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MARA

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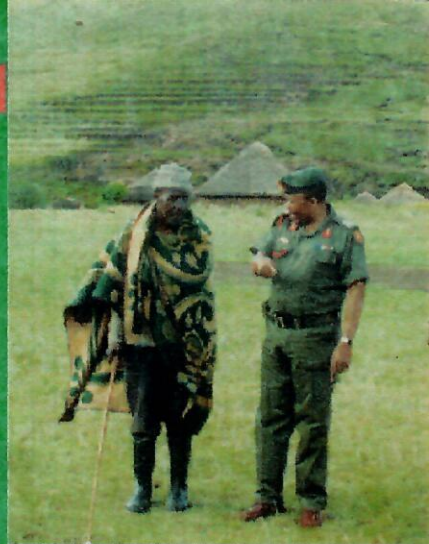
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Looking back: army boss's amazing life history

Operation Maluti to transform the Army

Army march against HIV/AIDS



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COVER

MAIN PICTURE:

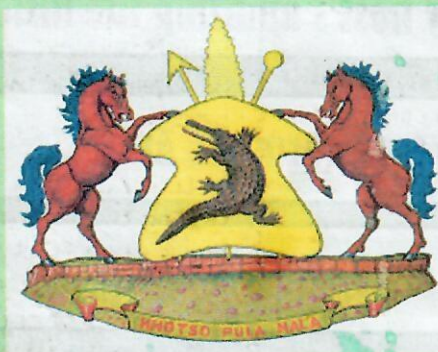
*The Commander-In-Chief,
His Majesty King Letsie III, seen laying
a wreath on Armistice Day*

FROM TOP RIGHT:

1. Lt Gen A M Mosakeng talking to the headman of Tlhanyaku, Mokhotlong
2. Deployment of troops along the Lesotho-RSA border in Mokhotlong.
3. LDF Motor Mechanics preparing for yet another task.
4. Lt. Gen. Mosakeng had some time to talk to school children at Matlaong, Mokhotlong.

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Editorial



Mara is the official Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) newspaper. It has been established by the LDF command to disseminate information about the

defence force's tasks and activities in relation to its social responsibility.

The aim of **Mara** is not only to disseminate information but also to share ideas with the general public. This aim can be achieved by regular inputs from the same public.

The purpose of this newspaper is to project the image of the LDF and to invite constructive ideas in an effort to rebuild the defence force for the nation. To attain this purpose, the editorial team invites articles from all LDF personnel, the nation at large as well as our friends in and outside the country.

It is important to note that since the dawn of the unipolar system, the defence forces of the world have been tremendously affected by the system. Through **Mara**, LDF strives to bridge the communication gap between the armed forces and the public.

Pertinent issues pertaining to the security of the nation will be covered by **Mara**. The newspaper will also communicate the command message to all soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers. Moreover, it will inform the families of members of the LDF about the systems and structures within which their children, spouses and relatives are operating.

Mara therefore invites inputs and contributions from both the LDF personnel and the public. The inputs will enable us to improve on the quality and development of this newspaper.

The LDF command intends to publish this newspaper once every two months. Finally, the command is pleased to announce that this newsletter is a nonprofit making paper and it is for free.

Captain Tanki Josias Mothae
Editor

Lucky to be alive as plane crashes



By
WOI Ntele Masoetsa

Thirteen members of the LDF escaped death when their aircraft crash landed

at Mokhotlong in the early morning hours of Saturday 16 December 2000.

The crew of the aircraft, pi-

aircraft rolled along and suddenly veered off the runway. Corrective measures were immediately applied, but in a split second we had crashed into a house," said Letsoela.

A terrified passenger, who wished to remain anonymous for fear of being labeled a coward, said during that terrifying incident he could smell



An LDF plane plunges into a shop.

lot-in-command Lieutenant Mojalefa Letsoela, co-pilot Lieutenant Taemane Madamane and the aircraft technician Corporal Mphiri Lephoto sustained minor injuries, while the rest of the troops were unharmed when a Spanish-made CASA 212-300 crashed as it landed at Mokhotlong Airport. The troops were being flown from Maseru to Mokhotlong on their regular two-month patrol duties.

Lt Letsoela said all the pre-landing checks and procedures were followed with great care. "We rounded off without a problem and the

nothing but death as the aircraft forced its way through the airport security fence and finally came to a halt after plunging into the building with the front part of the fuselage.

Following the accident troops who were supposed to board the aircraft back to Maseru refused to board. "Attempts to allay their fears proved futile. Consequently we had to send for drivers from Maseru to transport them," said Sgt Makhachane Lerotholi.

The LDF Airwing Public Relations and Operations Officer, Lieutenant Moeketsi

continued on pg 8

Operation Maluti to transform the army



by Phe Tankiso Nkoho

Training Wing commandant Major Kopano Thoola says the participation of some elements of the army in the 1998 political disturbances prompted the army to embark on 'Operation Maluti' in May 1999.

He said Operation Maluti's main purpose was to instill discipline and more professionalism in the army. "Towards this end the combined task forces of Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Zimbabwe laid down guidelines for Operation Maluti," the major said.

He added that it was important for the army to be perceived by the



Instructors from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Lesotho pose for a photo.

public as apolitical. "The army must help the nation solve its problems through dialogue and not be part of the problem," he said.

The commandant disclosed that strategic planning had been introduced into all levels of command in order to improve discipline, law and military code. "Our troops are now equipped with civil military relations and military professionalism, and the role of the army in democratic society is fully understood", Thoola said.

The commandant said the training programme had incorporated as-

pects pertaining to relations between the Lesotho Defence Force and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service and the impact of unstable security on the environment and economic development of Lesotho.

The major said that the Training Wing is impressed by the way the retrained troops are conducting themselves. "They now understand that the army is the servant of the public and not its boss. What is even more pleasing is that armed robberies in which army personnel is involved is now on the decline."

Lieutenant Montoelii Ramoqopo, second-in-command of the Training Wing, said, "A training wing had never been established before.

