



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
Republic of South Africa**

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**MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS'
TRIBUTE ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEMORIAL
SERVICE FOR THE DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE
SANDF MEMORIAL SERVICE, 24th AUGUST 2016**

Programme Director

Secretary for Defence Dr Sam Gulube

Chief of the SANDF, General Solly Shoke

Chief of the Services and Divisions

Members of the Plenary Defence Staff Council

Chairperson of ARMSCOR and Senior Management

The Defence Force Service Commission

The Military Ombudsman

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Today marks a sad day in the history of our South African National Defence Force! The loss of one member is one too many, but the loss of almost a dozen, eleven of our members, is too much to bear. The tragic accident that occurred reminds us that life is short, just too short and we need to cherish every moment as long as we live, live every day as if it's our last.

I beseech the bereaved, following this tragic event, that we call for God's peace to abound in us. Yes our loss remains the gain to the Angels in heaven. May we be comforted by knowing that as Paul commands of the people of Philippi when he says...

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever

things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and the God of peace shall be with you."

It is quite symbolic that such a tragedy happens to women who were currently deployed, at the demobilization centre, a centre that epitomizes the SANDF readiness for deployment in many theatres, preparing for readiness to lay down their lives for the security and safety of humanity globally in pursuit of peace. May the ministering angels continue to minister to us during this period. May archangel Michael provide a hedge of protection to the bereaved families and to the broader Defence family especially at this time. As the SANDF we have been hit by several thorns!

The circumstances of their passing is one that we need to avoid at all costs, and calls upon us to be ever more vigilant as we carry out our core business. Our members died in the line of duty and were in the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of our national women's day during this women's month. These female members died at the prime of their careers in the SANDF, as we now know, on the R712 in the Golden Gate Reserve. It is a further blow that this occurs just

a few days after we commemorated our own Women's Day Military Parade on Friday the 19th August 2016 as we were simultaneously marking the 350th year of the Castle of Good Hope.

Their home units were mostly the Demob Centre in Bloemfontein, the Signals Unit and also the South African Military Health Services (SAMHS), all of which units are in Bloemfontein. We must also acknowledge that they leave behind their children and families. In this regard the SANDF Fund will be looked upon to ensure that there is support to enable them to continue with their education and lives in general.

As we prepare for their last journey, we must be mindful that these gallant women of our Defence force died in the line of duty, and must be recognized as such. We must pay a fitting tribute to them, and ensure that their legacy and role they played in our Defence force is an everlasting one. We were robbed of the contribution these young women still had to make as part of our nation building and ensuring that we have a strong Defence force, fully representative of the women and men of our nation.

In paying the tribute to our members, seven military and four civilian, it would be amiss not to mention them, by name, rank and responsibilities they held in the SANDF. They are...

1. Chaplain Phumza Teledimo - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein
2. Sergeant Matseko Josephine Madimabe - Home Unit: Signals Unit, Bloemfontein
3. Corporal Akhona Tshoni - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein
4. Lance Corporal Sharon Nosiphiwe Macala - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein
5. Lance Corporal Cheena Roberta Jonkers - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein
6. Lance Corporal Maditsietsi Constance Morotolo - Home Unit: Signals Unit, Bloemfontein
7. Private Maserame Dorcas Molibeli - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein
8. Ms Portia Palesa Ramabodu - Home Unit: Demob Centre (SAMHS, Pharmacist), Bloemfontein
9. Ms Alice Thakanyane Masilo - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein

10. Ms Maria Jacobs - Home Unit: Demob Centre, Bloemfontein

11. Ms Cynthia Lesego Rasethuntsha - Civilian, Demob Centre, Bloemfontein

As we pay tribute to them we must also remember their their comrades who obtained injuries in the same accident, some of who still lie in hospital. We must wish them a speedy recovery and give them all the support they will need upon discharge from hospital as they deal with the trauma of the loss they've suffered from their units. Let us ensure that there is a wall of remembrance in the units they come from, as a stark reminder of them as members of their units.

We will remember them...