

## Chapter 7

# The Joint Operations Division: mandate, activities and key personalities



Joint operations are, surprisingly, a relatively new development in military affairs. Throughout most of history “joint” or “combined” operations implied army-navy cooperation – and most examples of this were unfortunate for at least one of the services involved. For this reason, as much as any other, many navies established their own landing forces, or marines. Modern joint operations date to World

War Two, when Britain established Combined Operations as a joint navy, army and air force headquarters to coordinate commando raids on targets in Nazi-occupied Europe. A similar, but Anglo American, establishment was formed to plan and then conduct Operation Overlord, the invasion of northern France in June 1944. Today, joint operations mean those conducted by more than one service and combined operations imply those conducted along with allies.

### **When and why was the SANDF’s Joint Operations Division (J Ops) established?**

J Ops was established on 1 August 1997 during a major reorganisation of the armed forces. Prior to its establishment, each Service had an operations staff responsible for deploying the units of that service as directed by the Service chief and the CSANDF. The latter had his own operations staff, but this acted more as a coordinating body. Where forces from more than one Service operated together for either extended periods or came together for a vital operation, a joint force commander would be appointed, usually the officer in charge of the larger continent. The Air Force and Navy had a permanent joint headquarters (HQ) in the shape of the Maritime HQ at Silvermine, in the mountains just above Cape Town’s Tokai suburb. At that time, the only forces reporting directly to the CSANDF was the Special Forces.

The 1997 reforms followed similar changes carried out in the US Armed Forces under the Goldwater-Nicholls Reorganisation Act of 1986. That Act extended the powers of the commanders of existing joint forces commands, such as European, Central and Pacific Commands, making them “combatant commands”, answerable directly to the Secretary of Defence, not the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Service commanders. The Nunn-Cohen Amendment of 1987 created a Special Forces Command to control the special forces of all Services in the field. Tom Clancy<sup>1</sup> put it this way: “Goldwater-Nichols revolutionised the way the United States military services operate. Each of the military services has its own culture and traditions, its own sources of pride and ways of doing things, but these differences, in addition to the inevitable competition for resources and status, can easily get in the way of cooperation. Meanwhile, the speed – the tempo – of warfare grows ever faster; and war becomes more lethal. The US military must be able to project massive, shattering

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Clancy with General Chuck Horner (USAF) Retd., *Every Man a Tiger, The Gulf War Air Campaign*, Berkley Trade, 2000, pp3-4.

force quickly from many different directions – land, sea, air and space – which means, among other things, that service parochialism is an expensive and dated luxury. The new military mantra is “jointness” – all the services must be able to work together as well as comfortably as with members of their own organisations. Goldwater-Nichols aimed to implement “jointness” by breaking the hold of individual services on their combat forces. All operational control was taken away and given to regional Commanders-in-Chief<sup>2</sup> (Europe, Central<sup>3</sup>, Pacific, Southern<sup>4</sup>, and to some extent Atlantic<sup>5</sup>, Korea and Strategic) and functional Commanders-in-Chief (Transportation, Space, Special Operations).<sup>6</sup> This meant that the services became responsible *only* for organising, training and equipping military forces. Once the forces were operationally ready, they were assigned to one of the Unified Commanders.”

A similar distinction came to be made in South Africa. The Services are now tasked with *providing* properly trained and equipped forces and J Ops is the sole agency for *deploying* forces for operations and force preparation exercises. Forces are assigned per- and for the duration of the mission and afterwards revert back to the service. The exception is the Special Forces Brigade, which is permanently at J Ops’ disposal.

### **What is its mandate?**

The main focus of J Ops is directing, planning and conducting operations and force training in accordance with the Military Strategy and Employ Forces Strategy.

### **What are its responsibilities?**

J Ops is responsible to the CSANDF for directing, planning and conducting and controlling all operations and mission-ready training.

### **How is it organised?**

LTG Deon Ferreira was appointed the first Chief of Joint Operations with effect from August 1, 1997. At the time the SANDF was in the throws of a “re-engineering” process and Ferreira’s division was initially a continuation of the old system – “a new head on an old body”, as someone who was there at the time said. A period of some confusion followed and lasted for exactly two years. On August 1, 1999, the “new head” received a “new body” and five regional joint task forces as well as the Special

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<sup>2</sup> Now “combatant commanders”. US Secretary for Defence Donald Rumsfeld believes the US President is the one and only Commander-in-Chief. Some argue the change was necessary to clarify the terminology, but others felt it was pedantic and paranoid.

<sup>3</sup> South-west Asia and the Horn of Africa.

<sup>4</sup> Latin America.

<sup>5</sup> Now “Joint Forces Command”. At the time it was a Navy command geared for a war against the Soviet Union on, under and above the Atlantic Ocean. Now it concentrates on research and development of joint doctrine.

<sup>6</sup> Since Clancy wrote these lines, Northern Command (the US and Canada) has been established. Space Command controls the US satellite system, including the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Strategic Command the US’ nuclear arsenal, including the US Air Force’s intercontinental ballistic missiles and US Navy’s submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Forces Brigade came under Ferreira's command.