"There was no training infrastructure, no classrooms and offices and, in order to perform their daily training programmes, they were obliged to use dormitories as lecture rooms, he added.

Sgt Maj Lineo Poopa said that they have never encountered problems, save the scarcity of equipment for field training exercises. ■

"The army must help the nation solve its problems through dialogue and not be part of the problem."



Instructors from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Lesotho pose for a photo.

Looking back: army boss's amazing life history



by WOI | Selebalo Sebe

South West of Maseru city along the river bed side of Mohokare (Caledon) river, is the Ratjomose Barracks, the headquarters of Lesotho Defence Force - the historical army base of Lesotho. It is

When the door opened, there was the general seated at his desk with a beaming smile. "Welcome, how can I help you?" the broad shouldered general asked, his light complexion matching the background of his office furniture. "I am here to write about your profile, General," I said, as

we relaxed for what turned out to be a revealing chat indeed.

"No problem," he said as he began narrating his life history. Born on September 10, 1946 at Semonkong Ha Seqobela, the affable but sometimes controversial general joined the Lesotho Mounted Police in 1967 of his own volition. "I had always wanted to become a soldier one day," he stressed, as if to brush aside any suggestions that he could have been influenced by someone somewhere.

The Commander said at the end of his training he was posted to the newly formed arm of security service, the Police Mobile Unit (PMU), which was para-military in nature. "The strength of the PMU was not anything one could write home about. It was about the size of a company," he recalls.

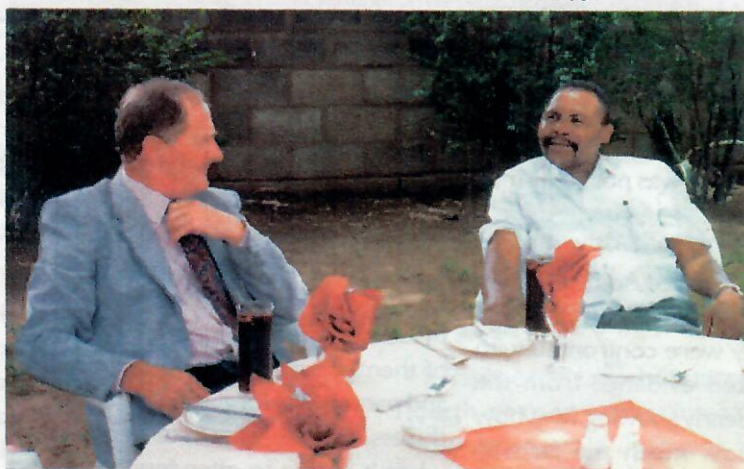
Asked why during military rule, he was appointed Director of NSS, the Commander ex-



The Commander-LDF Lt Gen A M Masakeng PMG, PMMS, CMLOR.

from this place that soldiers of the first and second world wars used to camp before moving to the war zones.

The current Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force, Lieutenant General Augustinus Makhula Mosakeng, conducts his day-to-day business from the same barracks that overlook the Mohokare river, which forms a boundary between Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa. "Please come in," said his secretary as she ushered me in.



The Lesotho Defence Chief, then Director of NSS, relaxing with his Adviser, 'Abele'

cont. on pg 6

plained that during that time several senior army officers were assigned to take such positions, which the military government considered to be strategic, in order to carry out its programme of returning to democratically elected government after five years.

Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng was appointed commander of the Army by the Defence Commission 1994 at the time when the army had been rocked by internal strife. Did he accept the offer without reservations? "I must say it was not an easy task on my side. As you will recall the situation was so volatile and critical that it took organisations such as SADC and the Common Wealth to bring the situation under control", he said.

The Commander has undergone several military training programs to prepare him for his difficult and challenging job. Notable amongst these are small arms, intelligence and defence management in Israel, USA and UK respectively, all of which were at an advanced level.

In the wake of the 1998 political disturbances, during which most opposition parties demanded the resignation of the government pending fresh national elections, the general and some senior army officers were detained by junior officers and forced to resign. They subsequently managed to escape to South Africa. The general said the whole thing was politically motivated.

"Some soldiers accused me of having bought a farm in South Africa. When they were confronted with documented evidence from the Treasury clearly showing why, how and for how much the farm in question had been bought by the government through the Ministry



Lt Gen Mosakeng (standing second from right) with his school mates at St Theresa's Seminary, Roma.

of Finance they decided to ignore the facts before them and pursue their ulterior motives," he explained.

"It was part of a scheme by some power hungry politicians to misuse soldiers to topple the government in power. As getting into power democratically was a tall order for them they were prepared to use whatever desperate means to satisfy their insatiable lust for power," he explained.

The general re-affirmed his unshakable belief in law and order, respect for the constitution and truth as the guiding light in life. "That explains why, against all the odds, I have thus far survived all the turbulence that has rocked the political history of this country," he said.

Referring to soldiers who compromise their allegiance and loyalty to the constitution of this country and allow themselves to be used by politicians for selfish motives Gen Mosakeng said, "In my opinion many of them are acting out of ignorance and personally I forgive them. Nonetheless, the law must take its course when it comes to offenders."

The Commander was optimistic that Lesotho would enjoy stability. "The current re-training programs that include Operation Maluti should ensure relative stability and underpin Democratic Governance", he explained.

The general intends to be a farmer upon retirement. "I have no interest whatsoever in party politics. They have messed up this country and its limited resources and I do not want to be part of that," he stressed.

On how he would like to be remembered, Gen Mosakeng said he would like to be remembered as a patriot and a professional soldier who steadfastly stood for nothing but the truth and the law.

He is married with five children, one boy and four daughters. The son is in the army, one daughter is working while the rest are completing their studies at different universities. ■

Army march against HIV/AIDS



by
WOI I Ntele Masoetsa

Makoanyane Military Hospital organized an HIV/AIDS awareness road march from Makoanyane Barracks to Ratjomose Barracks on Friday 22nd December 2000.

The rate at which the HIV/AIDS pandemic is spreading in Southern African has galvanized the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) into action against the killer disease. A series of workshops and counseling sessions are being held for both the infected and non-infected soldiers.

