



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS,
HON KEBBY MAPHATSOE
BUDGET VOTE 19 DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS 2015
19 MAY 2015**

Honourable Chairperson
Minister of Defence and Military Veterans
Co-Chairpersons and members of the Joint Standing Committee on
Defence
Members of the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military
Veterans
Honourable members
Secretary for Defence
Chief of the SANDF
Chiefs of Services and Divisions
Director General of DMV and his team present
Leadership of SANMVA
The Luthuli Detachment members present
Military Veterans present
Ladies and gentlemen

***“South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and
that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based
on the will of the People”!***

One stands here today, to elaborate on the Ministry of Defence and
Military Veterans of the government of the ANC, which has been
elected to govern by the will of the majority of the people.

In this vein, the constitution of the Republic enjoins all of us, government, private sector and the society, to “honour those who sacrificed for our democracy”. Among those we must honour and ensure as government, business and society are the military veterans.

In this task of honouring the military veterans and addressing their plight, we have had challenges of a disclaimer as issued by the Office of the Auditor General. Currently, we have put systems in place to ensure that we change that state of affairs. That process is in operation, and we hope that in the shortest possible time, we shall be able to give a progress report to parliament, on the measures we have taken and the systems that have been put in place. We have turned the corner!

Last year upon one’s assumption of duty, we committed to ensure the restoration of the dignity of military veterans.

Honourable Chairperson, of the total allocated budget of R 582.2 million (Rands), R424 million has been allocated for the rollout of all benefits and services to military veterans

Health and Wellness

Requests for proposal were advertised to test the viability of providing these services differently in partnership with the private sector, in attempts to bring the services nearer to the beneficiaries. This was done in realisation that beneficiaries often have to travel long distances for medical attention, when they could be attended to by local doctors for primary health purposes.

Education Support

The initial target set was to provide 400 military veterans and their dependants with education support during this financial year. I am elated to announce that we have surpassed that target with over

1000 %. Currently 3650 military veterans and their dependants are in receipt of educational support. Of these 1 822 are in Higher Education whilst 1828 in Basic Education at a budget cost of R130 million.

We are pleased to have in our midst Chumisa Mlalandle and Patrick Mangeshe who are beneficiaries and are now graduates

Compensation for Injury in Military Service

At last a breakthrough has also been made in rolling out the long-awaited compensation for injury in military service in line with the Military Pension Act. Out of the 100 desperate cases that have been identified, 23 military veterans have since received payment and 77 applications are currently in progress and will be paid out before the end of September 2015. A total amount of R4.2 million has been set aside for that.

Housing

An area in which there was slower delivery than planned was in housing. Working in concert with the Department of Human settlement, the DMV is hard at work in ensuring that the obstacles and challenges are overcome. In the last financial year over R78 million has now been transferred to the DHS of Human settlements for top up in the construction of 1000 houses for military veterans. In the current financial year on whose budget we are now appearing, R164 million has been set aside for provision of housing.

Military Veterans Pension

Honourable Chairperson,

A military veterans pension has been developed in partnership with the Government Pensions Administration Agency Special Pension and the department of Social Development and that framework has since been converted into a policy. Before the end of this financial year, the first pension is expected to be paid to 600 military veterans at the total estimated cost of R25 million

Whilst awaiting finalisation of that process a total of 833 of the most destitute military veterans have been provided with Social relief of distress.

Public Transport

An area of serious concern is the public transport subsidy. The Ministry has accordingly instructed the DMV to give added attention in accelerating the delivery of this important benefit. R1.8 million has been set aside for this financial year to ensure the commencement of roll-out of this important benefit. Engagements with the department of transport as well as all other relevant stakeholders are being undertaken to find lasting solutions.

Database Verification Completion

This process has effectively been completed, save for the capturing of names into the systems. A total of R10 million has been set aside for the creation of a credible database.

There are some applications which are awaiting the appeal process.

Economic Support

Honourable Chairperson, on the economic support of the military veterans, one is pleased to announce that so far, through the DMV partnership with the Department of Trade and industry, 97 cooperatives were registered, while 30 more are in the process of being registered. I am pleased to announce the Department will host the Military Veterans Cooperatives Indaba within the next three months

About 50 business plans are currently being finalised, while 196 military veteran' economic activity entities are now registered with SEDA to access no-financial assistance in the form of training from SEDA.

Reduction of Unemployment

The DMV has to date provided access to job opportunities for 1940 military veterans. PRASA has employed a total of 926 military veterans in permanent positions. Ntate Kabelo Mantsane ko PRASA, re a leboha! To you Mr Lucky Montana as the Group CEO of PRASA, we are sincerely grateful.

Among other government institutions and spheres that have supported the plight of military veterans, we would like to acknowledge and thank the Municipalities across the country for having employed 904 military veterans and also thank the Department of Water Affairs for 110 permanent job placements at the Jericho Dam in Standerton.

There shall be work and security!

Ziyalunga izinto zamacommander.

Burial Support

We also promised to attend to a better facilitation of standardised funerals for military veterans, through an initiative of burial support. This initiative has also been tested in the market, and we hope to finalize and operationalize it during this current financial year.

Amendment of Act 18 of 2011

We are pleased to announce that we have started the process to amend the Military Veterans' Act 18 of 2011. The department would give priority attention to the amendment to accommodate dependents of military veterans, particularly with regards to the provision of free healthcare and burial support. We will ensure that it is speedily placed before Parliament and its institutional processes for consideration.

We wish to honour our comrades who recently passed on, among them our Mother and stalwart, Mama Ruth Mompoti, Cde Edwin

Hlape Melato also known as Cde Fish and the late General Bongani Isidore Mbatha.

It is important to mention that the late General Mbatha passed on while playing a very important role as the Defence Chief of Logistic, to ensure a process which would enable military veterans to benefit favourably in the military procurement procedures. May his soul, and those of the other veterans, rest in peace.

It is important to note that General Mbatha, in his capacity as the co-chairperson of the Cape Castle Board, was leading his team in the reimaging and repositioning of the castle to represent its history as a centre of memory, of our history, of our colonization, which was the genesis of centuries of racial oppression and conflict in our country. To this end steps are being taken to list the Cape Castle as a UNESCO world heritage site.

May I thank the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans for the leadership she has provided since one was given the responsibility to deputise her. She has indeed been the light and mentor.

I urge the house to support this budget.