



Cape Town Rifles  
(Dukes)  
Est 1855

# The Communiqué

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## MESSAGE FROM LT COL F.S. MARAIS, THE OFFICER COMMANDING

The first quarter of 2017 has come and gone, the new financial year is upon us. We have all been aware of the constraints, financial as well as “Man-days”, which have been imposed on the SA Army reserves and now the warnings, like Brexit, have become reality. Many of our members have taken control of their own destiny and instead of wining about their sorry lot, have gone out and engaged in something both positive as well as sustainable. The notion that to be in the Reserves is a “Job for life” must be tackled head on, by each individual, as you and only you can make the paradigm shift, out of your false comfort zone, in order to create a career path for yourself, thereby providing for yourself and your Family. I urge you all to begin to take such steps as are required in order to ensure that you do not land up languishing at home, simply waiting for a “Call-up”

I wish to congratulate the members of the Regiment, who have persevered in their quest for permanent civilian employment and have entered such fields as Retail, Farming, Private security, Transport, Veterinary services and Contracting.

Finally, our very best wishes and encouragement to the members of our shooting team, who leave for the annual Gold Cup competition, early next Month. I trust that you will enhance the name of the Regiment and as usual bring back as much “Gold” as possible.

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### CHAPLAINS CORNER BY CPLN A DAWETI

#### 1 SAMUEL 2 V 3

Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed.

The bows of warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength.



## GUNNERS MEMORIAL PARADE—19 MARCH 2017





**ANNUAL SUCCESSION PLANNING 2017**  
**AT**  
**SA ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL**  
**BY S/SGT A.J. MYBURGH**

On Sunday 19 March 2017, Unit OC's, Personnel Officers, Chief Personnel Clerks & Personnel Clerks from all Infantry units across South Africa together with SA Army Infantry Formation HQ staff, gathered at SA Army Infantry School Oudthoorn to address the Annual Succession Planning of its members for the new FY 2017/18.

The exercise is scheduled annually by the GOC SA Army Infantry Formation to ensure that the INF FMN's career management system once and for all has to be optimized to ensure that the right person is placed in the right post. The SA Army INF FMN has succeeded in placing members during the 2016 Annual Succession Planning and HR policies on both staffing and promotion were adhered to. While all precautions were taken into consideration to ensure that career management of all SAIC members is administered in an effective and efficient manner, there are other factors affecting individual transfers and staffing, such as geographical location, ill-health, disabilities and welfare challenges as such these factors need to be taken into consideration.

The placement of soldiers from both the Regular and Reserve Forces were managed by teams from the respective units, whereby decisions were made as to the placement of such members that will have an impact on each individual's unique future careers. Each morning between 07:00 & 08:00, after Roll Call was taken and the National Anthem was heard, the Regular and Reserve units were separated to commence with the very important task of populating the unit structures. The groups worked hard and long hours to reach a common goal whereby their members are staffed in the right post, which will ultimately have an influence on the future of each soldier.

Sufficient nourishment was provided by the School and members were fortunate to enjoy breakfast, tea, lunch and supper on a daily basis. Other than the long working hours members had to endure, they also experienced a sweaty 42° mid-week day that is a known for in Oudthoorn. Luckily, the consolation to such extreme experiences is that one can fix it with a "cold one".

It is often that the staff from the various units communicate telephonically with each other, not knowing the person or his/her functions and/or their role in the SANDF. The work-session is also a good platform for such members to meet each other by putting a face to a name. Working relationships are build and friendships are made simultaneously.

The Reserves were excused from the work-session on Saturday 25 March 2017 and returned to their units. The Regular Force units had to remain behind to continue with their session. The result of the Conference is that those members that were not placed, was staffed in available posts. Members wanting transferred, were placed into vacant posts. New enlistments were placed and lateral transfers into vacant posts executed.



