

**SAAF
ASSOCIATION**



**SALM
VERENIGING**

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EAST RAND BRANCH

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= MAX THRUST =

**** East Rand Branch Newsletter - December 2024 ****



***** WARMEST WISHES, MAY YOUR DAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT *****



Dear Friends,

The festive season is upon us, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has supported us over the past year. Our successes would not have been possible without the relationships we have built with our valued Members and Friends. I am thankful for the opportunity to be part of "The SAAFA Legacy." We have a few exciting projects in the pipeline, I am excited to share the details with you in the upcoming year. On behalf of the East Rand Branch Executive Committee, I wish you and your families a safe, peaceful, and joyous festive season. Warm Regards,
Roelf Rossouw - Chairman



With sparkling lights, cosy weather, and beautifully decorated trees all around, it's time to be merry. The spirit of Christmas binds everyone together and is the perfect time to let your near and dear ones know how much they mean to you. I just want to wish you all the happiness and warmth this Christmas. May you have a joyous and wonderful festive season ahead. Merry Christmas!
Dave Tayler – Vice Chairman



To my fellow ERB members. 2024 has been an exceptional year for the Branch, apart from losing some very dear members. 2025 will be another special year with celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the formation of SAAFA. May it be a special year for all of you and your families. With best wishes.
Marjorie Malan - Secretary

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Thank you to all the Members who paid their Subscriptions for 2023-2024. I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. May it be a special year for all of you, Enjoy all that Christmas brings.
Devon Cardases - Treasurer



The festive season arrives like a warm embrace, draping the world in a shimmering tapestry of twinkling lights, vibrant colours, and the sweet aroma of freshly baked treats; a time where laughter echoes through cosy homes, families gather with open hearts, and the spirit of generosity and joy hangs in the air, reminding us of the magic that lies in human connection.
Have yourself a Merry Christmas!!!
Joey Rossouw - Membership



To all my friends at SAAFA, Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and everything you wish yourself for 2025, good health and many blessings in the year ahead. Merry Christmas.
Shelagh Godfrey - Honorary Member



The 80th SAAFA Congress and all related activities/events will occur from **Thursday 15th May to Sunday 18th May 2025**. It will also include the SAAF/SAAFA Memorial at Bays Hill on the Sunday. Further detail will follow early 2025.

Our thoughts and prayers go to all Members and Friends who are battling illness or who are recovering from surgery.



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**** In the Morning and at the going down of the Sun. We will remember them ****



As we bid farewell to 2024, let us carry forward the legacy of love, laughter and resilience of the dear Members and Friends that were called to higher service this year. Though they may no longer be with us in body, their spirit will continue to bloom in our hearts, reminding us of the beauty and joy of life.
Lest We Forget!

**** Financial position of the Branch ****

I am happy to share that the Branch is in a healthy financial position!

The BEC is extremely grateful and humbled for your continued support and the donations that were made by Members and Friends of the Association, this most certainly supports us in our efforts.

East Rand Branch – Banking Details are as follows:
ABSA Savings Account - Bank Code 632005
Account Number - 9059711295
Reference - Your Name

**** The Early Warning System – Called Gunner *****



This dog's name was Gunner. My uncle brought him back from WW2. He was raised and slept under my uncle's anti- aircraft gun. The gun crew shared their rations to feed him. By the time he was 18 months old, my uncle said he would stand up and look at the sky. If he laid back down they knew all was ok. If he growled and put his hackles up they got at the ready. He knew the sound of the German aircraft and my uncle said he never got it wrong. He said Gunner was better than any early warning system. I'm probably the only one left in the family that knows that story now, so I thought I'd tell it before it's lost forever! Author anonymous!

Courtesy of Marj Malan.