The Principal Nursing Officer of Makoanyane Military Hospital, Mrs Theresia Korotsoane, said the theme of the march was HIV/AIDS is a sniper, fight it. "The march will boost in a positive way the various contributions the LDF has rendered in the development of the country," said Mrs Korotsoane.

The March was a well-organized event that also attracted members of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), the National Security Service (NSS), Lesotho Prison Service (LPS), people of goodwill as well as school children.

The Commanding Officer of Makoanyane Military Hospital, Lt Col Letšolo Kholoane, disclosed that workshops have been held on numerous occasions with the Police, National Security Service and Lesotho Prison Service to formulate



The HiV/AIDS epidemic is a major concern in Lesotho, where the population is only about 2 million.

ways to combat the spread of the killer disease to members of the disciplined forces.

The Commander of the Lesotho Defence Force, Lt Gen Augustinus Makhula Mosakeng thanked all the road march participants and the organizers who selflessly made this event a reality. "This is yet another turning point in the history of the nation's

tion and Communications Officer of the Aids Control Programme in the Ministry of Health, Mr Teboho Rapiitse, said the epidemiology report of December 1999, indicated that the number of recorded cases in Lesotho stands at 10,880.

"According to the United Nations AIDS report for the year 2000, there were 240,000 peo-



The LDF, National Intelligence, LMPS and LPS personnel were all out in force marching against HIV/AIDS.

army in the promotion of national development. Let us arm ourselves with the precautionary measures and surely we will win this global war," said the Commander.

The Senior Information, Educa-

ple infected with the virus, which is 11% of the country's population," said Rapiitse.

Mr Rapiitse said Lesotho is rated fourth position in the Sub-Saharan region while Botswana is leading with 18% of its total population. ■

Konote commends the army



by Pte Thabiso Rajane

Mr Moikanyo Mokhethi, 71, a villager at Thabana-Morena Ha Konote says Lesotho De-

fence Force (LDF) Engineering Section has made it possible for the village and its clinic to access water easily and on a regular basis.

Speaking from his village, Mr Mokhethi said it was a dream come true that they now have

Lucky escape

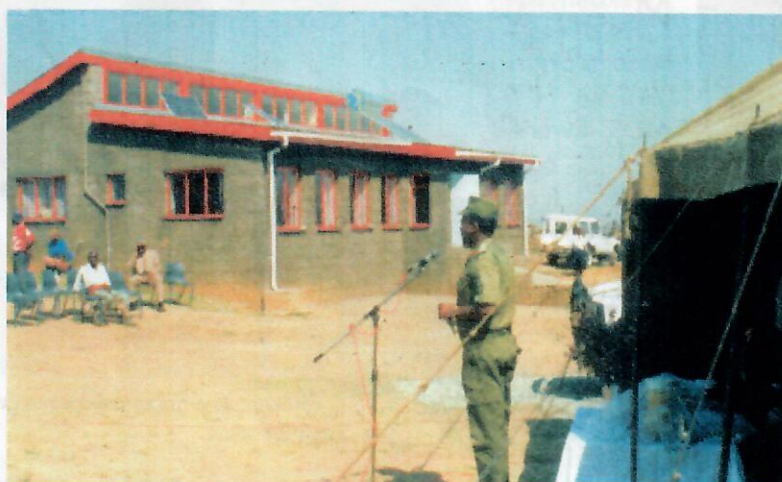
cont. from pg 3

Mohlahatsa said the incident was the second in the Fixed Wing Squadron. A similar type of aircraft crashed at Ha Mpiti in Qacha's Nek in 1989 on its way to Maseru, killing all the eighteen army personnel on board.

Lt Mohlahatsa said an entourage comprising the Minister in the Prime Minister's office, Honourable Sephiri Motanyane, Transport and Works Minister Honourable Mofelehetsi Moerane, Commander-LDF Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng, Police Commissioner Maj Gen Jonase Malewa and other army officers were flown to Mokhotlong to assess the extent of the damage.

The lieutenant said insurance representatives from the former Minet Kingsway Brokers (which is now known as AON Lesotho) were also flown by army helicopter to assess the damage.

"Although investigations are still continuing, the aircraft will be replaced with a new one on a date to be disclosed," said Mohlahatsa. ■



The Clinic which was renovated by the LDF. The people of Ha Konote and nearby villages now enjoy health facilities in close vicinity.

water taps right in their village. "These soldiers have also renovated our clinic and built some water tanks for the clinic and this has made life much easier for all of us," he said.

He recalled how people used to travel long distances to get health services. "Nowadays people from far away villages flock to our clinic to get health services and we feel very proud of our army," he added.

The chief of Ha Konote, chief 'Mahlalele Konote, 55, commended the army for work well done, to bring water right into the village. She said it was gratifying to see that her subjects no longer had to travel many kilometres to fetch water.

She however regretted that since army personnel had left her village, criminals were exploiting the situation. "There are now more incidents of house breaking, rape and stock theft," she lamented. A nurse clinician, Mrs 'Mamatete Nqosa, was full of praise for the work the army had done for the people of Ha Konote. "The house where I am now staying within

the clinic compound was built by the army," she added.

Speaking on behalf of the LDF engineering section, Officer in charge at the renovation and extension of the clinic, Warrant Officer II Mohajane Mautse said "we worked harmoniously with the community and stayed at the place for a period of nine (9) months."

The Warrant Officer said that when they arrived at Ha Konote the first problem they discovered was poor water supply to the clinic and the village as a whole.

"Accordingly we decided to address that problem as a matter of urgency. We were happy to leave the area nine months later with the problem of water supply solved," he said.

WO II Mautse disclosed that some soldiers are currently working in cooperation with the Labour Construction Unit of the Ministry of Works in the construction of Sehong-Hong Bridge which started early last year. "We are about to start with the renovation and extension of Matukeng clinic as well as improving the water supply to the clinic," said Mautse. ■

LFDS in aid of the poor



by
Pte Jese Hulane

The nursing assistant of the Lesotho Flying Doctor Service (LFDS), Marethabile Mabitle, says the LFDS is rendering an important and unique service to people living in disadvantaged areas.