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**CAPE TOWN RIFLES REMEMBERS THE BRAVE PARABATS  
HOW DEADLY CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC BATTLE UNFOLDED  
PUBLISHED IN THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT | 31 MARCH 2013  
BY Helmoed Römer Heitman**

From March 22 until about 9pm on March 24, 200 South African soldiers fought a series of running battles outside Bangui in the Central African Republic (CAR) against 3 000 or more well-armed opponents. And they did so while the CAR Army (Faca) evaporated and the peacekeeping forces of the Central African Standby Brigade disappeared from the scene.

That series of running battles claimed 13 soldiers and 27 others were wounded, but the force retained its cohesion and was able to fall back from two separate engagement areas to its base and to hold it until their attackers gave up trying to overrun them and proposed a ceasefire and disengagement. By then the rebels had suffered as many as 500 casualties, based on estimates by officers with considerable operational experience and estimated by a number of NGOs in the country. In the process the soldiers fired off more than 12 000 rounds of 12.7mm machinegun ammunition, 288 rockets from 107mm rocket launchers and 800 bombs from 81mm mortars, and thousands of rounds from 7.62mm machineguns and 5.56mm rifles.

This was one of the hardest-fought actions that the SA Army has experienced, and the soldiers fought well, even outstandingly. That is not only reflected in the fact that this small unit retained cohesion to the end of the action, but also in the casualties that it inflicted on its opponents: such casualties that it was the Seleka rebels who proposed a ceasefire and disengagement.

Their valour was underlined by the French force at Bangui airport when it held a formal parade to bid farewell to those who died.

South Africa has since withdrawn the bulk of its small force in the CAR following the fall of the CAR government. The South African government had wanted to relieve the troops and deploy a stronger force to stabilise the situation pending a decision by the AU, but the French government – whose troops control the only viable airport – would not permit deployment of new combat forces lest it draw an attack on the airport or on French citizens in Bangui. Information from Uganda suggests that South Africa is, instead, deploying some force elements there and perhaps also to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to provide early action capability should Seleka endanger the remaining South African troops in the country, or should the AU decide on a military intervention.

The small South African force was deployed to the CAR on January 1/2, to protect the two training teams already there under a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding, and to help stabilise the security situation after a startlingly swift rebel advance from the east of the country to near Bangui. Aircraft had to be chartered for the purpose, as the SA Air Force does not have the strategic air transport capacity for even such a small undertaking.

This protection force comprised a parachute combat team (a company of paratroopers and a support platoon with 12.7mm heavy machineguns and 81mm mortars), Special Forces teams with four 4x4 vehicles armed with machineguns and two Hornet vehicles armed with machineguns and 107mm multiple rocket launchers, tactical and electronic intelligence teams, signallers and engineers, for a total of 265 including the training teams.

The decision to deploy a small, lightly armed force was based on intelligence that the rebel force comprised some 1 000 to 1 200 men, lightly armed and poorly trained and led. According to the French force in the CAR, that intelligence was probably correct at the time.

The force deployed into a centre on the northern outskirts of the city and patrolled the area around the base, west towards Bouar and north to Damara, where Faca and Fomac forces had taken up defensive positions to prevent a rebel attack from the north. There were some 2 000 Faca troops, regarded as the most loyal, deployed in Bangui itself, with a battalion on the Bossembele road, protecting the only bridge in the area. A French force, down from 650 to around 250, was deployed to protect the airport and French citizens.

The situation remained quiet and the negotiations in Libreville produced what seemed to be a workable solution to the political issues. The South African government decided to leave the training team and protection force in the CAR.

On March 22, the Chad Army company deployed 10km north of Damara as part of the Fomac contingent, reported that it had been “overrun”, albeit without casualties, a report that raised some suspicion in the South African force commander’s mind. The Faca force at Damara shortly thereafter reported coming under fire.

The force commander tasked the special forces team to reconnoitre towards Damara to establish the actual situation. More than 20km north of Bangui, the patrol found itself in the middle of a 300m-long L-ambush, drawing fire from the bush just 10m from the road.

They carried out their practised counter-ambush drills, using the weapons of their vehicles to suppress the ambush and fight their way clear, suffering three wounded.

