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26 July 2010

SA ARMOUR MUSEUM PROGRESS REPORT: JULY 2010

INTRODUCTION

1. The year 2010 has been no exception to the past with regards to visitors and especially organised tour groups catering primarily for primary schools in the greater Mangaung area. However, the first priority for the SA Armour Museum in 2010 was obviously directed towards providing for an influx of foreign visitors that were expected, due to the Soccer World Cup. These preparations included ensuring the completeness and correctness of the entire building and surrounding grounds at all times as well as ensuring that a member of the museum staff was always available to assist any foreign visitors with a guided tour and/or any further information as required. The second task was to continue to build up the museums Library after a start was made last year to resurrect it after a lapse of three years. In this regard the appointment of a full-time Liberian Mr D.T. Meza was of critical importance, and I am happy to report that the Library is once again open and functioning at full capacity. Many other smaller tasks were set which will be seen throughout the report.



2. The SA Armour Museum attended numerous external activities resulting in exposure and subsequent enquiries for further participation in the future. The museum facilities have mainly been used by military institutions and only previously committed activities / functions have been conducted by non military institutions.

AIM

3. The aim of this document is to report on the present status and progress made to date at the SA Armour Museum.

STATUS AS AT END OF JULY 2010

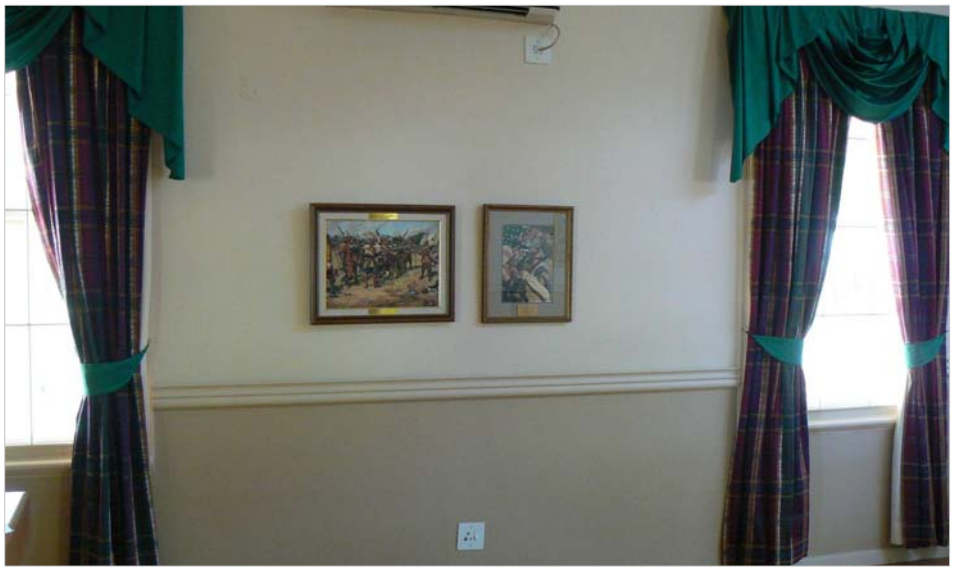
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

4. Major Jean-Pierre Scherman took over the reins as the Chairman of the Management Committee in January 2010, with the departure of Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Carroll on the Senior Command and Staff Duties Learning Program, which would see him out of Bloemfontein for the entire year. As for the rest of the small but dedicated staff of the museum, WO 1 Sieg Marais, assisted by Tpr Pilisane from 1 SA Tk Regt, continues to manage the Museum Shop and also the Museum main building apart from his normal work. This includes any requests for research on historical events and other such related topics. He is also responsible for the regular upgrading of the display cases in the Museum display room and controlling the facilities before and after outside use.

5. WO 2 Willem Wilke (Curator) manages the entire vehicle fleet and Lesakeng area including museum stores located in this vicinity. He is assisted by Cpl Keller from 1 SA Tk Regt. WO 1 Bennie van der Westhuizen manages the curator's old offices and stores. His primary goal is to support both sections by coordinating the activities and arranging "hands" from 1 SA Tank Regiment when required. This allows at any time a staff member to be on hand at the museum when required. Another major headache for the museum is the cataloguing of all articles available in the museum including donations. This project will be ongoing and should be in place over the next year.