The division was reorganised in February 2003 after the previous system was found wanting. It now consists of a three-tier structure comprising a strategic level headquarters, a joint operational headquarters at the operational level, and nine joint tactical headquarters – one for each province and an *ad hoc* tenth for “special assignments”<sup>7</sup>. The Special Forces Brigade answers directly to the Chief of Joint Operations. The divisional headquarters provides strategic direction and operational planning at the military strategic level. The operational headquarters plans and conducts all internal and external operations as well as joint and multinational exercises on the operational level.

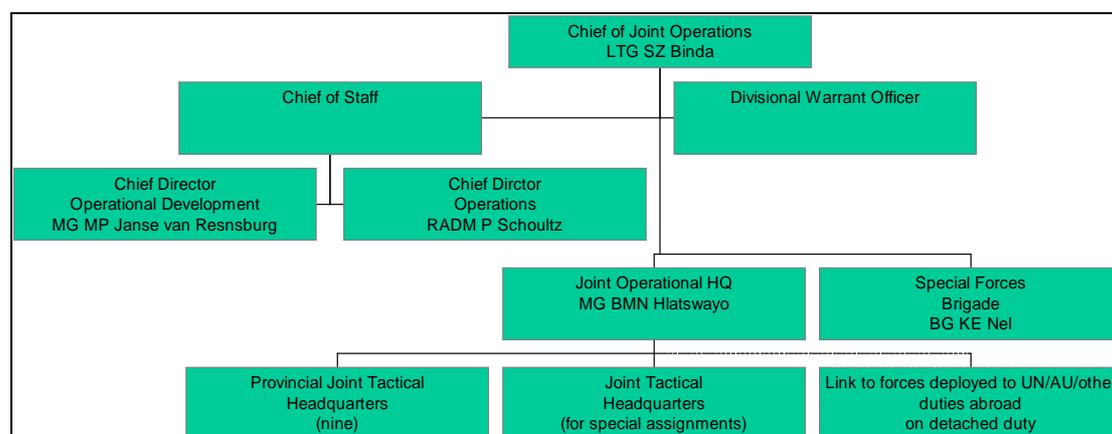


Table 7.1: Organogram: Joint Operations Division

The Joint Operations Division Headquarters plans, directs, co-ordinates and monitors the conduct of all joint and multi-national operations and exercises at military strategic level, as well as provides military-strategic force employment direction to the Department of Defence through the development of joint warfare doctrine, identification and development of joint defence capabilities. The main sub structures of the Division Headquarters are as follows:

- Chief Directorate Operations: Provides strategic direction for the conduct of joint and multi-national exercises to the following Directorates:
  - Directorate Operations: Plans, directs and monitors joint and multi-national operations in respect of peace support operations, conventional operations and internal operations.
  - Directorate Force Preparation, Mobilisation and Training: Directs, monitors and co-ordinates all joint and multi-national force preparation and mission-readiness initiatives and international exercises.
  - Directorate Operational Support: Directs and co-ordinates the support and sustainment of employed forces.

<sup>7</sup> SANDF CDCC response to an enquiry by the author, November 9, 2005.

- Chief Directorate Operational Development: Provides military-strategic force employment direction to the Department of Defence through the following:
  - Directorate Doctrinal Development: Develops joint warfare doctrine for the SANDF.
  - Directorate Capabilities: Directs and manages the identification and development of joint defence capabilities, concepts and plans.
- Joint Operation Headquarters. Executes operations and exercises at the operational level.
- Joint Tactical Headquarters. Conducts internal operations at the tactical level in conjunction with the SA Police Service and other departments.
- Joint Task Forces. When ad hoc operations are conducted – mainly in aid of other government departments, or operations for humanitarian assistance – a Joint Task Force is established for the duration of the operation, after which it is disestablished. There is reportedly an ongoing debate within the division regarding the need for a permanent headquarters for special assignments. At the time of writing the structure was not in existence.

### Meet the Chief of the Joint Operations



Lieutenant General Siphso Zacchius Binda, 54, assumed the rank and his current position on June 1, 2005, when Lieutenant General Godfrey Ngwenya became Chief of the SA National Defence Force.

Binda was born on January 13, 1952 in Johannesburg, where he later matriculated. Binda started his military career when he joined the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto weSizwe in 1977. He joined the SA National Defence Force as a colonel in the Ordnance Service Corps in 1994, holding the posts of deputy director transport in Army Headquarters GS4 and deputy chief of operations. Binda completed his senior officers' orientation course, all arms battle handling and a Joint Staff Duties course in the next several years and was promoted Brigadier on New Year's Day 1997 and appointed Deputy Officer Commanding of the SA Army

Logistic Command.

He became chief director of joint support management in 2000, and served as chief of joint support from November 2004. In 2003, Binda served as commander of the African Union peace force in Burundi. His education includes a Certificate in Defence Management from the University of the Witwatersrand, obtained in 1994. In 1997 he successfully completed the Senior Command and Staff Course at the SA Army College. The next year saw him gain a postgraduate Certificate in Defence Studies from the Royal College of Defence Studies in the United Kingdom.

