

June 2023 - Pretoria

The Flying Spirit

The Official National Newsletter of the SAAF Association



“Let’s make SAAFA Great Again”

DON'T RETIRE

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SAAFA**



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Cover Photo: Colonel (Ret) Dirk Blom – SAAFA West Coast Chairman.

South African Air Force Association

78th National Annual General Meeting – May 2023

Gqeberha - Eastern Cape.



The 78th SAAFA National Congress was hosted down in the Eastern Cape in the friendly city of Gqeberha [Port Elizabeth], at the Pine Lodge Resort, over the period of 25th to 28th May 2023. Our friendly hosts met us at the airport and we were bussed off to the Pine Lodge Resort to register and then settle into our Cabins. The first evening was a welcoming supper and in true SAAFA spirit, all enjoyed some great camaraderie at Ziggy's Pub.

The next morning saw the Official Opening of the SAAFA Congress with the Act of Homage taking place before the National President welcomed everyone. The Chief of the SAAF, Lt Gen Mbambo opened proceedings and delivered a "State of the Air Force" message to the delegates and their spouses.

The "*Annual General Meeting [AGM]*" was officially opened by the National President and the first Session began. Brig Gen (Ret) Rod Penhall gave a short brief on United Nations Humanitarian Relief Operations and provided personal insight into his experiences.

While the business of the Congress was underway, the spouses enjoyed some time out and about enjoying historical sights and touring a winery. The first evening's festivities were preceded by a few fly-pasts and aircraft demonstrations (mainly helicopter).

Thereafter refreshments and a meal were enjoyed at Ziggy's, with the main event being the "Auction" of wines and books. Some much-needed funds were raised in this way for the Branch.

The second day [Saturday] saw the business part of the AGM continue, while the spouses enjoyed a visit to SANCOB and a gallery.

Everyone then got together after lunch at the Air Force Base and we visited the SAAF Museum. This was truly a wonderful experience and a sight to behold – The Museum [and all involved in the upgrades] can be commended on a truly wonderful display. With Heritage being one of the Pillars of SAAFA, this is one of the inspirational stories to share. When anyone is down in the area, please go and see for yourselves as it is well worth the visit

Thereafter everyone went back to the Lodge and prepared for the Awards Banquet. The Banquet was a great success and the Chairman of the PE Branch, Trevor Bernberg, and his great Team can be congratulated on a truly magnificent affair.

It was confirmed at the Banquet that both the President and Vice-President will serve in their respective positions for the next year. Congrats to Mike Louw and Trevor Slade, respectively, and we wish them well in the forthcoming year. Awards were presented to a large number of members and in total more than 70 Awards were presented.

Article by Col (Ret) Bill De Pinho – Chairman SAAFA Pretoria Branch

Opening of the 78th National General Meeting

Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt Gen W.S. Mbambo, psc(j), ensp.

The Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth's) gentle wind whistled the celebratory tune together with the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lieutenant General Wiseman Simo Mbambo at the opening ceremony of the South African Air Force Association (SAAFA) National Congress on Friday, 26 MAY 2023 at the Pine Lodge Resort in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape Province.

“As aviators, we know that we are not designed to remain on the ground more than what is necessary, for this reason, we become restless and short-tempered when we are not in the air where we belong. Equally, we know that when we are in the air, we can come across all sorts of winds: headwinds, crosswinds, there is also thunder, and storms but we also know that up there are also tailwinds, therefore the SA Air Force will not rest until we can get back in the sky in big numbers, because that is where we belong,” declared the Chief of the SA Air Force.



The opening of the 78th Congress and Annual General meeting which was graced by the Chief of the SA Air Force, together with his wife, Dr. Thokozani Mbambo proved to have been a great success. The two were welcomed by the National President of the SA Air Force Association, Colonel (Ret) Mike Louw. The SA Air Force Association consists of all ranked retired SA Air Force members who continue to champion and support the SA Air Force brand.



Lieutenant General Mbambo opened his speech by also extending warm regards to the National Vice President of the SA Air Force Association, Mr. Trevor Slade, former SA Air Force Association President Major General (Ret) Hugh Paine, Acting Director of Corporate Staff Services in the SA Air Force Brigadier General Hilton Smith, Officer Commanding Air Force Station Port Elizabeth Lieutenant Colonel Kamogelo Mosiane, and the Port Elizabeth

branch Chairperson, Mr. Trevor Bernberg.

Moreover, he gave feedback and progress to the SA Air Force Association members on the assignments that were given to him at their last meeting, “We engaged and exchanged views and separated on a very good note and I accepted my assignment of being a SA Air Force Association patron.”