LFDS flies a health team to different clinics every week from Monday to Friday. "For many patients the trip to the clinics is a long trek from home either on



One of the planes used by the LFDS to fly patients residing far away from health facilities.

foot or horseback," added 'Marethabile.

The nursing assistant praised the LFDS staff for their dedication and devotion to their duties. "Remember that most of the time they are away from their homes, families and friends while they experience the hardships of life in the mountain areas," she said.



Patients in disadvantaged areas are met halfway by the Lesotho Flying Doctors

Jobo Khafa from the mountain areas expressed deep gratitude for the work done by the LFDS. "The regular visits to remote areas by the LFDS means a lot to us as sometimes they save lives, without them we would simply perish," he said. ■

Deployment of troops to continue in the South



by Pte Joseph Mphaki

The second in command of the Director of Operations, Major Malefetsane Maboloka says

deployment of troops south of the country, in the Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts along the

borderline separating Lesotho from South Africa will still continue for the next two years.

Major Maboloka said the deployment started in 1996 with the purpose of combating crime and stock theft that were rampant in the area. "The LDF authority has requested the government to buy soldiers the necessary equip-

ment that would enable them to operate effectively to root out lawlessness in the area," he said.

The Major said his office intends to improve working conditions, so as to motivate soldiers who operate in the remote areas

cont. on pg 16

Wreck produces super drivers



by
Pte. Ntlele Ntoi

claimed motor sport team," says the team spokesman, Captain Kopano Qacha.

Established in 1974, the team founders, the late Captain Thebe-ea-Mang Masupha and his service-crew composed of retired Major Molapo, Sergeant Kopo and the late, renowned rally champion Trooper Andrews, asked for a wreck from the LDF transport department. Together they worked strenuously to rebuild it to meet the standards of a perfect racing car.

"Although the sport was not popular at the time, the LDF threw all the support behind the newly-established racing team," Qacha said.

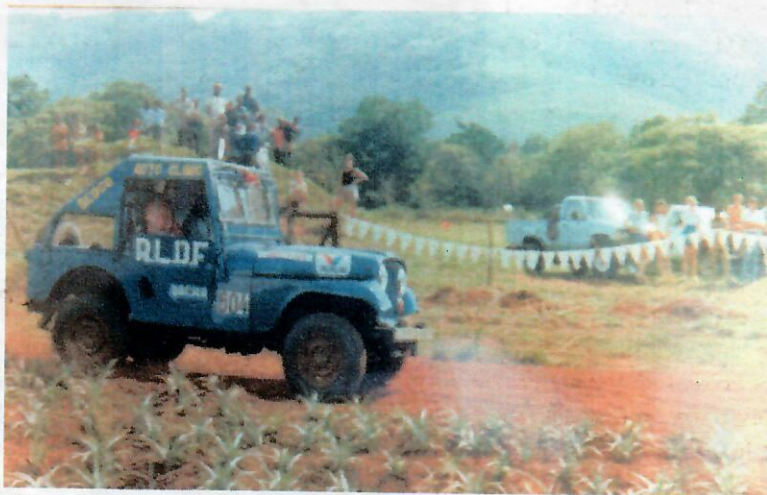
Qacha, Molapo and the late Lieutenant Thabo Ramaema took over in 1976. This marked the beginning of a new era not only in

the motor sport, but also in the LDF transport department. The mechanics adapted themselves quickly to the newly tried and tested technical skills.

"I never thought one could take apart and fix a clutch plate within an hour. Engines used to take us three to four days. It was an ago-

Captain Qacha boastfully said they have won several trophies so far. However, he expressed that this sport is not a moneymaking enterprise. It only serves to encourage teams in the country.

"Our foreign counterparts usually arrive in the country two weeks prior to the race and stay for an-



This is the vehicle that Super Driver Capt Kopano Qacha used to thrill racing enthusiasts.

nisingly slow process; a fatigue indeed!" exclaimed Qacha.

"But due to the exposure and practice we had and the challenges we met, eventually everything became much easier," he added.

other two weeks thereafter. So the hotels and local handcraft entrepreneurs make huge profit turnovers. This contributes a lot to our ailing economy," he remarked.

The current team's driver and co-driver both had their first taste of rally contests in the Toyota 1000 Desert Race in Botswana. The driver, Cadet Officer Morotoli Ramoseeka (35) is indeed pretty good at the wheel, he first drove alongside the then-super rally driver Lieutenant Phoofolo Shai in 1994.

"I started driving at a very tender age. My father used to put me on his thighs and made me take hold of the steering wheel. I enjoyed that very much. My eagerness urged me on and subsequently



Cadet Officer Morotoli Ramoseeka standing next to one of his race vehicles.

turned me into a perfect driver," recalls Ramoseeka.

Co-driver Lance Corporal Ntaote Bereng (33) is no exception to such humble beginnings. "I never went to a driving school either," Bereng interrupted excitedly. "My uncle taught me how to drive."

Both Ramoseeka and Bereng are qualified motor mechanics. They graduated from Lerotholi Polytechnic and Technical School of Leribe (TSL) respectively. Qacha and Shai noticed their love for the sport and encouraged them to join the team. They responded without hesitation. No matter how enthusiastic they were, things had not always been rosy for these two dedicated gentlemen. The navigator, co-driver Bereng, burned himself when he accidentally got hold of a hot exhaust pipe with his bare hands. This happened in his grim 1998 Toyota 1000 Desert Race in Botswana.

"Due to lack of funds I had no complete appropriate gear. I had no hand gloves. Even the soles on my training shoes were not durable enough to sustain the heat of the free-flow exhaust pipe underneath my seat," regretted poor Bereng.

Despite all the problems the navigator Bereng has encountered, he executed his responsibility to the best of his ability. Ironically, he said the navigator is actually the one who drives the car. He barks instructions to the driver from time to time.

"I am responsible for spotting the route signs, assess the track condition and pits, and to forewarn the driver of any impending danger," Bereng remarked.

