



# **IN-FORMATION**

**NEWSLETTER OF THE DURBAN BRANCH**

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**20 December 2018**

## **NEWS AND EVENTS**

### **Chairman's Chatter**

The past year has been marked by good camaraderie, the loss of some colleagues and friends, and sadly a decline in the attendance at our lunches.

A mention must once again be made regarding the wonderful hospitality that our branch has received at Air Force Base Durban, and we thank Col Barney Fourie (Officer Commanding AFB Durban) for this kindness and assistance. Special thanks must go to WO Maggie Olivier, the Club Manager, who has provided wonderful 3 course meals at every single lunch this year!

I was delighted to hear that Col Fourie is staying as OC AFB Durban for another year.

### **The Sunset Call**

Since the publication of our previous newsletter it is with great sadness that we report that the following members have been called to Higher Service:

- a. Gary Gradwell.
- b. Vic Sylvester.

***At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.***

### **New Members**

Our new members that we welcome to the SAAFA, and our Branch, are:

- a. Arrie and Carol de Klerk, who were transferred from the Pietermaritzburg Branch. Arrie is a Past National President and is currently the Country Vice President in Natal.
- b. Hein Pistorius who was also transferred from the Pietermaritzburg Branch.
- c. Neville Dolley who was transferred from the East Rand Branch.
- d. Henry Morkel, who is a new member.
- e. Grant Weston, who is also a new member.

We trust our new members will enjoy the camaraderie and friendship at the SAAFA Durban Branch.

### **Transfers Out**

Sadly, Darryl Ireland was transferred to the Lower South Coast Branch where we trust he will enjoy the same camaraderie as he did with us in the Durban Branch.

### **Luncheons**

Our lunches are still held on the first Friday of the month and the lunches now start at 12h15 so that the guest speaker can speak before lunch, and starters are served at 13h00. The pub is open from 11h30 for those thirsty early travellers.

## Member's Accounts

We have had a 100% payment record regarding the annual fees for the past two years.

Unfortunately, some people only paid as late as November 2018 and our annual capitation fees to NEC have to be paid on, or before, 31 March of the year, so I implore you to sit down quickly and pay your 2019 subs if you have not already done so. The subs have remained R120 per annum, which is really reasonable, so please pay them promptly.

An EFT payment is preferable for us so, if you must pay by depositing cash at your bank please add R40 if depositing the money at the bank teller, and R10 if you are making an ATM deposit. Thank you.

Please pay your subs at the lunches, rather than cash deposits at the bank or ATM.

## FNB Banking Account

The SAAFA Durban Branch FNB cheque account banking details are as follows:

SAAFA DURBAN BRANCH  
FNB Acacia House  
Cheque Account  
Branch Code: 210750  
Account Number: 62604514556

If you have any money lying around doing nothing or looking bored, you are welcome to deposit it into the above account and we will ensure that it finds a good home amongst friends!

## Welfare

The SAAFA Durban Branch still has three beneficiaries that are assisted financially. The monthly grants are paid from the branch savings, and generous donations by members.

The Air Forces Housing Memorial has committed to providing assistance in 2019, which is administered by the SAAFA Johannesburg Branch, and for which we are extremely grateful.

## Attendance of Memorial Services and Functions by the SAAFA Durban Branch

The following Memorial Services and functions were attended since the last newsletter:

