

Of SAPS Heroes, competitions and challenges

The finalists for this year's *debis* Emergency Hero of the Year Award have been nominated. How proud I felt, when I realized that most of the finalists are SAPS members! The awards are dedicated to the men and women of the emergency services who go beyond the call of duty and perform extraordinary acts of bravery and courage.

Superintendent Stephen Macintosh and Inspector Hendrik Visser of the Mamelodi East SAPS in Pretoria, were jointly nominated for fearlessly saving the lives of 17 people who were trapped in a fire that had engulfed eighteen shacks in Mamelodi earlier this year.

Captain Henk Janse van Rensburg, Superintendent Christine Marais and Inspector Carina Fourie of the SAPS in Lichtenburg, North West rescued five people from two burning vehicles after a head-on collision.

Constable Michael Potgieter of the Middelburg SAPS in Mpumalanga, walked into an armed robbery at a busy filling station. He managed to save the lives of all the shoppers and the cashier.

A mother and child were heroically saved from suffocation while trapped in a manhole by Netcare 911 paramedic, Kobus Gericke and Constable Gerrit du Plessis.

Constable Johan Maloney of the Bloemfontein SAPS dived into a deep quarry in an effort to save a little boy who had slipped and fell into the quarry.

The winner will be announced on 8 June 2007. But, it doesn't matter who the winners are, in my eyes, each one of the nominees is a hero in his and her own right.

The nominees, however, are not the only heroes in the SAPS, there are thousands more. Men and women, working long hours to solve murder and rape cases, sacrificing their time over weekends to do crime prevention duties and not forgetting all the Public Service Act personnel who are providing the necessary back-up and support to the police officials. A heartfelt thank you to all our support staff for the excellent service you render.

The SAPS Journal has received two letters of appreciation from community members this month for excellent service rendered by two SAPS officers, Snr Supt Moodley from Lenasia SAPS in Gauteng, and Supt Gcinikaya Taleni of Queenstown SAPS' Communication Services. (Both letters were published on page 4). Councillor Richard S Pillay from Johannesburg wrote that "Senior Superintendent Moodley, the Station Commissioner at Lenasia, is one of the most dedicated and disciplined members of

the SAPS."

Dedicated and disciplined are two of the most important characteristics a police officer should have and what better way to shape these two attributes than through participation in sports. Recently, National Commissioner Selebi hosted a special function to congratulate the SAPS delegation who participated in the World Police and Fire Games in Adelaide, Australia. The games took place from 16 to 25 March 2007 and the 152-strong SAPS team brought home over 200 medals. In recognition of their outstanding accomplishments, the National Commissioner awarded National Police Colours to the entire delegation. "You were true ambassadors of our country and I have every reason to be proud of you, South Africa has every reason to be proud of you", said Commissioner Selebi.

We are also very proud of the SAPS officials who have recently returned from the Carribean after completing a tour of duty at the Cricket World Cup. They, too, represented their country proudly and with dignity, earning the respect of all in attendance. As National Commissioner Selebi said: "This proves to me, yet again, that our Police Service is made up of the finest individuals and that we never, ever have to take a back seat to any other police service in the world."

While we are on the subject

of world-wide news... The SAPS Journal Online website is doing very well. By 23 May 2007, the site already had more than 212 000 hits. The site is updated throughout the day, with an average of 16 new articles daily. The editorial team of the SAPS Journal Online is challenging all the provinces to see if they can submit more articles per day than the team can deal with. It will be interesting to see who will win this challenge!

Remember, anyone can submit articles to the SAPS Journal Online. Go to www.sapsjournalonline.gov.za and click on the submit button. All articles pertaining to police successes, community policing, service excellence and crime prevention projects are welcome. Articles can also be emailed to the Chief Editor: SAPS Journal & SAPS Journal Online, Supt Gerda van den Bos at vandenbosg@saps.org.za.



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