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The Reintegration of Former APLA and MK Soldiers into Civilian Society

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was argued that the demobilisation of former APLA and MK soldiers was introduced without adequate planning. Since the suspension of the armed struggle in 1990, there has never been any effective reintegration programme to facilitate the return of former APLA and MK soldiers to civilian society. This chapter begins (in section 6.2) with a focus on the reintegration of former guerrilla soldiers into civilian society between 1990 and 1994. The rest of the chapter analyses some of the statutory and non-statutory reintegration programmes that have been implemented in South Africa since 1995. These include the *Special Pension Act* (No. 69 of 1996), which provided for monetary compensation to people who could not provide for their own pensions because of one or a combination of factors. Former APLA and MK members who were demobilised from the SANDF were also entitled to a demobilisation gratuity, the amount of which was dependent on the length of time served in either MK or APLA. However, apart from the demobilisation gratuities, the *Demobilisation Act* (No.99 of 1996) made no provision for long-term reintegration programmes. The *Military Veterans' Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999) was meant to recognise the sacrifices that all military veterans had made in service of their country but did not provide for the special needs of former guerrilla soldiers. The three pieces of legislation are discussed in Section 6.3.

The lack of focus on the special needs of former guerrilla soldiers was largely due to the fact that planning for reintegration programmes was aimed at addressing the needs of soldiers affected by rationalisation. As argued, the demobilisation of former APLA and MK soldiers was not part of the process of forming the SANDF. Thus, there was no immediate planning for the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into civilian society. This chapter will show that as early as September 1994 the Department of Defence (DoD) started planning for the establishment of a Service Corps to facilitate the reintegration of soldiers affected by rationalisation. However, when the first group of former APLA and MK soldiers was demobilised in September 1995 (as stated in Chapter 5), there was nothing planned for their return to civilian society. The Service Corps was implemented without adequate planning. Some strategies for the reintegration of demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers were adopted later. In 1999, in preparation for rationalisation, the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) and the DoD finalised a project proposal for funding from the World Bank on the demobilisation and reintegration of military personnel in South Africa. In the same year, the DoD requested technical assistance from the United States (US) for the purposes of demobilisation and reintegration. The World Bank-funded research and the US-funded project were too late to contribute to the reintegration of demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers into society.

The Service Corps, which was established to provide basic adult literacy and vocational training programmes for military veterans, is discussed in Section 6.3.3. It will be argued that while the institution was a noble idea, it failed to achieve its objectives because it was established in haste and without adequate planning.

This is followed by section 6.3.4, which focuses on the South African Veterans' Employment Project (SAVEP). The SAVEP was sponsored by the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) through a bilateral agreement with the South African Department of Defence. It was aimed at improving the transition of demobilised veterans (both former members of the Statutory Forces and Non-Statutory Forces) to civilian society through the provision of employment and training. Section 6.4 focuses on three non-statutory institutions that could have served as alternatives to the Service Corps. These are 17 Shaft Conference and Training Centre, Western Cape Action

Tours (WECAT) and uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans' Association (MKMVA).

This chapter does not focus on the APLA Military Veterans Association (APLAMVA). This is because it became evident during the course of the study that APLA Military Veterans Association (APLAMVA) was almost non-existent. The national office consisted of six National Executive Committee members, the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, General Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer and National Co-ordinator. There were no provincial structures and, according to Johnson Mlambo, Chairperson of APLAMVA, some dedicated APLA veterans operated APLAMVA from their own houses without resources or infrastructure. Due to the lack of resources the APLAMVA office remained inactive and no one knew the actual number of APLAMVA members. Some former APLA members stated that they were not aware of the existence of a structure called APLAMVA. Attempts to interview officials of the organisations were unsuccessful.

6.2 The Reinsertion of Guerrillas into Civilian Society

The suspension of the armed struggle by the ANC in August 1990 was followed by the repatriation of exiles to South Africa. The process included about 4,000 former APLA and MK soldiers who were repatriated as “unarmed civilians”. The suspension of the armed struggle occurred in the context of the informal restructuring of the SADF. The SADF retrenched 9,000 full-time military personnel between 1989 and 1994, and in 1993 conscription was abolished (Cock, 1993). “However, there were enormous inequalities in the packages given to members of the SADF versus the paltry amounts given to returned exiles” (Batchelor, Cock and McKenzie, 2000: 42). MK soldiers returning to South Africa as part of the 17,000 returning exiles received some minimum cash payouts from the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African exiles (NCCR) (Motumi, 1993). The NCCR was founded by the ANC, PAC and Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), in conjunction with the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). It was meant to receive and assist returning exiles to reintegrate into society. Other functions included placing returnees

in temporary shelters while searching for their families and relatives, and administering an individual grant of R4,000 spread over six months (Motumi, 1993). The NCCR was also responsible for assisting returning exiles with training in vocational skills, or job placement for those who already had the skills. However, not all returnees got all that was due to them:

Most of the returnees received the said amount, although there were problems as some returnees, especially those who returned in late 1992 and early 1993, received some or none at all. The reason for this was because of the closure of the NCCR due to financial mismanagement and corruption, as well as the drying up of funds (Motumi, 1993: 6).