GARRISON HALL

6. The major interior decoration revamp of the function hall has now been completed, which included the painting of a two-tone wall. The reason behind this was to prevent the chairs used during functions from damaging the wall resulting in dirty marks not possible to be removed without repainting the entire wall. Most of the functions at the School of Armour, 1 SA Tank Regiment and the SA Armour Museum are held at the Garrison Hall and therefore it must portray the image of our Museum in a positive and professional way.



WO 2 Lucy Beukes has been instrumental in assisting with this renovation. Pictures are changed according to the target group using the facilities and also to prevent stagnation in appearance in the hall. New paintings and pictures for the interior of the Hall are being discovered as the stores are being catalogued and repacked.

7. The upgrade of the men's ablution facilities have also now been completed. This upgrade involved the addition of air dryers and a new wash basin and cupboard. Blinds have also been installed to improve the aesthetics of the already crowded area. The ladies' side has received new table tops and blinds. The indoor display area has also received white blinds which also improve the area while the 2 SSB room has replaced the cloth blinds with dark blue Venetian blinds.





8. The interior of the building is now in a very good condition but the exterior is becoming a great concern and needs urgent renovation. Plans have been conducted including quotations but to date nothing has been forthcoming. This matter has been addressed as a matter of urgency and the School of Armour has placed this under major renovation projects as part of the future budget.



INDOOR DISPLAYS

9. The continual upgrading and renovating of all the display cases within the museum is continuing on a daily basis. With the SWC 2010 in mind, the entire indoor museum displays were given a once over by WO1 Sieg Marias and are now looking very good.









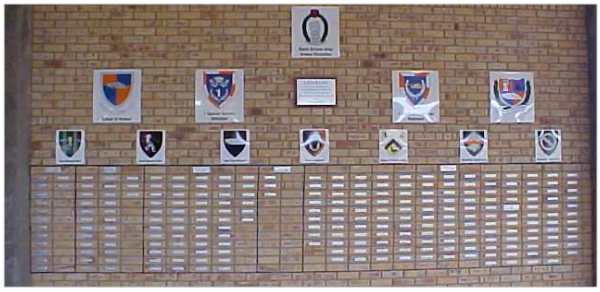


LESAKENG

10. LESAKENG has been used by military institutions mainly for functions and by civilian institutions for a gathering place. The major new addition to this area has been the installation with the financial assistance of ATE of the T72 and BMP1 with accompanying turrets and photos in one of the corners of the building.









EVENTS

11. The South African Armour Museum has a proud and invigorating relationship with Adv Colin Steyn, renowned collector and historian and also Honorary Colonel of 1 SSB. This in turn also connects us with private collectors of military uniforms and military vehicles which have also made contributions in the past. Every year the SA Armour Museum is involved during the anniversary of the *Battle of Barbarossa* on Leeuwberg, the farm of Adv Steyn. Once again this year, the Russian T34 tank along with Museum staff formed part of the re-enactment during the activities. The entrance was controlled by WO 1 Sieg Marais, WO 1 Van der Westhuizen and Tpr Pilisane. Each year this event is greatly increased as other organisations around the country become aware and start showing interest to participate.



The ‘Battle of Barbarossa’.



The Museum’s T34.



Mathilda in action (Ford Mk IV armoured car.)



Adv Colin Steyn giving feedback after the battle.

12. The South African Armour Museum was once again officially invited by the Show management committee to display the Museum at the Bloem Show, after a very successful outing last year. In order to improve on last years performance it was decided to utilize as many of the museum vehicles as was humanly possible. This increase in vehicles necessitated an increase in display area, which the organisers of the Bloem Show were happy to agree to. As a consequence the Museum eventually came to dominate the area around Entrance 7 of the show, occupying an area larger than any other exhibition at the show. The theme of the show was obviously geared towards the SWC 2010 and the Museum contributed in its own way also in this regard. 1 SA Tk Regt, under the command of Major Mark Wheeler and WO 2 Boer Maartens not only supplied the tents, lighting and guards and transported the museum vehicles to and from the grounds, but were ultimately responsible for the setting up of the entire display, which looked fantastic and which continued to prove a great crowd drawer despite the miserable weather. Many of the outdoor vendors expressed their appreciation for the services rendered by our members during the show to them especially during heavy downpours.