He saw an opportune moment to proudly share the remarkable progress and achievements of the organization, “The SA Air Force is currently at the forefront of developing space capabilities, by working in close collaboration with our industry partners, especially the National Earth Observation Space Secretariat (NEOSS), SANSa, Director of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and partaking in internal and external operations.

The SA Air Force was actively involved in disaster relief in February through Operation CHARIOT when the country was hit by floods. “He then shared, “Tragically, in February this year we lost one of our members who was deployed under Operation Mistral, Sergeant Vusumuzi Mabena, a Flight Engineer that still had so much to live for, may his brave soul continue to rest in peace.

I would like to take the opportunity to commend Major Jan Augustyn, Captain Rebotile Mothoa, Warrant Officer Allistair Prince, and Sergeant Kamogelo Raphiri for the daring rescue mission that they conducted on the Lurio River, in Mozambique on 10 March 2023, that man is alive because of them,” Lieutenant General Mbambo said.



The Chief of the SA Air Force emphasized the importance of “***FREEING THE EAGLE***”, which is the SA Air Force’s new slogan that speaks to the mind shift, a change in the organization’s thinking to thrive innovatively through its challenges.

He shared with the SAAFA members that there are many changes that have happened within the organization’s command structure, all the Major Generals are newly appointed.

Annual Report – 78th National Annual General Meeting

National President Colonel (Ret) Mike Louw.

Well, we are now three years down the line since the hard lockdown of 2020 was instituted and much has happened since then. The converse is, however, also true, in that in some instances not much has happened, with the blame for this being placed on Covid. Thankfully during 2022 many Branches showed strong revival, awakening from what can be termed as a slumber, and have started to reinstitute Branch activities in an effort to normalise things, if that is even possible. Perhaps it is time to think outside of the box and to develop a new normal for ourselves, being creative and perhaps changing the way we did things in the past. Fundamentally though is that we continue to do things with the four pillars of the Association providing a sound basis, namely camaraderie, heritage/remembrance, benevolence, and support to the SAAF and general aviation industry. We will need to identify and exploit all possible opportunities as they present themselves to grow and expand our sphere of influence. I have no doubt that we have within SAAFA members with the calibre to rise to the occasion and to shape the way we need to do things going forward.

With the SAAF's new vision and mission that was crafted towards the end of 2021, it provided us with an opportunity to also craft for ourselves an updated vision and mission, although one that would remain true to our founding principles. Much as the SAAF's slogan calls to "Free the Eagle", so it is that we as SAAFA should also seek ways and means of unleashing our inherent combined abilities to rise to the challenges of the current and future environment, and not merely to accept the mundane, blaming any inactivity on Covid. Let's make SAAFA great again.



Having said the foregoing, it is now time to reflect on our activities of the past year. I have no intention of repeating ad nauseum that which is incorporated into the various portfolio reports, but will only highlight a few salient points under each heading.

SAAF, MAAC LIAISON and PUBLIC RELATIONS

In September of 2022, we commemorated the centenary of the first recorded fatal military aircraft accident in South Africa, which occurred on the Irene Dairy Farm near Centurion. This was a SAAFA initiative and we were ably assisted and supported by the SAAF and the van der Byl family.

There has been a distinct lull in the Corporate Staff Services environment at the Air Command over the last few years which, unfortunately, has a negative impact upon the updating and maintenance of guest lists resulting in advanced planning for upcoming events not being handled and executed timeously causing much embarrassment for all concerned.

From our side, particularly at Branch level, we need to ensure that we remain on a good footing with Base and Unit Commanders by ensuring that there is very good communication and mutual respect.

The interactions with the Military Attaché and Adviser Corps continue which is a most rewarding SAAFA-related activity.

Good relations exist between SAAFA and various foreign country missions, particularly that of Korea, Taiwan, the USA, Thailand, and the UK.

My thanks and appreciation is expressed to Craig Stanton for having taken over this portfolio from Philip Weyers. I am sure that he will present a more comprehensive picture during the course of this Congress.

HERITAGE

During the past year, SAAFA was well represented at a number of Memorial Services held countrywide. The condition of the SAAF Memorial site is reasonable with no acts of vandalism having been reported during the course of the past year. Renier Feldtmann continues to ensure that the national memorial events receive the appropriate treatment and support.

Renier, together with Bruce, Harrison has been assigned to compile guidelines for Branches to establish the whereabouts, record and compile a database of all SAAF-related memorial sites spread throughout the Country and to accept ownership to ensure the maintenance and upkeep thereof.