The team prefers racing in semi-wet weather to dry and windy



Has the Roof of Africa Rally come to an end?

**"I never
went to a
driving school
either," Bereng
interrupted
excitedly.
"My uncle taught
me
how to drive."**

conditions. "In dry, windy conditions, the clouds of dust impair our sight. It becomes hard to catch up with the car upfront. Like it or not, one has to keep a safe distance between one's vehicle and the one in front to avoid crashing," said Ramoseeka.

The most challenging route of the grimmest Pirelli/ Lesotho Sun Roof of Africa Rally is the 1000 river track along the banks of the Phuthiatsana river. "The route curls and meanders along and across the river. We cross it at different points for several times, normally at ten to fifteen minutes' intervals. Our

foreign counterparts often take it for granted that they actually cross many rivers," Bereng recalls with laughter.

The two narrowly escaped death when their Toyota 4x4 racing car veered off the track and overturned. "We were driving at a very high speed on the Makhoarane plateau when the accident occurred. We seemed set to win the championships. However, we escaped without scratches due to the safety precautions we took. Our vehicle was still intact, too, except for the shattered windscreen. Anyway, we managed to get to the finishing line," said Ramoseeka.

The sponsor of the team and owner of the earth moving plant hire company Thipane Transport Company, Mr Mokone John Thipane - who is also a strong member of the Likuena Motor Racing Supporters Club - said he was happy to be sponsoring the the racing team.

"Although I will consider running my own sports car in the near future, I will always lend a helping hand to the LDF racing team," Thipane solemnly promised. ■

EVENTS IN



The Hon Minister Shephiri Montanyane closing one of the Operation Maluti training courses in the capacity of Minister of Defence.



LDF spearheaded a war-like march against HIV/AIDS, which seems to be getting out of control in the country.



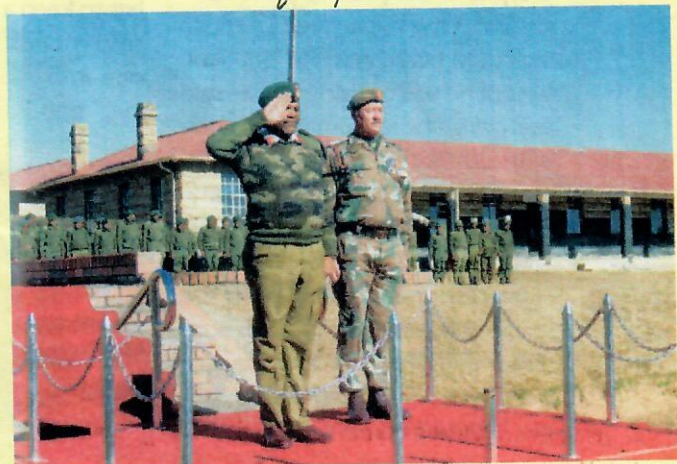
SADC Defence Intelligence Chiefs met in Maseru at the end of last year to exchange ideas.



The Maluti areas are usually covered in heavy snow in winter, making movement difficult and hazardous. LDF participate in disaster relief operations at



Lesotho is a very popular destination for tourists and international conferences. His Majesty King Letsie III is seen accompanying Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos to his plane.



Defence Force Chief Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng is seen here at the closing ceremony of one of the training courses under Operation Maluti.

PICTURES



The Right Honourable The Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili, was the guest of honour at the official opening of the CISM/ESALO Volleyball Championships at Setsotho Stadium, 1999.



1999/00 Lesotho Cup Winners LDF FC were this year sent for an early shower by Reunion Cup Winner in the first round of the CAF Competitions.



Although this aircraft was badly damaged, its occupants escaped with minor injuries.



On King's Birthdays, the LDF Taekwondo team usually thrills enthusiastic crowds with martial arts.



Defence Force Chief Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng is a keen sports lover.



Lesotho participated in the CISM 2nd World Taekwondo Military Championships in 1999 in Croatia.

A car washer on a mission



by
WOI I Ntele Masoetsa

The bustling city of Maseru comes to vibrant life as early as six in the morning, local taxis blaring their hooters along the Kingsway Street from time to time. People are hurrying to their different places of work.

Young boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen wait anxiously at exclusive commercial centres for motorists to leave their cars for washing.

As Thabo cautiously approaches the vehicle, the owner steps out and greets him. "How are you, I didn't see you yesterday, was there a problem?" asks the big man. Thabo nods his clean shaven head and admits he wasn't at his usual work place. "I had gone to pay school-fees for my younger brother," says Thabo.

Car washing is a common business venture along the main commercial centres in the capital, Maseru. Cars are spotlessly cleaned and polished at the unit price of M10.00 (a little over US\$1). The tyres become so polished as to look new. The interior of the vehicle is sprayed with the latest fragrances of the customer's choice.

Thabo, who is now 12 years of age, has been doing this job for the past four years. "I come from a very humble family and I'm told my father left us when I was three. My mother, 'M'e 'Mathabo worked as a factory worker earning a meager wage. Although it was difficult for her

to raise me she could tighten loose ends," said Thabo in a sad tone.

He said he began his primary education at Loretto Roman Catholic Primary School at Qoaling, about seven kilometres south of Maseru. Like most children from his village, Thabo would at times go to school without a lunch pack even though the school could not afford to feed them.

Thabo said after school he went straight home to tend to his family's backyard garden and to water the vegetables. Water was drawn from the municipal tap about 20m from the family's yard. "When the vegetables were ripe

I sold them to the local people at affordable prices," recalled Thabo.

He said life became very unpleasant when the factory where his mother was working closed down and he had to drop out of school. "That was the most saddening point in my life because I had to find work and help my family," said Thabo, struggling to fight off the tears in his innocent looking eyes.

Section 29 (1) of the Constitution entitles every citizen to the fundamental right to work, but jobs are hard to come by. "The money I was making from the sale of vegetables was not enough and I therefore had

cont. on pg 20

LDF set to buy modern helicopters



by
Pte Tšepo Phaila

The Officer Commanding Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Air Squadron, Colonel Thuso Motanyane, has disclosed that LDF is in the process of buying

two new helicopters in the course this year.