13. The Bloem Show 2010 was once again a huge success. It was bigger, brighter and proved to be inspirational and it was well executed. The exhibition portrayed a professional and efficient organisation. It was not for nothing that the SA Armour Museum and its affiliates received the following awards from the judges of the various displays and exhibitions: Superior Spa and Poolshop Floating Trophy for the Corporate Institution with the Best Exhibition, the Central Show Floating Trophy for the exhibition with the greatest inset within the Public Sector and Bloem Show Floating Trophy for the exhibition with the Greatest Display Inset (Inset in Exhibiting and Marketing, Public and Private Sector).



Húlle wen Bloemskou se trofeë

VERSKEIE uitstallers het trofeë vir die handel-en-nywerheidsuitstallings verower. Die uitslae is:

Sasko-wisseltrofee vir die beste spyseniering:
Kobus se Gat – Swartberg Experience

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die beste verversingstalletjie:
NG kerk Noordhoek

Sentrale skou-wisseltrofee vir grootste impak in 'n klein ruimte:
Aloe Ferox

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die beste uitstaller in CX Container/ Wendy-huis:
Lilly's Biltong Bar

Dr Rudi Maré-wisseltrofee vir die bank met die beste uitstalling:
Geen toekenning

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die beste buite-oop-uitstalling (uitstalling in oop ruimte)
Husqvarna

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die beste buitegebou-uitstaller (Uitstaller alleen in 'n gebou)
Suid-Afrikaanse Polisiediens

Double Purple-wisseltrofee vir die uitstalling wat die meeste te verbeter het van die vorige jaar
McCarthy Value Centre

Sentrale Skou-wisseltrofee vir die uitstaller wat homself die beste bemark
Snowflake (Pancake King)

Sentrale Skou-wisseltrofee vir die grootste inset in die private sektor (enige uitstaller behalwe openbare sektor)
Husqvarna

Superior Spa and Poolshop-wisseltrofee vir 'n korporatiewe instansie met die beste uitstalling:
Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum

Prinsloo-wisseltrofee vir die oorspronklikste binne-uitstalling
SANParke

Du Plooy-wisseltrofee vir die beste algehele voertuiguitstalling:
McCarthy

NOK-wisseltrofee vir die beste uitstalling van meubels
Coricraft

Sentrale Skou-wisseltrofee vir die grootste inset in die openbare sektor
Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die grootste uitstallingsinset (inset in uitstalling, bemarking, private en openbare sektor)
Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum

Die Bloem-Medi-Clinic-wisseltrofee vir die uitstaller wat die beste waarde tot die skou toevoeg met sy uitstalling
Troeteldierskou

Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die beste landbou-uitstalling (landbouverwante produkte)
New Holland

Volksblad-wisseltrofee vir die beste binne-uitstalling in die uitstalsale
Coricraft





LINKS: Die Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum op Tempe by Bloemfontein het nie minder nie as drie trofeë op die prysuitdelinggeselligheid van die handel-en-nywerheidsafdeling van die Bloemskou gewen. Van links is mnr. Martin Vorster, voorsitter van die handel-en-nywerheidsafdeling, ft kol. Raymond Hohls en sers.-maj. Willem Wilke, albei van die Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum, en me. Elmarie Prinsloo, uitvoerende hoof van die Bloemskou. Die Suid-Afrikaanse Pantsermuseum het die Superior Spa and Poolshop-wisseltrofee vir 'n korporatiewe instansie met die beste uitstalling gewen, asook die Sentrale Skou-wisseltrofee vir die grootste inset in die openbare sektor op vanjaar se Bloemskou. Nog 'n trofee wat die museum gewen het, is die Bloemskou-wisseltrofee vir die grootste uitstallingsinset (inset in uitstalling, bemarking, private en openbare sektor).

MUSEUM VEHICLES

14. Maintenance of the vehicles in the LESAKENG area is carried out by WO 2 Wilke and Cpl Keller. This process involves a rotational maintenance programme involving battery charging and monthly vehicle rides by the team. A major program that still remains in the pipeline is the re-spraying and upliftment of all outdoor displays and the mobile vehicles used for drive pasts and at shows. This process is vital and it is foreseen that this will cost the museum a penny and sponsors will have to be found. Majority of the museum vehicles displayed around the unit require a new coat of paint including decal work. The upgrade of the roads around Tempe is now complete, but this process has impacted on our route markers resulting in two of the markers having their bases damaged to such a degree they will have to be almost rebuilt.









SUPPORT BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS

15. It must never be forgotten that museums play a very prominent role in any community. Although a museum is a very formal and structured body there are those bodies less organized and some merely interest groups or hobby clubs that share a common passion.