- a. The Change of Command Parade of Natal Mounted Rifles was attended by the Chairman, Steve Bekker, on 24 March 2018.
- b. The SAAFA Cross was laid by me, Steve Bekker, at the AFB Durban Annual Memorial Service on 18 May 2018.
- c. The Delville Wood Memorial Service was attended by myself and my Aide de Camp, my 13 year old grandson Brendon, on Sunday 15 July 2018 at the Cenotaph in Durban, where I laid the SAAFA Cross.
- d. The Annual KZN Spring Ball was held at AFB Durban on 1 September 2018. Although the SAAFA volunteered to host this function, the OC AFB Durban agreed to co-host the Spring Ball and all preparations were done by members of AFB Durban. AFB Durban excelled in the décor of the hangar, the food and music were excellent and the Ferrari Club (who also attended) parked 6 Ferraris either side of the red carpet at the entrance to the venue making for a spectacular entrance. The SAAFA Durban Branch won the trophy for the Best Table. We all had an absolute "jol" (military speak for a "really great time") and we danced till late, and this event will be remembered as the benchmark for the KZN Military Spring Ball for many years to come. I was extremely proud to be an ex-OC of AFB Durban and to be the Chairman of the SAAFA Durban Branch!
- e. The SAAFA Cross was laid by me at the Annual Gunners Memorial Service at Lord's Grounds in Durban on Sunday 2 September 2018.
- f. On Saturday 3 November 2018 the SAAFA Cross was laid by me at the C (Rhodesia) Squadron 22 SAS Regimental Association Remembrance Service at the MOTH Flame Lily Park in Durban.

- g. On Friday 9 November 2018 the SAAFA Cross was laid by me at the Durban High School Remembrance Day Service.
- h. On Sunday 11 November 2018 the SAAFA Cross was laid by me at the Remembrance Day Service at the Cenotaph at the Durban City Hall. This was a huge privilege for me as this was the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Remembrance Day.



Here is my Aide de Camp (my grandson Brendon) with me at the Delville Wood Memorial at the Cenotaph in Durban



Clinton Wyness (left), Pete Harvey (middle), and myself (not in one of the other 2 positions), at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Remembrance Day Memorial on 11 November 2018. We were very proud to attend!!!

### **The SAAFA Durban Branch Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the SAAFA Durban Branch took place on 6 April 2018. The Committee was voted in, as is, for another year. The Committee thus consists of the following members:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| a. Steve Bekker      | Chairman.   |
| b. Gavin Farquhar    | Vice Chairman, Finances and Welfare.              |
| c. John Boardman     | Honorary Treasurer.                               |
| d. Clinton Wyness    | Media.  |
| e. Nick Lithgow      | Regalia.  |
| f. Rob Sinclair      | Co-opted Member.                                  |
| g. Linda Bekker      | Part time Secretary only employed at the lunches. |
| h. Col Barney Fourie | OC AFB Durban.                                    |

We trust that we will meet your expectations in the forthcoming year.

### **2018 Annual Congress in Cape Town**

The 2018 Annual Congress was hosted by the Cape Town Branch and we were accommodated at the Krystal Beach Hotel.

It was a magnificent and stylish affair, as is the tradition.

Col (ret) Mike Louw was appointed as the National President, and the SAAFA Durban Branch wishes him in his tenure as the Boss.

The Durban Branch would like to thank Maj Gen (ret) Hugh Paine for his leadership and guidance during his time as National President in the hot seat.

### **The Annual Military Spring Ball**

At the Annual Military Spring Ball at UMR in 2017, some Committee members of the SAAFA Durban Branch suggested that the SAAFA Durban Branch host the Spring Ball in 2018. Below is a photo of the Spring Ball that I organised:



The Committee members told me that this was not what they had in mind, and that they wanted to dance. Some misunderstanding!

Col Barney Fourie, OC AFB Durban, agreed that the Base would arrange the Spring Ball, with some input from us. Lt Col Neil Butler and his team did a magnificent job and they decorated the hangar, and

the tables were set in style. We had a magnificent time and the SAAFA won the table for the best table of the evening. You really are encouraged to attend next year as it is a wonderful evening! Below are some photos:



Our trophy for the Best Table of the Evening



Rob and Leigh-Ann Sinclair on the red carpet, flanked by the Ferraris



Two of the six Ferraris on display



An example of the tables and the decor

### **Awards in 2018**

Since assuming my role as Chairman in 2012, the SAAFA Durban Branch Committee has only awarded one Certificate of Appreciation. However, at the Christmas Lunch this year we awarded four certificates to

- a. WO1 Colin Scorer; who has rendered 20 years, or more, of excellent service to the SAAFA Durban Branch.

