

MILITARY ACADEMY WELCOMES FIRST YEARS

The Military Academy had its Welcoming Parade for the first year learners (MA18) on 28 January 2016 at the Military Academy parade ground. The Welcoming Parade marks the start to the beginning of the year for the Military Academy, and first year learners got their first taste of events to come at the unit. The students were especially welcomed and honored by the presence of the Mayor of Saldanha municipality, Mr Francois Schippers, the Chief Human Resources, Lieutenant General Norman Yengeni as well as several high ranking SANDF officials. The parade was led by the SA Army Band from Youngsfield.

The Commandant, Brigadier General Lawrence Mbatha welcomed the first years to the unit and also extended a welcoming to all staff members and students, back from leave. In his speech, Brigadier General Mbatha mentioned that 2015 has been a busy and challenging year for the Military Academy, but thanks to the resilience displayed by the entire staff, the unit were able to overcome all challenges. He also expressed his profound appreciation to the University of Stellenbosch for their remarkable partnership with the Academy, which ensures that the Academy remains one of the highly recognized institutions in our country.

The Commandant mentioned the refurbishment project that started in January 2015, which was one of the biggest hurdles for the Academy to overcome. This project not only benefits the Academy, but also the local community in terms of job creation. It is envisioned that the future leaders that will benefit from this establishment will continue to contribute positively to the local community and thus strengthening the Academy's relationship with them. This is also visible in the continuous support from the Mayor of Saldanha Bay, Mr Schippers and the positive relationship that was built between his office and the Academy.

Brig Gen Mbatha continued to welcome the first years and inspired them with a quote from Nelson Mandela: "I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter. I have made mistakes along the way, but I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." Brig Gen Mbatha said that his sincere advice to them was: "Focus on your studies 100% from day one. Grab this opportunity with both hands and never let go of it. It is your key to life, both in terms of broadening options to life and further more enabling you as a citizen of this country to make a meaningful contribution."

As part of the parade, the Dean of Faculty Military Science, Professor Samuel Tshehla, read the Military Academy Code of Honour to the students and each first year learner received a Code of Honour on parade. This should serve as a guideline for them to complete their studies successfully.

The evening of the 28th of January, saw first year students and staff of the Military Academy (Faculty of Military Science) attending the Academic Opening for 2016. The unit were privileged to have Professor Nico Koopman, Vice Rector: Social Impact, transformation & Personnel from Stellenbosch University, as the guest speaker.

Prof Koopman started his address to the students by reminding them that they came to the Academy to help build dignity for humans, animals and plants. He said that they also came here to build comprehensive human security and peace in South Africa, the continent and globally. He said that: "we make a commitment that you will grow in knowledge, values and skills for the common good of South Africa and the rest of Africa. So that they can be served by YOU. You come with your focus on the common good – on yourself yes – but for the wellbeing of others and in the spirit of Ubuntu and let humanity and nature flourish."

Prof Koopman told the students that the Academy and Stellenbosch University want their graduates to have the following attributes: "We want you to be thought leaders". They must know that analysis does not lead to paralysis, but it encourages them to address problems to overcome

the immense challenges that they face. “We also want you to be a dynamic leader – people that are not happy with mediocrity, but people that want to give their best and make distinctive contributions and excel and give their best in all aspects.” And lastly they go away as a “Lifelong Learner”. They must not only have their degree/s, but they must always say I am curious, I want to be involve in continuous education programs and I will always learn.

Prof Koopman concluded by informing the students that they will succeed with their studies and will live constructive lives if three things are materialized in their lives – 3 Greek words: Firstly, *Logos*, which means word/logic/knowledge, thus love your disciplines and be committed and make use of the support provided to you. Secondly, *Ethos*, which refers to ethics and the fact that we say to study is also an ethical choice, to build a new “habitat” for yourself and others. Thirdly, is *Athos*, which refers to passion, love, commitment and energy to say you are thankful for this opportunity. This gives you inspiration and meaning to your life and lets you flourish in an unstoppable way.

As Brigadier General Mbatha has pledged that we remain committed as an institution irrespective of the challenges we are encountering, to be focused and committed to our vision and mission, we wish the intake of 2016 a prosperous three years at the Military Academy.