Apart from the cash paid out by the NCCR, the ANC Repatriation Committee gave returnees R2,500 each (Motumi, 1993). The ANC gave some individuals extra money. This money was given to individuals as they got off the plane. On a few occasions, people got drunk and had nothing the next morning (Cock, 1993). However, from the accounts of former MK soldiers who came back to South Africa at this time, it seems there was no standard amount given to returnees. *“After two weeks of arrival in South Africa we each received a grant of R600. Each individual qualified for six grants of the same amount but had to wait for four weeks before receiving the second grant”* (a former MK soldier cited in Mashike, 1999: 15). The difference in the amounts received is reflected in the words of another respondent: *“I received R2,000 from the ANC and R600 for three months from National Co-ordinating Committee for Refugees (NCCR). I never claimed more money because I was bitter against the ANC”* (a former MK soldier cited in Mashike, 1999). One former MK soldier had the following to say: *“I received R1,000 and was told funds were not available. I understood and anyway, I did not want to look like a beggar”* (a former MK soldier cited in Mashike, 1999; 15-16).

The financial assistance received by returning MK soldiers was an example of some short-term reinsertion allowances (discussed in Chapter 3), which are normally followed by long-term reintegration assistance. However, the long-term reintegration assistance did not materialise. Thus, most of the returning MK soldiers found life to be very difficult.

One comrade arrived in Kimberley with a family of seven after having left the country in the 1960s to join MK in exile. The town he knew had changed completely, and he and his family had to stay in a hotel for few weeks. It was nice because the ANC was looking after them, until they were told that the ANC could no longer fund them. In order to build their shack, the building material was donated by community members. The family depended on donations of R30 or R50 from sympathetic community members for survival. This comrade was a qualified train driver, but unfortunately Spoornet could not employ him because he was few years away from retirement age (Interview with Major Lawrence Mbatha, Pretoria, 05.08.2000).

The NCCR committed itself to funding income-generating projects. These were mainly tuck-shops since the NCCR was only able to fund projects up to R6,000 (Interview with Major Lawrence Mbatha, Pretoria, 05.08.2000). To receive funding for their projects, ex-combatants had to write a business proposal and identify the location where they planned to establish the business. This was before they received any training in business skills such as writing a business proposal or drawing a monthly budget. Major Mbatha states that the most difficult part for applicants for NCCR funding was writing a business proposal. Hence, most returnees did not receive funding to start businesses. At the time, the ANC argued that it had suspended but had not abandoned the armed struggle and thus it would continue building MK structures inside the country until such time that a peaceful democratic transition was guaranteed. Since the armed struggle was suspended and not abandoned, there was no formal process of demobilisation. This also meant that there were no long-term reintegration programmes to assist returned soldiers to reintegrate into the civilian society.

The absence of a demobilisation policy meant that former APLA and MK soldiers were not formally demobilised and thus had to find ways of reintegrating into civilian society on their own. However, *“the popular notion [was] that [former guerrilla fighters] were home and dry after the unbanning of the ANC. It was not the case”* (Interview with Shirley Gunn, Cape Town, 25.07.2001). Former MK soldiers were not a homogeneous group. Some continued with their studies or found jobs in the

formal sector while others engaged in informal sector activities, including criminal activities. An example is a former MK soldier in the Northern Cape who returned to Kimberley only to find that his father had passed away. He was the first child in the family and, as tradition demands, he had to take over the responsibility of looking after the family. However, he came from a family in which neither parent had engaged in formal employment, but were involved in smuggling diamonds and selling dagga. In order to support the family the returning MK soldier started off by selling sweets and vegetables; after establishing some rapport with people in his late father's networks, he started smuggling diamonds out of Kimberly and importing dagga. This included travelling to places as far away as KwaZulu-Natal Province. He argued that he was able to evade the police during these "business trips" by using some of the skills he had learned as an underground MK operative (Interview with a former MK soldier, Pretoria, 05.08.2000).