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**** History of the Mine and Military Museum – Springs ****

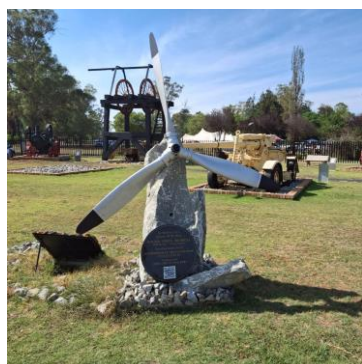
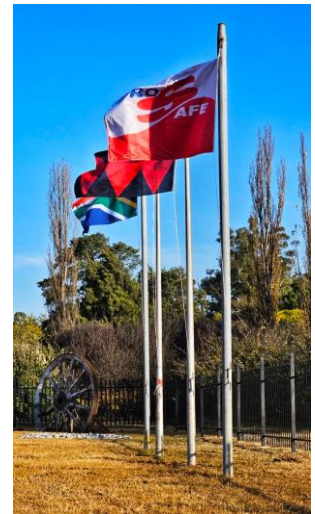
As Antonio da Cruz, *Museum Director writes it!*



I immigrated to Springs from Portugal in 1965 and grew up in this wonderful mining town in the 1970s. As children, we played on many of the Military Monuments and exhibits in various locations. The Moth Memorial in Geduld, The Anti-aircraft Guns in front of the Olympia Park public swimming pools, and the M3 Stuart Tank at Windmill Park. They all left an indelible impression on me, so much so that I volunteered to do military service in 1983. Kimberley, Maintenance Unit.

Thirty-Five years later in 2018 after educating myself, working in corporate for 10 years and then starting and running a successful business in Springs, I felt the need to give back. Regularly seeing my childhood military icons in a dilapidated state spurred me to approach Ekurhuleni with a plan to rescue, restore and display in one place all the neglected Military and Mining exhibits in the larger Metro, from Bruma to Nigel. I invited their Heritage department to a presentation and they loved the idea. They requested a business plan and I started working on it. A year later just before the presentation of the plan COVID rolled in and the project was shelved for three years.

In January 2023 I approached the Metro to resurrect the project. They fast-tracked permissions and a month later we were permitted to use a large piece of the President Park grounds right alongside the R51 freeway into Springs near the waters of President Dam. My first order of business was finding a handful of sponsors to get the basic infrastructure in place. I appointed a friend and former RSM, Errol Brits as Head Curator. His connections to the military and Gunner's association would be instrumental in our future growth. My security company donated all electronic security, a complete Palisade fence donated by CJJ Steel was erected in April, thousands of bricks were donated by Brickor in Nigel to build display plinths, Ash, plastic liners and cement, sand and stone were donated to form the main walkway. Chammel Gardens donated its landscaping services to maintain the gardens in the Museum.



A Mine steam Loco that was in place when we fenced the Museum space in was our exhibit #1. In March 2023 Apex Military base Brakpan donated a written off 120 year old wheel less 1908 Model 96 n.A. Field Gun to MMM. It was moved to Prosafe Security Engineering workshops for restoration. A wheelwright was found and contracted to make a new set of wooden wheels for Laser cleaning was donated and started immediately. On the 4th of June 2023 the first batch of Springs exhibits, the M3 Stuart Tank and two Anti-aircraft Guns were relocated to the new Museum space.

Delmas Crane Hire was approached and without hesitation donated the logistics for the day at no charge. Restoration, sandblasting and spray-painting on those first three exhibits were commenced immediately.

**** History of the Mine and Military Museum – Springs Continued ****



DJ Goosen with Errol Brits. (DJ Goosen is a Member of SAAFA East Rand Branch)

We appointed three more assistant curators, Alan Pollastrini-Gunner, DJ Goosen-Airforce and Sean Byrne-Gunner. MMM was now up and running. Over the following 18 months, we received exhibits from various sources based on our initial successes. Johannesburg Metro donated their 10.5cm Light Field Howitzer Model 98, on display and neglected in Joubert Park. In May Ditsong National Museum of Military History in Johannesburg offered MMM two very rare armoured vehicles for display at our nascent Museum.