The intended Heritage Chapter for the Manual of Administration is currently in its third draft and it is foreseen that this will be finalised during the course of this year and be incorporated into the MoA before our next Congress.

FINANCES

In terms of our finances, we continue to live within our means, which will ensure that our Association will have a long financial horizon. This will only be possible by sticking strictly to our approved budget and cutting unnecessary costs. Cost saving remains the name of the game and the National Secretary, together with our National Treasurer, are doing a sterling job at ensuring that we spend within our means and budget.

Our investment at Sanlam Private Wealth continued to provide us with reasonable returns despite the volatile market conditions. More about this will be said in both the financial and investment reports.

Although we ended the year with a net loss of R66 856 in terms of our income and expenditure, this was mainly due to the fact that we had additional Congress expenditure that was not originally budgeted for, as well as financial support towards the Curamus Association and the SAAF WO and NCO Achiever Awards.

There was also an increase in honorarium expenses after it was approved to compensate our Treasurer for the work that she puts into handling our financial affairs.

Additionally, we did not make use of the budgeted drawdown of R50 000 from our SPW investment which also impacted upon the increased deficit. Nonetheless, the statement of financial position clearly illustrates the healthy state of our Association, with assets being represented in the main by our investment in Sanlam Private Wealth, which has increased in value from R1 664 853 to R1 738 989 (almost 4.5%).

In terms of Funds and reserves, we commenced 2022 with R2 278 381 and ended 2022 with R 2 239 238 funds under administration. The General Fund stood at R921 185 at the end of 2021 and now reflects a balance of R1 021 716 at the end of 2022.

BENEVOLENCE

The ongoing efforts by Branches to support the needy are greatly appreciated. My appreciation goes to Trevor Slade for his commitment to improve the lot of those less fortunate and he has ensured that from National level we are able to assist in terms of the annual bonuses.

By the end of 2022 seven Branches had supported thirteen Beneficiaries and funds expended towards their welfare totalled almost R370 000. This figure consists of monthly Branch and Christmas Donations and NEC Christmas Bonus' paid to Branch Beneficiaries. It is envisaged that during 2022, seven Branches will be supporting twelve Beneficiaries.

On this note it must be reiterated that Branches are to ensure that every Branch Beneficiary is assessed at least on an annual basis and even more often where necessary. However, our Beneficiaries should not be seen as a burden, but as an opportunity to celebrate one of our main reasons for existence through that profound pillar of Benevolence. We encourage those Branches with no Beneficiaries to please consider giving support to their local Air Force Base should there be one, or indeed to local Charities, particularly Hospices that provide support to ailing ex-servicemen and women.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

We continue to have very good relations with individual veteran organisations and the Council of Military Veteran Organisations (CMVO). Once again I have to report that the revision of the Military Veterans Act of 2011 has still not been completed. While we had hoped that the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) would finally make some progress in providing the much needed support to veterans, this is sadly still seriously lacking.

However, the proposed regulations regarding the military veterans' pension benefits were published but these were met with widespread criticism as it initially excluded members of the statutory forces. Due to pressure exerted from all quarters, this has since been amended to be all inclusive.

Notwithstanding, there is still no satisfactory feedback regarding Veterans' registration, and due to the POPI Act, we as an Association are unable to follow up on submissions unless we are given a mandate through a power of attorney by affected individuals. Together with the CMVO, we intend to vigorously pursue this matter during the forthcoming year.

Once again I need to reiterate that it is vitally important for every member of SAAFA to be registered on the database of the Department of Military Veterans. The benefits are considerable and we encourage every Branch to launch a campaign to register their members with the DMV.

The CMVO Constitution is being revisited and we as an Association are very much active in the process.

MEDICAL

Our National Medical Liaison Officer, Bill de Pinho, endeavours to maintain cordial relations with the Regular Force Medical Continuation Fund as well as the South African Military Health Services. The recently rolled out Schedule of Benefits has caused widespread consternation, particularly for veterans residing far from military medical facilities. Despite the initial negative sentiment, there are many positives in the new system and this will be elucidated upon by Bill de Pinho later on.

Although the RFMCF Offices continue to be closed to members, they have been mostly helpful via telephonic and email enquiries. The RFMCF have published via email and SMS different messages and have kept members up to date with what is happening.