The commander said the helicopters are to be purchased from Germany at a cost of about M13 million each. The new helicopters,

cont. on pg 15



This is the replacement helicopter.

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New LDF choppers

cont. from pg 14

BO105LS, are more powerful and will
suit the local terrain much better.

The Colonel said the retraining of
pilots to fly the new helicopters
would not be necessary as the new
helicopters are not that different from
the ones that are currently being
used. "In any case we conduct famil-
iarization courses on a regular basis
to maintain high standards," he
added.

Sergeant Makalo Lehloenya, a tech-
nician, said he was delighted with the
news that more modern and power-
ful helicopters would be bought to
replace the existing fleet. "I think it is
a great improvement which should



The helicopter model set to be replaced by a new version.

also improve the quality of our services," he said. ■

Howl of a jackal raises soldier's hair



by
Pte Ntlele Ntoi

A cream white AT o y o t a Camry 220SE screeched to a halt in front of the Commander's offices at the Lesotho Defence

Force Headquarters at Ratjomose Barracks. The doors flung opened.

"Co-operative, co-operative!" someone cried out cautiously. Everybody became silent and paid attention. Eventually a burly bespectacled senior army officer stepped out of the car.

"All parade!" yelled out the junior officer at a nearby parade ground. "Attention!" he cried

out, after a brief pause, "Major General, Sir!" saluted the officer.

Major General took three long strides towards the stairs leading to his office. He eventually turned and returned the junior officer's salute. "Thank you!" he roared.

Everybody stood perfectly mo-

cont.on pg 13

Troop deployment

cont. from pg 9

along the border line.

The Platoon Commander of Platoon Two of B12BN that is currently deployed along the border, Second Lieutenant Moilola Mahase, confirmed that stocktheft across the two countries has declined.

"What led to a decline in stocktheft along the borders is the good co-operation between the deployed troops, the police, the antitheft and crime preven-

tion committees and the District Secretary in the Quthing district," he said.

The chairman of the anti theft and crime prevention committee in the Quthing and Qacha's Nek districts, Mr Pitso Leche, said the relations between the citizens of Lesotho and South Africa are currently cordial compared to the previous years.

Mr Leche appealed to ordinary people to co-operate with the committees and deployed troops, and give any information



Cross-border stock theft between Lesotho and South Africa has been contained in the south, but the problem has re-surfaced in the north, in Mokhotlong.

that would lead to the arrest of the culprits.

The co-ordinator of the antitheft and Crime prevention committees from both Lesotho and South Africa, Mr Stanford Kupiso, said he works around the clock to contain the situation in the affected areas. "I must say I am encouraged by the positive results," he said.

A 45-year-old farmer who is residing at Mphaki in the Quthing district, Mr Poulo Paane, said Xhosas from Matatiele robbed him of 696 animals in 1996, prior to the deployment of the troops. "They captured 300 sheep, 190 lambs, 190 goats, 9 horses and 5 donkeys, and now I have nothing," he said.■



Armed Zulus recently raided cattle farmers and got away with hundreds of livestock in Mokhotlong, prompting the Lesotho Defence Force to rush to the rescue of Mokhotlong residents.

tionless in the meantime. He exchanged greetings with the officer in charge of the parade. "Carry on officer!" he ultimately said, as he climbed up the stairs into his office.

I took a sharp glance at my wrist-watch. It was 7.20 am the exact time the Lesotho Defence Force Deputy Commander, Major General Rachobokoane Anthony

he was elected the secretary of the once renowned Tiny Rockies Football Club at Assumption Primary School. He was also a forefront member of the Lesotho Red Cross Association and Boys Scouts. "Perhaps, that was the time I first took interest in the police service," smiled Thibeli.

The Deputy Commander

mired the beautiful scenery of the highlands, rolling mountains, valleys of green pastures and crystal clear brooks and streams," he said.

"I did not bully other herd-boys of my age group and neither of them ever bullied me either. The only thing that once stirred up my hair with fright was the awful howl of a jackal!" laughed the major general.

He joined the then-Police Mobile Unit (PMU) on the 1st April 1970, the counter-riot unit which eventually evolved into the current Lesotho Defence Force.

"We were called up at the Police Training College (PTC) as raw recruits. Our squad was well motivated and undoubtedly determined to work hard. The standard of discipline and morale was considerably higher than it is today," he said.

"Our unit was under-strength, however, with the selfless assistance of the mounted police we managed to curb crime effectively in all four corners," he said boastfully.

Thibeli's unquenched thirst for higher academic qualifications urged him to further his studies at a newly established secondary school in the defence force. He did

cont. on pg 18



Army Chief of Staff Major General Anthony Rachobokoane Thibeli PMMS.

Thibeli usually reports for his duty. Born at 'Mesapela in the district of Berea in 1950, Major General Thibeli had experienced a lot as he grew up. "I went to the Evangelical Mission school at my home village, 'Mesapela, where I did my grade A in 1961. I was only eleven years old at the time." Thibeli said.

"In the following year I had a financial problem. However, my elder brothers and the Sisters at Assumption Catholic Primary School were kind enough to pay my school fees. Perhaps, I could have furthered my studies, but the odds were against me, so I had to call it quits at Std VII," the general recalls with sadness.

Maj Gen Thibeli wiped his forehead with a clean handkerchief and calmly said, "Anyway, I appreciated what they did for me, that was very kind of them."

While Thibeli was still at school,

tended a herd of cows at home after school hours. He usually took the supplies of mealie meal and salt to the cattle post up in the mountains during summer school holidays.

"Life used to be very quiet and peaceful up there. I ad-



Chief of Staff Major General A R Thibeli (top right in picture) in West Germany, where he was trained as a pilot.

Indian army to train LDF



by Pte Thabiso Rajane

Ma j o r Malefetsane Maboloka PSC, second-in-command of LDF Operations, has announced that some LDF personnel will undergo a special military training to be offered by Indian military officers.

The Indian instructors will fly to Lesotho as soon as the memorandum of understanding has been signed by the governments of India and Lesotho.