- b. The AFB Durban Comms Section; for rendering excellent service to us at every lunch by setting up the sound system, and any other service that is required.
- c. The AFB Durban Mess Personnel; for providing excellent lunches at every meal, every month, of every year.
- d. WO Maggie Olivier, The Club Manager at AFB Durban; for going out of her way to make the lunches special for the SAAFA members.



WO1 Colin Scorer receiving his certificate from the Chairman of the SAAFA Durban Branch.

### **Christmas Lunch on 7 December 2018**

The SAAFA Durban Branch enjoyed our annual Christmas lunch at AFB Durban on 7 December 2018.

I was pleased that we had a turnout of 43 members and friends, and it really was an excellent day. WO Maggie Olivier and her staff provided an excellent meal which was enjoyed by all.

One free lunch was won and cash prizes of R500, R250 and R100, were won by three lucky members, of which the Chairman was sadly not one. .

Below is wonderful incriminating evidence of us having fun and enjoying ourselves:



Happy members and friends, feeding with other happy friends!



Starters! Prawns and Calamari.

### **UMR Comrades Association and SAAFA Affiliation**

AFB Durban, and sub-units, have had a longstanding association and affiliation with Umvoti Mounted Rifles (UMR). The Officers Commanding and Sergeant Majors of the Base and units were “spurred” in 2009 when spurs are attached to one’s formal dinner shoes. It is a major privilege to wear these spurs, but they are extremely hazardous to one’s ankles when dancing!

The UMR Comrades Association, under the Chairmanship of Lt Col (ret) Pat Titlestad, and the SAAFA have now also affiliated and the formalities were done at the Christmas Lunch on 7 December 2018.



The Chairman of the SAAFA Durban Branch (me) and Lt Col Laurence Palmer, Acting Honorary Colonel UMR and representative for Lt Col Titlestad, exchanged affiliation certificates at the lunch.

We are pleased and privileged with regard to this formal affiliation!



Lt Col Laurence Palmer (on the left) and Col (ret) Steve Bekker, exchanging our affiliation certificates

### **SAAFA Durban Branch Breakfasts**

I started arranging a SAAFA Durban Branch breakfast once a month, and advertise the date of this breakfast. However, it will usually be the second Thursday after the monthly lunch.

The breakfasts are held at John Dorys in Wilson's Wharf. We have only had two breakfasts there, and the only formality is saying the SAAFA Grace; otherwise it is informal with regard to attire and procedure.

It is simply "meet, say Grace, eat, talk, go away until next time". There are no speeches or welcomes or any formality of any sort, other than Grace.

It is good fun with good friends/comrades, and the food is excellent as is the view over the harbour.

Take note of the next one in January or February and join us!

### **Last Note**

Paddy was complaining to Mick about his wife, Maggie.

"Aye Mick" he says; "Two years ago I went to Australia on holiday for three week and when I got home, Maggie was pregnant. Then last year I went to Hawaii on holiday for three weeks and when I got home, Maggie was pregnant. Then this year I went to South Africa on holiday for three weeks and when I got home, Maggie was pregnant. Next year I am going to do things differently".

"Aye Paddy; what are you going to do differently next year"?

Paddy replies: "Next year I am going to take Maggie with me".

## **CONCLUSION**

On that happy note, on behalf of Linda, myself, and the SAAFA Durban Branch Committee, I trust that you will enjoy a safe and wonderfully blessed Christmas, and that 2019 will only treat you kindly.

Finest SAAFA greetings,

**Steve Bekker**  
**Chairman SAAFA Durban Branch**

*Disclaimer : The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official views of the SA Air Force Association*