A vital aspect though is that of communication. Beneficiaries of the RFMCF are encouraged to download and register on the applicable App so as to remain abreast of affairs and to source authorities for medical services required.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Chairpersons and/or Medical Liaison Officers of those outlying Branches who are doing sterling work in assisting particularly the elderly veterans to access medical assistance as and when required.

CONSTITUTION, REGULATIONS and RECORDS

At the 77th Annual General Meeting of the SAAF Association in May 2022 a resolution was passed updating the SAAFA Constitution by replacing the concept of Sub-branches with the concept of Satellite branches. The Constitution of May 2022 is therefore the latest version and was duly signed by the office bearers.

With respect to the Manual of Administration, during the past year NEC has approved one change that has been incorporated in the latest version and has been made available to branches.

Chapter 2 was updated to explain the concept of Country Vice Presidents more clearly. Our Records will be updated after this Congress.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to Hugh Paine for the relentless manner in which he perseveres to ensure that we remain up to date and relevant.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership has always been an ongoing task with new ways and means of getting information to update the membership database of each Branch being developed. This in itself brings about its own challenges.

Although our membership status has remained rather stable, there are a few Branches that are showing remarkable signs of growth. This can be attributed to their vibrant Branch Executive Committees being led by passionate Chairpersons. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of all Branches and in some instances one sadly notes the continuous comments in monthly reports that no meetings were held or no activities took place. In these instances it is clear that stagnation has set in which stymies any growth potential.

Branches are reminded of their responsibility to maintain and update their records on the SAAFA online database on our saafa.co.za Website. It is imperative that the records of Branches and the National Database are aligned and there are no discrepancies. Should problems be experienced then the NEC Membership Portfolio Coordinator should be consulted for assistance.

My thanks to Roelf Rossouw for having volunteering to take over the Membership Portfolio last year and for the effort he has put in thus far.

CAMARADERIE

Amongst others, our Constitution clearly states that the Association has been formed to perpetuate a tradition of comradeship. Thus camaraderie remains one of the fundamental pillars of our Association.

Active camaraderie in our Association is vital for the wellbeing of every member, for the wellbeing of every Branch and for the wellbeing of SAAFA at large. Every military person knows that care for one's comrade is pivotal to the success of any venture.

That injunction is clear to us all in SAAFA and we strive to uphold the pillar of camaraderie in all that we do.

WEBSITE

In contrast with the SAAFA Facebook Group, our Website is mainly used to distribute formal information regarding the Association i.e. Records, Roll of Honour, Patrons, Elected Officials, Branch Information etc, whereas the Facebook Group fulfils the social media side of member and Branch activities.

However, the official site in many cases is considered to be a more reliable source of information (as it should be) and therefore many members prefer browsing the Website rather than Facebook. For this reason we need to ensure that the Website remains relative, informative and attractive to address visitor needs.

Branches are requested to provide the Webmaster with pictures and information regarding Branch activities in order to update the Website on a regular basis.

Branches are now able to update their member database with special focus on Member Status (Active or Nor-Active) and Last Levies Paid.

My thanks and appreciation goes to Koos van Rensburg for his dedication in maintaining our Website.

NATIONAL OFFICE

The NEC monthly meetings have been held using the Zoom platform and more recently Teams. The online meetings have proved very effective, as all parties could interact from far and wide. A number of meetings have, however, also been held at the National Office at Swartkop.

Going forward it has been agreed to adopt a hybrid model with on-site meetings being held every quarter and the balance of the meetings will be held via Teams. This is also to compensate for the impact of load shedding and the effect thereof on traveling time.

In terms of regalia, this may still be sourced via the National Office. However, there are a number of Branches that have had merchandise manufactured through local suppliers. Whilst NEC is not averse to this practice, it is imperative that the SAAFA logo used is heraldically correct and that our sacred golden fish eagle is not corrupted into looking like a flying turkey or something similar. *Designs are to be formally submitted to NEC for consideration and approval.*

Our National Secretary will present more information regarding the National Office during her report back session.

NEWSLETTER

Over the past year our new editor of the National Newsletter, Roelf Rossouw, has not disappointed with his enthusiasm and drive. He also introduced Snippets so as to keep members informed of happenings within our Association.

Branches are again encouraged to provide material that will be of national interest, although Roelf makes a concerted effort to assess the Branches monthly reports for excerpts for the Newsletter. If Branches do not feature in the Newsletter, it is because they have failed to submit monthly reports to the National Office.

My thanks and appreciation to Roelf for the sterling work done in this regard.

AWARDS

Jaap Rossouw has once again efficiently managed the awards process over the past year and he reports that there has been a pleasant increase in the number of citations submitted for consideration. This is very pleasing indeed.