In 1993 a study of 180 returned MK soldiers revealed that over half of the sample had completed at least Standard 9 (Grade 11), and a large number (64) were studying. Most notable was that 116 respondents (64.4 per cent) indicated that they were interested in continuing their formal education and going back to school or technical college or university (Cock, 1993). At a January 1994 workshop on "Demobilisation in Southern Africa" the Military Research Group (MRG) was asked to approach tertiary learning institutions to request them to consider instituting a special admissions policy for ex-combatants. A number of institutions were approached by Jacklyn Cock and Rocky Williams, and their responses ranged from sympathy to a total lack of interest in the idea. In response to a letter from Cock, the University of Cape Town was sympathetic to the proposal, but raised concerns about funding:

We agree that the social integration of demobilised soldiers is an urgent need. We believe, however, that our current admissions policies, including special admissions procedures, provide the necessary framework for us to respond to applications from ex-combatants... Our experience with returning exiles in 1991 and 1992, where we did set up special coordinating structures, was that these were useful in terms of ensuring that students were linked to national financial aid programmes that made special provision for exiles... If your group is in a position to advise ex-combatants it would be helpful to us if they could include a covering letter with their completed

UCT application forms so that we can readily identify them as combatants (Letter from Jon File, Academic Secretary and Deputy Registrar, University of Cape Town, 20.04.1994).

Rhodes University also supported the idea in principle but expressed concern about the lack of financial resources to fund ex-combatants' tertiary education. "In our experience ex-combatants have minimal personal resources and our bursary funds are already inadequate. In 1994, several hundred students offered places at Rhodes on academic merit, have not taken up their places because of the shortage of funding" (Letter from M.A. Smout, Vice Principal of Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 01.03.1994).

While some institutions were sympathetic, others showed a lack of interest and responded that they would admit applicants on the basis of merit using the national admissions policy. The response from Pretoria Technikon was that "we will welcome prospective students who qualify for admission based on the national policy at our main campuses and satellite campuses (Nelspruit, Witbank and KwaMhlanga)" (Letter from Professor N.P. Du Preez, Vice-Rector Academic, Technikon Pretoria, 09.03.1994). The Medical University of Southern Africa also gave a response that indicated lack of interest. "Persons wishing to apply for the 1995 academic year are welcome to do so and each will be considered on merit" (Letter from C.W. Berndt, Registrar, Medical University of Southern Africa, 03.05.1994). While the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, claimed to support the idea of enrolling former freedom fighters, Professor Robert Charlton's response to a letter written by Rocky Williams was very not enthusiastic:

We at Wits are eager to play our part... However, we do feel very strongly that every student we admit must have a reasonable chance of succeeding. You mention the potential of discontented demobilised soldiers for destabilisation (*sic*); that potential will be increased if they become more discontented through their inability to cope with their university courses in spite of full academic and other support (Letter from Professor R.W. Charlton, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 29.03.1994).

It is worth noting that while some institutions showed some sympathy towards MRG's request, none of them came up with a special admissions policy for ex-combatants (Interview with Professor Jacklyn Cock, Johannesburg, 01.08.2005). Despite the failure of MRG to obtain a special admissions policy for ex-combatants at tertiary institutions, some former APLA and MK members managed to get through university. The actual number who managed to continue with their studies after the suspension of the armed struggle is unknown. The formal reintegration of former soldiers into society was meant to be considered only after the last phase in the process of forming the SANDF. As stated in the previous chapter, the formation of the SANDF was envisaged as a three-phase process – integration, consolidation and rationalisation. The demobilisation of former APLA and MK soldiers was introduced as an additional phase.

6.3 Statutory Reintegration Programmes

6.3.1 Introduction

Demobilisation was introduced as an additional phase without adequate planning. This meant that the process was not based on any detailed research or analysis of the socio-economic context or needs of soldiers who were affected by the process. In December 1999 the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) at the University of Cape Town and the Department of Defence (represented by Mr. Ismael and General Reich) finalised a project proposal for the World Bank on demobilisation and reintegration of military personnel in South Africa. The aim of the project was to conduct research and to provide other forms of support to the Department of Defence's planning and preparations for large-scale demobilisation and the productive reintegration of soldiers into civilian society. In March 2000 the Post-Conflict Unit of the World Bank prepared a contract with CCR for a grant of US\$216,000. At the time it was clear that the project proposal required substantial revision in the light of various developments in the DoD and elsewhere in government. The World Bank acceded to a request to delay signing the contract so that the proposal could be redrafted (Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2000). The alternative research agenda was finalised on July 12, 2000, and research work began in late 2001, focusing on two areas. The first was a research project to determine the quality of life and socio-economic needs of previously

demobilised former members of MK and APLA, while the second project focused on the retired members of the Special Forces. Research began in late 2001 and ended in March 2003, and resulted in the submission of a research report to the Minister of Defence and the publication of two occasional papers (see Lamb, 2003; Mashike and Mokalobe, 2003).