Maj Maboloka further said that the special training is expected to enhance LDF's capabilities to effectively fulfil its international obligations, as well as to build the necessary bridges between the military and the civilians.

"It is important that we build a more friendly and positive image towards the public as we are their servants", he said.

Maj Maboloka said this was part of a wider programme aimed at raising the professionalism of the LDF to acceptable interna-

tional standards. "We want to ensure that the security of the nation is maintained with greater efficiency and professionalism," he stressed.

Maj Maboloka stated that LDF personnel will be trained in, among others, military skills, engineering, reconnaissance, combat engineering and many more. "Some LDF members will go to India for further training, while others will be trained here at home by Indian instructors. I believe that it will be a useful exposure for those who will go to India," he said. ■

Jackal's howl

cont. from pg 17

remarkably well in mathematics and science subjects at Junior Certificate (JC) level, and he was selected for pilot training abroad. "I was amongst the eight-man section that went to Germany on a basic pilot course in 1979-1980," recalled Thibeli.

Maj Gen Thibeli said he flew an American-made Bell 47 G2 piston engine and Jet Ranger Bell 26 aircraft as part of his basic training program. He also piloted German-made BO 105 helicopters which are currently used here in Lesotho. "To my great delight I took the advantage of flying a French-made As 350 which was dubbed "The Squirrel" due to its long tail," he giggled.

"Once I got the control of the aircraft up in the sky, I felt so excited that I made two complete circuits without the supervision of the German instructors who used to bellow instructions to us from time to time. When the plane touched down I instinctively knew I had finally made it," he proudly patted himself on the chest.

In 1982 Maj Gen Thibeli enrolled

in evening classes at Prisons Services High School where he sat for the final Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC). He wrote only few subjects due to his workload, however, in the following year he did supplementary subjects at P.T.C. and obtained a COSC certificate.

The general also attended several military training courses, including: Junior Staff Officers' Course at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, USA (1992), Civil Military Relations at Herbert Field in Florida, USA (1997) and Defence Resources Management in Monterey California, USA (1998).

He rose through the ranks and assumed post of Commanding Officer Air Wing at the rank of colonel in 1994-1997. In 1997-1999 he was appointed the Brigade Commander LDF as a brigadier. He assumed the current office of Chief of Staff at the rank of major general in 1999.

The Deputy Commander still cherishes the moments the Lesotho Defence Force used to

work harmoniously with the public. "Now our fundamental concern is to rebuild a force which is loyal and determined to serve its nation wholeheartedly," he said.

"I always feel so sad when the army unceremoniously gets out of control and commit atrocities that only serve to tarnish the good image of our defence force in the international community," Thibeli lamented.

Maj Gen Thibeli is married and blessed with two children. He likes to spend time home with his family when he is not at work, but that would not keep him from his routine physical training programmes.

He hopes to live co-operatively with society when he retires. He would also like to do farming or any other income-generating project, if possible.

"I promise to be always available to assist the army in anyway should the need arise. I would like to be remembered as a lifelong advocate of peace and restructuring process which will help our army to maintain its utmost loyalty to the Basotho nation at large," the general said as he sank back on his rocking chair. ■

Mochesane is laid to rest



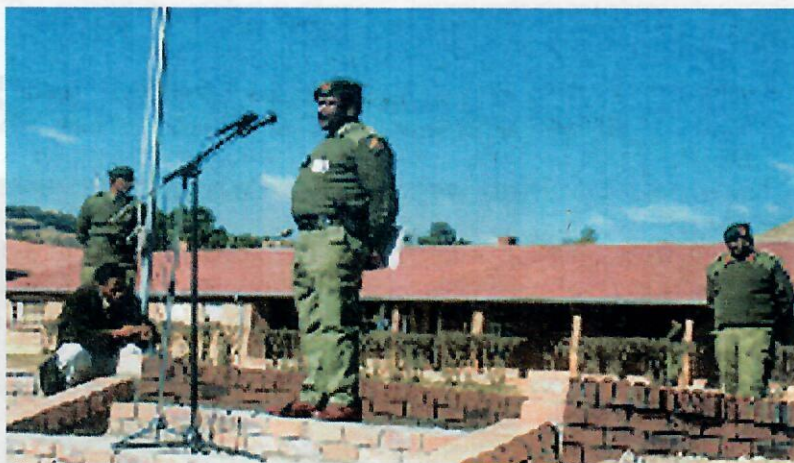
by
Pte Tšepo Phalla

Lieutenant Colonel Pula Mochesane, Life President of the Lesotho Amateur Boxing Association (LABA), and a senior LDF officer,

was laid to rest in his home village of Tsikoane, Matukeng, on Saturday 10th March, 2001.

Lt Col Mochesane passed away on 22nd February, 2001 at his home in Maseru, after a long illness. According to the medical report, Lt Col Mochesane's death was caused by severe, chronic gastric ulcers.

Lt Col Pula Joseph Mochesane was born at Tsikoane on November 21, 1946. He got his primary education at St. Monica's and then proceeded



Lt Col Mochesane making a speech during a sporting activity.

He became a trainer in the military boxing team in 1978. In 1992 he trained as a referee in Mauritius and was elected Vice President of LABA, becoming Chairperson in 1993. Because of his dedication and long, distin-

dier known not only in Lesotho but all over the world as well. Let us pray to God that He give us another Mochesane to carry on from where this one left off," said Maj Gen Rachobokoane Thibeli.

Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng recalled how the deceased stood with him through thick and thin. "This man was one of those who assisted me during difficult times. When soldiers were hostile and were a threat to the nation, he taught them how to observe the law. He helped to restore peace and order in the country. He was loyal and did not take orders from his home, but from work."

The Honourable Minister, Sephiri Motanyane, speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister (as the Minister of Defence), said he regarded Mochesane as an ambassador for peace. "He always strived to do good," the Minister said. The Minister finally appealed to the nation to assist the army to ensure that there could be many more people of Mochesane's calibre.