A concerted effort has been made during the past number of years to achieve consistency with the approval of awards nominations, despite a level of bias which inevitably creeps in during the drafting of motivations. Consistency will remain a primary objective of the Awards Committee.

CONCLUSION

I wish to thank the Port Elizabeth Branch for their willingness to have accepted the responsibility to arrange Congress 2023, and for all the preparatory work that they put in.

It is great that after the disappointment of 2020, we have since been able to set aside a few days to deal with the soft issues normally associated with Congress.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our Patrons for their support during the year. I would also like to thank all the members of the National Executive, including the Country Vice Presidents, for their commitment and contributions.

As a point of interest I would like to emphasise that NEC members are also actively involved in their own Branches in addition to their National activities, which amounts to them committing substantial amounts of time and effort to our Association.

I would like to thank the Chairmen and Chairwomen of the Branches for their personal contribution and those of their members. Our members are the Association and without them, there would be no Association.

I thank you.

M.J. LOUW

NATIONAL PRESIDENT SAAFA

Article by Col (Ret) Mike Louw – National President SAAFA

From the NEC Benevolence Portfolio.

Warm Benevolent greetings to all readers of The Flying Spirit. Our recent 78th Congress in Port Elizabeth clearly demonstrated that the Pillar of Friendship and Camaraderie in our SAAF Association is alive and well and the following is a brief extract from my Benevolence Report delivered at Congress.



“The recovery we are making after the Covid-19 pandemic is certain and the good work going on at our Branches and the NEC is clearly seen. Someone once said that ‘Great works are performed not by strength but by Perseverance’, and it’s that dedicated Perseverance by all of us that sees our SAAF Association continues to flourish and grow.

When we look at the SAAFA Pillar of BENEVOLENCE (or Well Being) we can easily see that close relationship enjoyed with the SAAFA Pillar of FRIENDSHIP and CAMARADERIE. And I say that because when we consider the Principles of both practises we see the importance of fostering a friendly SAAFA COMMUNITY...Encouraging Members to get to know each other by meeting regularly and sharing stories and experiences. This promotes a sense of SAAFA INCLUSIVITY and PARTICIPATION where Members feel VALUED and RESPECTED, listening to and learning from each other’s perspectives and CELEBRATING the unique qualities that make each SAAFA Member special.

The story is told that the English Poet Rupert Brooke once paid a dirty little boy a sixpence to wave to him from a Liverpool quay as he set forth on a voyage to the United States. It was just Brooke’s expression of a longing for friendliness in his time of loneliness. We can’t let that situation happen to our SAAFA Members and Beneficiaries”.

In addressing our Leadership at Congress I mentioned in my Report that, “As strong leaders of our Association we are all intrinsically obliged to lead by EXAMPLE, and in both Benevolence and Camaraderie we LEAD with those elements of COMPASSION, GENEROSITY, KINDNESS and SERVICE that BENEFITS our SAAFA Community as a whole. I encourage every Branch Executive to focus on and share these attributes as we strive to grow and develop our SAAFA FAMILY. We volunteers are the elected LEADERS of the South African Air Force Association.

We all come out of the history, discipline and service of the South African Air Force and we now graciously remain in service to all the Members of our Association. It's what SAAFA Benevolence and the Well-Being of our Members is all about...I commend all of us to this noble task".

Congress as usual was fantastic and I certainly encourage every Member of SAAFA to attend and enjoy SAAFA Camaraderie and Congress fun.

Trevor Slade.

NEC Benevolence Port Folio.

A Glance of the Biography of the Guest Speaker Brig Gen (Ret) Rod Penhall.

Rod joined the South African Air Force in 1968 and flew the F-86 Sabre and MB-326 Impala Jets as well as the Alouette III and Puma Helicopters. In 1980 Rod was promoted to Officer Commanding 16 Squadron, 70 ACP, OC Ciskei Air Wing (seconded through Foreign Affairs SA) and OC Air Force Base Bloemspruit. In 1997 Rod was appointed South African Military Attaché to India, thereafter Officer Commanding Air Force Base Waterkloof and lastly Director of the National Aviation Academy at Air Force Headquarters. Rod retired from the Air Force in 2005 as an A1 Flight Instructor and PAI at the rank of Brigadier General. After his distinguished military career Rod served as Chief Air Transport Officer and Civil Military Liaison for the United Nations Joint Logistic Centre in various world theatres. In 2006 he returned to flying as a fire fighter and medical rescue helicopter pilot and instructor in Africa, Antarctica and Kosovo, before joining Tensho Rod was deployed as Base and Air Operation Manager in Balad Iraq.