Binda is married to Malehlohonolo Irene (née Sefako, born November 8, 1955) and has a son and a daughter and two grandchildren. His home language is Zulu and he also has knowledge of Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana.

Table 7.2: The Chief of Joint Operations' biography.

LTG Siphon Z Binda	June 1, 2005 to Sept 2006 <sup>8</sup>
LTG Godfrey Ngwenya	January 1, 2001 to May 31, 2005 <sup>9</sup>
LTG Deon Ferreira	August 1, 1997 to December 31, 2000

Table 7.3: The Roll of Chiefs of Joint Operations



WO1 Sheron Strydom is the first female Divisional Warrant Officer of Joint Operations and was appointed to the post in October 2006. "In June 2001 I was the first woman to be appointed on the operational side as the Acting Task Force Warrant Officer Regional Joint Task Force South. In 2002 I was officially appointed as the Task Force Warrant Officer Regional Joint Task Force South," WO1 Strydom said speaking to SA Soldier.<sup>10</sup> "Then the Task Force became the Tactical Headquarters and I became the Tactical HQ Warrant Officer and also the first woman to be appointed to that post," she added. WO1 Strydom is also the first woman to be appointed on Level 2 (Strategic). She was born in Cradock, and is the third of four sisters. "We are a lovely family and as sisters we are very close to each other," she said.

In 1972 her family moved to Port Elizabeth where she matriculated at DF Malherbe High School. "When I was in high school members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) would come to the school to drill us and that is how I got interested in joining," WO1 Strydom remembered. "One time while I was in matric they had a programme on television about the women's training in George. Then and there I decided to join the Permanent Force." WO1 Strydom joined the military in 1982, and completed her Basic Training Course in Pretoria at Personnel Service Corps School from where she was later transferred to 2 Signal Regiment as a telecommunication operator. "You do get members who will say you cannot do this or you cannot do that because you are a woman, but in my whole career I must say that I have proved them wrong. It is all in the mind and it is all about attitude and commitment. I do not have an attitude problem," she added.

In 1994 she was integrated into the South African National Defence Force as a Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2). In August 1999 she was transferred to Regional Joint Task Force South as WO1 in the SO3 Communication Centre post. "In 1994 when the whole integration process started people were a bit nervous and did not know what to expect, and as time went by I actually realised that nothing was different to the way things were and was it not for the integration process I do not think that I would be where I am today," she continued.

. Rear Admiral Philip Schöultz joined the SA Navy in 1972. He was awarded a B Mil (BSc) at the Military Academy in 1975. He followed this up with a Diploma in Business Management from the University of Stellenbosch in 1989. He was promoted rear admiral in January 2004 and has served as director maritime plans and chief director maritime strategy at the Navy Office. He is currently chief director operations at the Joint Operations Division.

The admiral's seagoing appointments include a tour as weapons officer aboard the SAS Jan Smuts, operations officer aboard the SAS Hendrik Mentz and as commander of the SAS Oswald Pirow. Shore appointments include posts as Staff Officer Training and SSO Personnel at the Strike Craft Flotilla, SSO Surface Warfare, SSO Operations and SSO Operational Staff Duties and Director Naval Management Services at the Navy Office. His medals and awards include the Southern Cross Decoration, Southern Cross Medal, Military Merit Medal, Pro Patria Medal, Southern Africa Medal and the General Service Medal.

<sup>8</sup> Died of heart failure after a vehicle accident.

<sup>9</sup> Promoted C SANDF

<sup>10</sup> Nomonde Vuthela, Heading for the top, SA Soldier, August 2006, p10.

### **BG John Church**

BG John Church was born November 27, 1949 and won the Honoris Crux during Operation Reindeer for flying over enemy-occupied Cassinga town late on May 4, 1978 to check that no paratroopers had been left behind during the hurried evacuation that followed the arrival of Cuban tanks and mechanised infantry on the landing zone. He reported to the SA Air Force Gymnasium in January 1967, started flying as a Candidate Officer in May that year and received his "wings" on February 16, 1968. Later that year he qualified to fly the Alouette II and III light utility helicopters. He did an instructors course in 1970 and became a helicopter instructor until 1975. In 1976 Church converted to Puma medium helicopters and was assigned to 19 Squadron until late 1978. From 1979 to 1981 he was on the operational staff at AFHQ. In 1982 he was promoted 2IC of 19 Sqn and commanded the unit from January 1983 to December 1986. He was then posted to 310 Forward Air Command Post (FACP) at Oshakati, Namibia, serving there for three years. His next assignment was as OC, 303 FACP. From July 1991 to July 1994 he was Military Attaché in France. On his return he was appointed SSO Force Preparation Support Aircraft in the Directorate Force Preparation. In January 1996 he was appointed OC AFP Ysterplaat, a post he held until December 1998. In April 1999 he was appointed OC Air Force Command Post.

Church is married with children and still flies the Oryx helicopter operationally.

### **Deputy GOG Joint Operational HQ ??**

Brigadier General Jan Hougaard won South Africa's then-highest award for bravery, the Honorus Crux, as a captain, in action in southern Angola in 1982 (during Operation Super) while serving with the now much-maligned 32 Battalion.