A 1925 Vickers Crossley Armoured Vehicle and a 1930's South African Reconnaissance Car Mk 4A Armoured Vehicle. In July they offered us an 1893 Spandau 15cm Howitzer used by the German forces against General Smuts during the war in South West Africa in 1914.



Our efforts to rescue a neglect Harvard Trainer at Dunnottar paid dividends in May 2024 when the asset was officially transferred to MMM custodianship by Swartkop Airforce Museum. After a local outcry about the loss of the icon by the local community, MMM postponed the relocation to MMM to afford them an opportunity to form a community structure to raise funds and maintain the aircraft in-situ. This unfortunately has not materialized and MMM shall be relocating the aircraft early in the New Year.

After much negotiation and discussion, Lt Col Gaelejwe, OC of SAAF Museum Swartkop authorized the gate guard donation of a handful of secondary Air Force exhibits from their storage area. The first was a complete 1954 Mirage III (Tail No 809) fuselage with accessories such as extended fuel tanks and a missile. Restoration was started immediately with the intent to have it painted and pole-mounted by March 2025.



On the mining side, Benoni Metro offered us the Modderfontein Mine headgear sheaves that were in storage. We committed to rebuilding the headgear and mounting them as per the original photo available. Grootvlei Mine offered us coco pans and a headgear sheave they had in storage as well. Two WW2 War hero Memorials were also erected with generous donations. One for Job Maseko, a North African campaign hero who single-handedly sunk a German freighter at Tobruk and the other for Roger Bushell, the mastermind of the Great Escape. Both were Springs born and bred.

The Museum is growing at an astonishing pace and its future as a nationally significant heritage space is assured.

Courtesy **Antonio da Cruz** *Museum Director*

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**** Season's Greetings ****



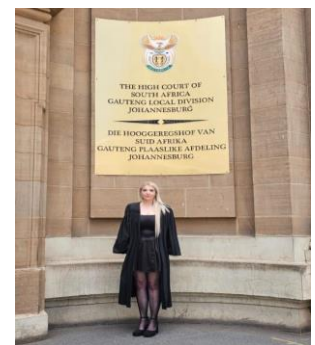
**** Member Spotlight – Liiza-Daniëlla Grobler ****



Warmest congratulations on an outstanding achievement! On 18 October 2024 Liiza-Daniëlla Grobler, got admitted in the high court of South Africa, Johannesburg Gauteng. Her application was heard before, Deputy Chief Justice of Gauteng Roland Sutherland and Justice Leonie Windell.

Advocate Brigit Brammer who assisted Liisa, introduced her to the bench and asked the court to admit her as follows:" The applicant is an exceptional character, shows integrity, strong morals, has a combination of intellect and compassion, I submit that those are the qualities that the profession deems fit and proper."

Congratulations Liiza-Daniëlla, May your journey be filled with continued success and happiness!!!



Liiza Grobler,
A Member of the ERB.

**** New Members ****

A joyous welcome to all our new members! We're thrilled to have you join the SAAFA family. It's a true honour, and we can't wait to create unforgettable moments together. Here's to laughter, friendship, and all the wonderful experiences that lie ahead!

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**** Monthly Luncheon's ****



Monthly Luncheons are held every third Friday of the Month from noon till late! Café @ The Range in Kempton Park with their friendly staff and warm, inviting atmosphere make every meal feel like a special occasion.

In the year ahead, we will continue this initiative to build in the opportunity for you to get to know your SAAFA friends better - either during these monthly luncheons or attending happy hour or other social events. Kindly make your reservations on time as our meals are prepared based on the number of bookings. Always an enjoyable experience!!!!



**We are excited to announce that our next luncheon is coming up 17th January 2025!
We can't wait to see everyone there!!**

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**** Final Approach and Shutdown ****



I extend my thanks to everyone for being part of "The SAAFA Legacy", may the rest of 2024 be peaceful. With love and warmth of heart, wishing you a Merry Christmas with a blessed 2025, God Bless...

Roelf and Joey.

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*** NOTAM ***

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