Article by – The Editor

SAAFA Awards Ceremony.

The following members/Institutions were awarded for their efforts and unselfish Contribution to the SAAFA at large:

Order of the SAAF Association – Gold

H Blok
J C M Holmes (Morgan)

Outeniqua Branch
Pietermaritzburg Branch

Order of the SAAF Association – Silver

J W Bayne (John)	Durban Branch
D J Blom (Dirk)	Weskus Branch
T V Cockbain (Tim)	Port Alfred Branch
M L Mostert (Marianne)	Pretoria Branch
J Pentz (Johan)	Whale Coast Branch
A J Rogers (Annetjie)	Port Alfred Branch
R J Rossouw	East Rand Branch

The SAAF Association Certificate of Merit

H Becker (Hilze-Mari)	Cape Town Branch
L Becker (Leon)	Cape Town Branch
L Becker (Boertjie)	Cape Town Branch
S W Behn (Siegfried)	Cape Town Branch
R & G Best (Roger & Grieta)	Outeniqua Branch
T Botha (Tiaan)	Pretoria Branch
W Carstens (William)	Cape Town Branch
G J & E Coetzee (Jerry & Eunice)	Whale Coast Branch
P C & M A Dagg (Peter & Marie)	Whale Coast Branch
T J & V E de Munnink (Theo & Valerie)	Whale Coast Branch
R & S Drummond (Robert & Sandra)	Outeniqua Branch
L W Hall (Lee)	Cape Town Branch
M Hubsch (Marlit)	Pretoria Branch
D Janse van Rensburg (Dewald)	Cape Town Branch
W Jakutowicz (Witold)	Cape Town Branch
J Julyan (Jules)	Cape Town Branch
R P Keet (Rynier)	Cape Town Branch
D L & R M B Knoesen (Dave & Beverley)	Outeniqua Branch
G Luden (Garth)	Pretoria Branch
C E & A E Luyt (Charles & Averil)	Whale Coast Branch
J S M Oosthuizen (Oosie)	Cape Town Branch
J H & A Snyman (Toekie & Annetjie)	Whale Coast Branch
R Stebbing (Raymond)	Cape Town Branch
G J van der Merwe (Gerrie)	Cape Town Branch
H J van Reenen (Henry)	Pretoria Branch
R B & S Weideman (Bennie & Cathy)	Outeniqua Branch
T J Wilson (Terrence)	Cape Town Branch
Hermanus Golf Club – Two Chefs	Whale Coast Branch
Hermanus Old Boys Club	Whale Coast Branch
The Bowls Tavern – Groenkloof	Pretoria Branch
28 Squadron	Pretoria Branch
Pine Lodge Inn	Port Elizabeth Branch
F F Gosher (Felix French)	East Rand Branch

Order of the SAAF Association – Bronze

T Bernberg (Trevor)
S Blom (Dirk)
B G Butler
J Nel
A Pentz (Johan)
A Ranger
R C Sinclair (Rob)
C R Stanton (Craig)
R Stanton (Rene)
I Uys
M J van Wyk (Marius)
E J Wesley (John)

Port Elizabeth Branch
Weskus Branch
Outeniqua Branch
Whale Coast Branch
Whale Coast Branch
Weskus Branch
Durban Branch
Pretoria Branch
Pretoria Branch
Outeniqua Branch
Outeniqua Branch
Port Alfred Branch

The SAAF Association Presidential Merit Award

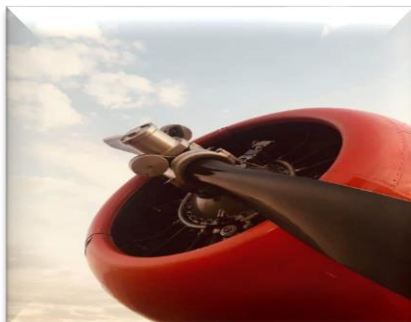
D Beyers (Dave)
M J Bruyns (Mark)
V E Bruyns (Vanessa)
A de Waal (Adrian)
K le Roux (Karin)
D J Pearce (Dave)
L Pearce (Lorraine)
G Ranger (Gerda)
J H Rossouw (Joey)
G E Rowles (Deon)
D W Schoeman (Dawid)
T C Schultz (Thorton)
P Schultz (Patricia)
S L Stanton (Stacey)
A P Stewart (Anne)
A J Visser (Anton)
E J Visser (Elsa)
W Weideman (Wendy)

