlisted soldiers each took a turn stepping up to one of the new NCOs and speaking a request, such as to make sure they are cared for and fed, or treated with respect, or kept informed, or to be led wisely.

Throughout the presentations, attendees and inducted NCOs were constantly reminded of the history and traditions of the NCO Corps, and the sacred charge that is placed on every NCO to reinforce an Army ethic and uphold our NCO Creed, which begins:

No one is more professional than I. I am a Non-commissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a Non-commissioned Officer, I realise I am a member of a time honoured Corps, which is known as ‘The Backbone of the Army’.”

As part of our ceremony, we had each new NCO recite a portion of that Creed. Together, they all spoke its conclusion:

I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Non-commissioned Officers, leaders!

At the pinnacle of the ceremony, we had the new NCOs all line up, and in a single movement step across a line as one, signifying their change in status from enlisted soldiers to NCOs.

With our Benediction, we concluded the ceremony:

Almighty God, You have commanded that we be strong and of good courage, to not be afraid or dismayed. We can trust in You, oh Lord, to be with us wherever we go, from this place and this day forward. Amen.

I know there are some who would cynically dismiss such pageantry as dog and pony shows or hollow rhetoric. And it’s true, some of the Joes and Janes roll their eyes when we go through classes or they have to read through (or sit through) explanations or speeches about Army Values. But you know what? Even the most cynical or jaded Soldiers present at our Induction walked out of that theatre that evening just a little different than they walked in. Somehow a little taller, more confident, with a spring in their step, and with a quiet resolve to try a little harder to live up to those ideals.

Table 6.9: : “Dadmanly”, An anonymous first sergeant explains. From <http://dadmanly.blogspot.com/2005/06/nco-induction.html>, accessed October 18, 2005.

Show the SANDF's rank insignia

AWAITED

Table 6.10:

What are a colonel major, colonel general and a (field) marshal?

None of these ranks are used by the SANDF.

The rank of colonel major is used by French-speaking militaries as an alternative to brigadier/brigadier general. African militaries that use the rank is Ivory Coast, Morocco and Tunisia. In these militaries – and their associated gendarmeries, a brigadier is equivalent to a corporal.

The rank of colonel general has been used differently by Germany and Russia. Up to 1945, the Germans considered colonel general a rank higher than a “full” or “four star” general, but junior to a field marshal. The Germans no longer use the rank. In the Russian and related militaries, a colonel general is junior to a “full” general but senior to a lieutenant general. The rank is still in use. Note, however, that neither militaries used the rank of brigadier/brigadier general, effectively degrading the German and Russian rank one step – in other words, a Russian colonel general is equivalent to a South African lieutenant general.

Marshals and field marshals are officers senior to a “full” general. During World War Two the Soviet military was so large that several grades of marshal existed. The British military, by contrast, only had one grade of marshal, namely the field marshal. South Africa's only field marshal, Jan Christian Smuts, held that rank in the British Army, as the Union Defence Force (a SANDF ancestor) did not offer that rank. Noteworthy is that the US equivalent, General of the Armies, can only be bestowed by Congress, not the American President.

What is an “honorary” colonel” and “honorary “sergeant-major”?

In many militaries, including the SANDF, distinguished officers and other dignitaries are paid the tribute of being elected to serve as the Honorary Colonel of a Regiment. In the US a similar system exists to honour distinguished retired warrant officers – they are similarly elected to serve as the Honorary Sergeant Major of the Regiment. In the US Armed Forces, both positions are normally held for two years. Honorary colonels and sergeants major provide a link between the past and the present, perpetuating the history, customs and traditions of a regiment.

Code of Conduct

FOR UNIFORMED MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

I pledge to serve and defend my country and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the law and with honour, dignity, courage and integrity.

I pledge to serve and defend my country and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the law and with honour, dignity, courage and integrity.

I serve in the SANDF with loyalty and pride as a citizen and a volunteer.

I respect the democratic political process and civil control of the SANDF.

I will not advance or harm the interests of any political party or organisation.

I accept personal responsibility for my actions.

I will obey all lawful commands and respect all superiors.

I will refuse to obey an obviously illegal order.

I will carry out my mission with courage and assist my comrades-in-arms, even at risk of my own life.

I will treat all people fairly and respect their rights and dignity at all times, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, culture, language or sexual orientation.

I will respect and support subordinates and treat them fairly.

I will not abuse my authority, position or public funds for personal gain, political motive or any other reason.

I will report criminal activity, corruption and misconduct to the appropriate authority.

I will strive to improve the capabilities of the SANDF by maintaining discipline, safeguarding property, developing skills and knowledge, and performing my duties diligently and professionally.

RULES OF WAR

In situations of armed conflict I will abide by the rules of international humanitarian law as contained in the Geneva Conventions:

In situations of armed conflict I will abide by the rules of international humanitarian law as contained in the Geneva Conventions:

I will fight only enemy combatants and attack only military objectives.

I will employ methods of attack to achieve the military objective with the least amount of harm to civilian life and property.

I will not attack or harm enemy personnel who surrender. I will disarm them and treat them as prisoners of war.

I will not kill, torture or abuse prisoners of war.

I will not alter weapons or ammunition for the deliberate purpose of increasing suffering.

I will collect and care for the wounded, shipwrecked and sick, whether friend or foe.

I will treat civilians humanely.

I will not tolerate or engage in rape or looting.

I will respect all cultural objects and places of worship.

I will respect all persons and objects bearing the Red Cross, Red Crescent and other recognised symbols of humanitarian agencies.

I understand that disobeying these rules is a crime. It dishonours military personnel and their country, and makes them liable to punishment as war criminals. I will therefore report any violation of the rules to my superiors.

Table 6.11: The code of conduct for uniformed members of the South African national defence force