16. Preserving history can take on many forms and even a simple effort such as creating awareness for any given subject can lead to its preservation. Educating people in history can also be preserving history in the minds of those whom we reach.

17. Thus we believe the museum can benefit from a symbiotic relationship with other bodies taking the same issues to heart. Such bodies are the Military Uniform Collectors and Re-enactment Club, Bloemfontein Model Train Club and the many Vintage Automobile Clubs.

18. Although some of these Clubs are no strangers to the museum we would like to have more contact and maybe closed events involving them and organizations like the MOTHs and SA Legion.

19. Another organization that continues to show a keen interest to cooperate with the museum is Sandstone Heritage Trust, headed by Mr Wilfred Mole who has been communicating future plans that would be of great benefit to the SA Armour Museum. This entails the restoration of vehicles on a very significant scale for both parties involved and more vehicles being put on display.





DONATIONS

20. Random donations are received every now and then but the 'Adopt a Brick' project has proved a great idea especially after being revived by the Curator after some time of slow progress. We feel that maybe the price of a brick might be elevated as many foreign visitors indicated that they would not mind paying more to support the museum.

MUSEUM SHOP - "GUN BARREL"

21. Since the opening of the shop and the fact that we are an agency for *Let's Talk Militaria* (owner Mr Craig Monk) money is generated and contributed to the Museum Trust fund. Apart from this our own memorabilia is also available for customers. Although lessons can be learned out of the past, the items presently on display may not reach the target group such as the vast amount of children visiting either in large groups or as families. The Militaria section sells only to collectors and this will always be on the slow side in order to generate funds in large turnover. War memorabilia such as bayonets, uniforms, medals, badges, knives, pieces of uniforms are expensive these days.





VISITORS

22. The Museum once again received several foreign visitors from countries such as the USA, UK, Germany, Belgium, Ghana, Egypt, France, Spain, Brazil, Chilli, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. The regular stream of schools visiting the museum is also a great way in reaching out to the public and improving our corporate image.













FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. The current financial situation in the country, certainly also has an influence on the financial position of the Museum. To maintain the museum's current status and ensure maintenance and improvement, we were forced to delve deeply into the financial resources of the Museum.

24. Essential maintenance and constant improvements that are planned are as follows:

a. Lesakeng concrete floor: R350 000,00.

b. Garrison Hall exterior: R 85 000,00.

c. Maintenance of external displays and vehicles: R36 000,00.

d. Hull Down exterior: R13 000,00

e. Maintenance and renovation of 'drive past vehicles' or 'runners': R42 000,00.

25. Clearly a lot of innovation and hard work is required in order to raise sufficient funds for these important projects and to prioritise scheduled critical maintenance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

26. The Museum Management Committee remains indebted to many individuals and institutions that continue to support the SA Armour Museum. Without such support, the Museum will clearly not make any progress or even be able to maintain its status. Our sincere appreciation to everyone involved.

27. The Management Committee wishes to assure all interested parties that it will continue to do it's best to ensure the ongoing development of the SA Armour Museum and Research Library.

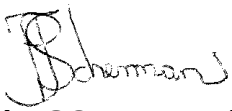
28. The SA Armour Museum has become a vital item on the agenda of any senior or foreign visitors group to the Free State and holds it head up high amongst such institutions in this province. The museum vehicles have become key players during most major events orchestrated by the SA Armoured Corps and this has grown to a considerable extent. The publicity of the museum and marketing is a collective effort by serving members of the three Armour units in Tempe. All the SAAC members in Tempe, as well as our support staff, work tirelessly organise events and receive visits.

29. Feedback from our visitors has always been positive and a lot of compliments are received every day. Sometimes we receive advice on how to do things better and when possible (and affordable) we implement these measures.

30. The unselfishness and commitment of the Museum staff and volunteers who drive the Museum vehicles must also be mentioned. There are a lot of visit groups or events that occur over weekends and public holidays. All the activities where museum vehicles were displayed outside the Tempe area were held during weekends. These displays are still done professionally and this is when the museum gets most of its donations and publicity.

CONCLUSION

31. The SA Armour Museum is making steady progress, despite severe financial and human constraints, and we envisage remaining a price beacon for the SA Armoured Corps.



(J. SCHERMAN)
DAY-TO-DAY MANAGER SA ARMOUR MUSEUM COUNCIL: MAJ