Port Elizabeth Branch
Pretoria Branch
Pretoria Branch
Port Elizabeth Branch
Port Elizabeth Branch
Cape Town Branch
Cape Town Branch
Weskus Branch
East Rand Branch
Outeniqua Branch
Durban Branch
Pretoria Branch
Pretoria Branch
Pretoria Branch
Port Elizabeth Branch
Cape Town Branch
Cape Town Branch
Outeniqua Branch

BAR to the SAAF Association Presidential Merit Award

J W Mostert (Johan)
J Thomas (Juliana)

Pretoria Branch
Cape Town Branch



! BENEVOLENCE !

**FIND THE COURAGE TO MAKE
POSITIVE CHANGE ...**

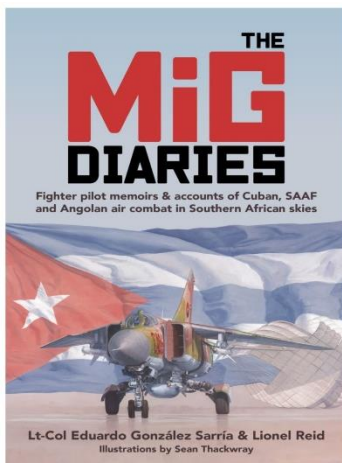
A Photographic Trove of Random Beauty

The Pine Lodge Resort – Summerstrand Gqeberha



Book of the Month – **THE MiG DIARIES**

What was it like to fly a “MiG” or “Mirage” in combat over Angola?



Most books on the Angolan Bush War, especially those in English, present the South African perspective of events. Now a former MiG-23 Squadron Commander of the Cuban Air Force has collaborated with an ex-SAAF pilot to paint a remarkable new picture of the aerial conflict over Angola in the 1980s. In The MiG Diaries the recollections of Lt-Col Eduardo González Sarria are blended by Lionel Reid with those of air combatants from the Angolan, Cuban and SA air forces. Many are being published for the first time. Using their own aviation knowledge and experience of the conflict, Sarria and Reid combine the accounts of these diverse combatants – former comrades and foe – to provide original insights into, and a more holistic description of, what happened in the skies over Angola.

The results, often quite different to what the opposing sides had believed, reveal a surprising, and more complete, picture of events. The wonderful sketching pencil of Sean Thackwray, himself a former fighter pilot, helps to bring this unique story to life, along with select images, including many not seen in print in South Africa.

Article by – The Editor

The Port Elizabeth Chairman' s Chirp

To the esteemed members of the SAAFA East Rand Branch, it is my pleasure to be writing this small article for our newsletter. I was approached by The Editor to write something about the planning that went into the 78th Annual General Meeting and National Congress that was held in Port Elizabeth from the 25th to the 28th May 2023.



The Branch was given the go ahead by NEC about 18 months before the time, and, as this is a very long time before the actual event, not much was done, besides advertising, and informing our members of the big occasion which we were going to be involved in. The Manual of Administration (MoA) chapter 5 has a very detailed sequence of events that acts as a guideline to what, and when, to have things in place, and who the responsible person should be. It is slightly outdated, still referring to fax lines, but it generally served its purpose in the planning. Our biggest concern was obviously costs and how much each delegate would have to pay for the event, without losing out on the interest, entertainment, and good value, of the event. We had a look at about 4 venues, and either costs, size or location determined our eventual choice, which was Pine Lodge Resort.

This decision was made about 7 months before Congress. The meetings with the Pine Lodge owners were always very open, which helped a lot. We determined a figure of R3000.00 per delegate would cover the costs of the event, and we moulded the menu, accommodation, and entertainment around that figure. Nothing happened for a very long time, again, but transporting the guests was already being discussed. We desperately needed a sponsor to pay for the transportation of the delegates. This was already investigated in November, 7 months before Congress.

Invitations were sent to NEC, who then distributed the invitations to the various SAAFA Branches, and this was 105 days before Congress. The excitement was palpable when the first delegates started confirming their attendance, and a lot of happiness when payments were made. We were still very unsure how many people would be attending the event, and nervousness crept in whether we would be hosting this with only a handful of delegates.

We needed to find numbers urgently, especially when one considers the size of the bus for the spouse's outing, the amount of "goody bags" to be produced, the size of the banquet hall, etc. Weather was always a consideration, and we planned our events so that it was mostly indoors, to prevent a double booking for wet day or windy day events.