The church services were led by Catholic Church priest Fr. Patrick of St. Monica's; the LDF brass band and LDF choral provided the musical accompaniment. ■



Lt Col Mochesane (in white) with a friend in Croatia, where he was leading the Lesotho team.

with his secondary education at 'Mabathoana High School, where he completed his Junior Certificate.

In 1970 he joined the Lesotho Defence Force and became an active member of the boxing team. He married Lineo Monica Thetsane in 1972 and their union was blessed with a daughter.

guished service, he was honoured with the title of 'Life President' for LABA in 1997. At the time of his death, he had been in military service for almost 32 years.

Speaker after speaker showered the late army officer with praises for his distinguished military career.

"Mochesane was a universal sol-

Journalism training a milestone in the army



by
Pte Ntiele Ntoi

The Commander of Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) Lieutenant General Makhula Mosakeng says the training of the LDF personnel in Basic News Writing and Feature Writing is the milestone in the defence force's history.



Lt Gen A M Mosakeng PMG, PMMS, CMLOR urged the Journalists to perform their social responsibilities impeccably.

When speaking at the Basic Journalist on pg 20

cont. from pg 14

to do something to supplement the family income. I decided to try my luck in the city," Thabo added.

"After a week or so I noticed a boy almost my age carrying a bucket full of water and a dirty rag on the other, walking hurriedly towards a two seater sports car that was parked nearby at the parking lot. In a split of a second the boy was washing the vehicle," recalled Thabo.

He said he approached this fellow after the owner had paid him for the work he had just done. "How are you, my name is Thabo".

"Hi, I am fine, you can call me Vinnie, Vinnie for Vincent," said the boy with a broad smile. They became instant friends.

Thabo said he was so captivated with the job that he bought himself a bucket and fragrances and joined in the song.

He said he was, however, concerned about a certain number of his fellow workers who indulged in crimes such as smoking dagga, constant break-ins into the very vehicles they were cleaning and getting away with valuable items such as car radios and other personal belongings of their unsuspecting customers.

Thabo said these unfortunate incidences were reported to the Police and the perpetrators were sometimes arrested and put before the courts of the law. "This shames me as I believe in leading an honest clean life," he explained.

Most motorists become victims of these unfortunate incidences and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service is doing its level best to combat crimes of this nature, which have now extended into the rural areas.

The Officer Commanding the Counter Crime Unit (CCU),

Senior Inspector Thabo Thamae, says his unit is concerned about the alarming rate of crime in the country especially in the urban areas.

He said his unit has noted that street boys seeking jobs of cleaning vehicles prey on unsuspecting motorists. "These young criminals will wash these locked vehicles and ultimately break into them, if they set their eyes on anything of value such as car radios, they break in and get away as quickly as possible," lamented Thamae.

Thamae said, comparatively, rural crime is always in the form of dagga-smuggling and animal rustling, which are exchanged for firearms smuggled from the Republic of South Africa.

He said the Police Department has begun policing programmes by holding public gatherings and organizing choral music concerts wherein messages of crime watch are disseminated. "It is our observation that we are making progress," he added. ■

nalism course official closing ceremony held at LDF Headquarters at Ratjomose Barracks on 2 March 2001, Lt Gen Mosakeng brought to the attention of the participants the sheer magnitude of their task as newly initiated reporters in the field of journalism.

"Hey, gentlemen, you must be aware that a wider audience will be convinced of your reporting because you have access to places where some reporters do not have. So, be careful, unprofessional reporting can incite insurrection as it has been the case in the aftermath of May 1998 general elections here in Lesotho," the Lieutenant General warned.

"Your task is to build good relations between the army and the Basotho nation at large. Inform them about the important activities your defence force is engaged in. For instance, your people are eager to know about the latest developments in the ongoing Operation Clean Sweep mounted in the northern districts where some of your colleagues are deployed to clamp down on stock-theft and other criminal offences in the area," General Mosakeng pointed out.

The Commander, like all the other speakers, said he expects the participants to show their utmost commitment, loyalty and all eagerness to do their job to the best of their ability. He said in that way they will get more experience in their field of work.

"I feel very much reluctant to declare this course officially closed. I will rather suggest you just break for a while," he ironically said.

He expressed, however, that in his own perception such training

should be conducted on a regular basis within the LDF.

The general also took that opportunity to express his heartfelt gratitude to Dr Lebohang Lejakane, the course facilitator

their work properly.

"We wish our superiors could find it necessary to facilitate other similar courses so as to help us upgrade what we already have," Rajane said.

One of the journalists who was



These are newly graduated Mara journalists, who have been urged to perform their duties with a great sense of responsibility and dedication.

from LL Production Media Consultancy, Director of Information, Mr. Thabiso Makintane, Mrs. Violet Maraisane of Lesotho News Agency (LENA) and all who made the course a success.

there to cover the closing ceremony said, "we wish you all the best of luck, gentlemen. Let us all join hands as comrades and help build oneness, understanding and peace amongst our people."

"Hey, gentlemen, you must be aware that a wider audience will be convinced of your reporting because you have access to places where some reporters do not have. So, be careful, unprofessional reporting can incite insurrection as it has been the case in the aftermath of May 1998 general elections here in Lesotho."

In an interview, one of the participants, Private Thabiso Rajane, said though they encountered some problems here and there, they successfully acquired all the necessary skills to help them do

Amongst the guests of honour at the closing ceremony were the course facilitator, Dr. Lejakane, Mr. Makintane, high ranking officers and several reporters from various news agencies.■

FUNERAL IN PICTURES



Col Mohanoe Lefosa explaining what led to the untimely death of the late Lt Col Mochesane.



Maj Gen A R Thibeli also conveyed comforting words of condolence to the family of the late Lt Col Mochesane.



Chief Defence Force Lt Gen A M Mosakeng conveying his message of condolence at the funeral service.



Colleagues of the late Lt Col Mochesane are in a sombre mood as they carry his coffin during the funeral service.



Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng (left) Hon Lesao Lehohla (centre) and Hon Sephiri Motanyane (right) also attended the funeral.



Soldiers fire volleys of cartridges in the air during the burial service.

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