While the patrol took its wounded to the airport from where they were evacuated to Pretoria, the force commander moved the parachute company to a reconnoitred defensive position 15km north of the base.

The morning of March 23 brought some fire north of the company’s positions before it came under mortar fire around 9.30am, which quickly escalated into heavy fire from mortars, heavy machineguns, RPGs and light weapons. The Faca and Fomac forces to its north having evaporated, this quickly developed into a major engagement.

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Enveloped by the enemy, the company fell back to another previously reconnoitred position before re-taking its original position, which it held until 12pm. Forced back to the next line, it was again enveloped but used 107mm rocket launchers to clear the high ground on its flank and attacked to drive off the enemy forces. At 2pm the force commander learned that the Faca battalion at the bridge on the western approach had decamped, and sent the special forces to confirm the situation. They immediately found themselves in a heavy contact with several hundred rebels supported by at least 15 “technicals” armed with heavy machineguns and perhaps 23mm cannon. Another special forces team with six Hornets, that had just been flown into Bangui, went to support them.

The combined force was, however, too small to hold, despite firing ripples of 107mm rockets directly into the advancing enemy, and was repeatedly enveloped. By about 6.30pm the fighting had moved into the suburbs, and they were ordered to fall back into the base. They had by then suffered several wounded, and many of the Hornets were running on rims, their tyres long since shot flat.

By 7pm the base itself was under attack by some 1 500 rebels with mortars, heavy machineguns and RPGs, which lasted until about 9pm, and all of the heavy weapons ammunition had been used.

The parachute company meanwhile found itself being attacked from behind, and was also ordered to fall back to the base.

At about 10pm the force commander was informed that the Seleka commander wanted to discuss stopping the fighting. Meanwhile, civilians in the city had been issued weapons by the government and there was random shooting and fighting in the city.

After a quiet night, the base was again attacked at about 6.30am, but after about 30 minutes the Seleka commander telephoned to ask for a meeting, saying he had 2 000 troops with which to attack the base but would prefer not to. He approached the base holding a white handkerchief to identify himself, and met with the force commander at the gate. He said he had no orders to fight the South Africans and was happy to break off the engagement if they would not fire on his troops.

After some discussion – while perhaps 2 000 rebels moved past the base towards the city – the rebel commander demonstrated his goodwill by bringing back a paratrooper who had been wounded and captured. The returned paratrooper reported that while being taken to Damara and then back, he had seen several thousand more rebel troops on the move towards the city. Later the rebels also brought in the bodies of several who had been killed.

By now it was clear that the attacking force was far different from the “rag tag” rebel force originally reported: Most of them in standardised uniforms with proper webbing and with flak jackets, new AK47s and heavy weapons up to 23mm cannons.

It was also clear that many were not from the CAR, some speaking with Chad accents and others having distinctly Arabic features.

Almost out of ammunition and with Faca having evaporated or changed sides and Fomac nowhere to be seen, the force commander decided there was no purpose to be served by further fighting, and the two sides disengaged.

One of the Fomac companies then made an appearance, offering to provide trucks to move the wounded to the airport, from where they were evacuated. The force commander now also decided to move his force to the airport. By 9pm on Sunday the troops were at the airport resting and cleaning equipment, while in the city various rebel elements had begun shooting at each other.

\* Heitman is an independent defence analyst

**Sunday Independent**



# Whats happening in April 2017

- Good Friday - 14 April
- Family Day - 17 April
- Gold Cup Shooting Competition (Bloemfontein) - 17 to 24 April
- Freedom Day - 27 April



## HATCHES, MATCHES AND DESPATCHES



Congratulations to Rfn Helga Botha who is getting married in April.

## THE WEIGH IN



After publishing the BMI chart in February of the HQ personnel took a little wager in who could loose the most weight by 31 March 2017. The winner was Maj Brimacombe with Cpln Daweti a close 2nd followed by Lt Novela. Congratulations to all the participants.

If interested in participating in the next weigh in which will take place from 2 May 2017 contact Lt Novela at

021 597 2810