The Spouse events were easily determined, because we have a professional diver who raised the Sacramento cannons living near Port Elizabeth, and it was immediately decided that he would be the man to assist with the outing, as well as a wine tasting in Theescombe.

Travel distances were planned to be minimal, and a visit to the SAAF Museum was determined at the 2022 Congress already. With about 6 weeks before Congress, one could feel the pressure begin to mount.

There were occasions when the mind was racing so fast that I found myself doing Congress work at 03h00 on some mornings. Personal letters of welcome were drafted to each person and their spouse, which takes time, and sometimes costs sleep!!! Still, we didn't have a bus.

The food menu was confirmed, and we decided to split the evenings to include a sundowner on the deck at Ziggy's bar, which is a separate entity from Pine Lodge. Ideas were mulled a few months before, of a possible air demonstration, and this confirmed our idea of using Ziggys. Auction items were obtained, and a massive support came from a newly launched book, "The Mig Diaries", which was donated to the Branch from the author. Signatures were also obtained from various pilots involved in the book. The book value was dramatically increased when a pilot involved in shooting down some enemy helicopters, gave us a short talk on the book. This was incredible.

It is now about a month before Congress, and still no bus. We were now starting to tie up loose ends, and Plan A, Plan B and sometimes C, were placed on paper. The Chief of the Air Force was also going to attend, but we didn't know how many of his entourage would be there, his accommodation was separate from ours, and eating and drinking requirements were needed for him and his wife. The spouse excursion would have to be planned with her in a separate vehicle, (Protection services with her), and all other seating and guests' requirements had to be adjusted for the extra protection services and his P.A. We still didn't know how many extras there would be. Cost!!!

We were extremely fortunate to have a lady on the planning committee who has done a lot of banquets, and she was immense in her assistance to the planning, and the overall running of the gala evening. She took a lot of pressure off us with her inputs.

As the expiry date for registration had arrived, we realised that we might as well extend it by another 2 weeks, and the final registration would take place 10 days before Congress commences. Still no bus.

Further payments were trickling in, and the air demonstration was confirmed, but again, last minute emails to the Air Force, sometimes reminder emails were sent, sometimes even more reminder emails!! With the extended registration having passed, we started concentrating on the weather patterns, and it all seemed fine for the event, except for the opening evening, where we were expecting some well-deserved rain. Still no bus. The cost of hiring a bus and professional driver was immense. We started looking at using our private cars to do the work. The Chief of the Air Force confirmed his attendance with his wife.....and 5 additional members!!! This was a massive, curved ball. Cost was going to escalate through the roof. Seating arrangements had to be changed, additional tables.....it was chaos.

With about 5 days before Congress registration, one of our members was able to obtain a bus, fully sponsored, with a professional driver. What a relief!!! The P.A. systems (Plan A) couldn't be utilised because they were being used for a memorial service on the Base, even though we had reserved these for our exclusive use, and that the CAF was going to be in attendance.

Plan B came into action, but the costs increased immensely from the P.A's owner, which we couldn't afford. Plan C was immediately implemented, with a few adjustments, and it went off smoothly on the day. Flag poles, which had been arranged and planned for, were suddenly unavailable.

Another plan had to be decided upon, and fortunately this also panned out to be successful. All of this happened merely 24 hours before the big day.

Video links to Ireland were unfortunately not able to occur due to low signal strength, because we wanted to live stream a lot of Congress onto YouTube channels. The 78th Annual General Meeting and National Congress had started, the 1st time in 25 years in the Bay, and it was now time to rock and roll, and enjoy the fruits of our hard planning. Once the 1st guests started arriving, we knew that all the hard planning that we had done, was going to be tested. We were nervous, but extremely excited, because we knew that what we had to offer, would be a first-time event for many in the SAAFA. A YouTube video is available of the SAAFA Congress, Port Elizabeth.

I hope you enjoyed the “behind the scenes” of our planning for this prestigious event, and from feedback that we have received from those attending, they certainly enjoyed their time with us. The Port Elizabeth Branch is waiting for your visit to the Friendly City.
Best and warm SAAFA wishes.

Trevor Bernberg

Chairman: SAAFA Port Elizabeth Branch

Article by Trevor Bernberg – Chairman SAAFA Port Elizabeth Branch

Final Approach and Shut Down

As ever, I’m hoping what you read is entertaining! Remember, opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or the NEC. If you’re digging anything feel free to throw me a note, or just complain about the weather, that’s cool too.... @ rossouwrij1@gmail.com Until next time, Fly high and be safe!

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