When the research process began in 2001, the integration-demobilisation was nearing completion and thus the study was too late to be used for the process. There were various forms of legislation in place to deal with those leaving the military. These were the *Special Pension Act* (No. 69 of 1996), the *Demobilisation Act* (No. 99 of 1996) and the *Military Veterans Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999). The first two pieces of legislation made provision for the financial compensation of former members of the liberation movement. The *Military Veterans Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999) made provision for the creation of an Advisory Board on Military Veterans Affairs, which would liaise with the Ministry of Defence. The Service Corps was the only institution established in terms of Section 80(2) of the *Defence Act* (1957), to facilitate the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into society. While Technikon South Africa (which later merged with the University of South Africa) was contracted to conduct a pilot project for the employment and training of military veterans, at the end of the pilot project it was by-passed in favour of the state-run Service Corps. The following sections explore the legal and institutional frameworks for the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into civilian society.

6.3.2 The Legal Framework

In the process of demobilising former APLA and MK members, there was no adequate planning for their reintegration into civilian society. Many held the view that as former APLA and MK soldiers had not joined the armed struggle in order to benefit materially but to free the country from racial domination and oppression, no special payment was required. This attitude was expressed very strongly in a recent television programme by two former MK soldiers. “*People were not fighting for salaries. You cannot value, I mean I stayed years in prison, you cannot now, I don’t know how you would value how I would be paid... People fought for freedom and they got freedom...*” (Muleleki George, Deputy Minister of Defence on SABC 2’s *The Big*

Question, 12.06.2005).²⁷ Another former MK soldier who had recently retired from the SANDF also supported this view. “*We did not get into the struggle to get something. We got into the struggle to fight for freedom. It was voluntary; no one was forced*” (General Wilson Nqose (Rtd.), former MK soldier and former Chief of the Service Corps, on SABC 2’s *The Big Question*, 12.06.2005).

The enactment of the *Special Pension Act* (No. 69 of 1996) was an acknowledgement that while people had not joined the liberation struggle for monetary compensation, their involvement made it impossible for them to accumulate pension benefits. Section 189 of the *Interim Constitution* (Act 200 of 1993) placed an obligation on the state to provide pensions for people who had made sacrifices in the cause of establishing a democratic order in South Africa. The passing of the *Special Pension Act* gave effect to this provision. The special pensions were intended for people who could not provide for their own pensions because of one or a combination of factors. It was meant for those who were engaged on a full-time basis in a liberation movement, for those who were imprisoned for political activities, for those who were in exile for political reasons, and for those who were under banning orders for most of their lives. The pensions ranged from annual amounts of R6,000 to R84,000, as depicted in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Pensions Payable in terms of Subsection (6) of Section 1 of the Special Pension Act

AGE CATEGORY IN YEARS	ANNUAL PENSION AMOUNT IN RANDS
35 but younger than 45	6,000 PLUS 1,200 for each year of service exceeding 5 years but less than or equal to 20 years, with a maximum amount of 24 000
45 but younger than 65	12 000 PLUS 1,200 for each year of service exceeding 5 years but less than or equal to 20 years, with a maximum amount of 30 000
65 and older	24,000 PLUS 1,200 for each year of service exceeding 5 years, with a maximum amount of 42 000. Where years of service exceed 25 years, a fixed amount of 84 000.

Source: Schedule 3 of *Special Pension Act* (69 of 1996)

²⁷ *The Big Question* is the South African Broadcasting Corporation News’ (SABCNEWS) live interactive religious programme on SABC 2. Four people (two a side) debate a moral question, and home viewers as well as the studio audience vote in favour of one of the sides to the debate. On this occasion the “Big Question” was “Are We Forgetting our Freedom Fighters?”, in commemoration of the June 16, 1976, student uprising. The author and Reverend Gift Moerane of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in Gauteng argued that “we are forgetting the freedom fighters” while the Deputy Minister of Defence, Muleleki George, and retired General Wilson Nqose argued that the government was not forgetting the freedom fighters.

The main shortcoming of the *Special Pension Act* (69 of 1996) is the age restriction for recipients of the pensions. In terms of the Subsection A of Section 1 of Act, only those who were 35 years or older on the commencement date of the Act were entitled to apply for a special pension. General Reich describes the *Special Pension Act* (1996) as the worst piece of legislation he has ever come across because it discriminated against people in terms of age (Interview with General R.G. Reich, Pretoria, 08.08.2000). However, others, such as the Deputy Minister of Defence, Muleleki George, argued that the exclusion was justified. “*It was very difficult to give pensions to people who were younger because there was this view that they can still find jobs. That they did not get jobs, it cannot be said they did not get jobs because they are former freedom fighters. There are many people in this country who are unemployed*” (Muleleki George, Deputy Minister of Defence on SABC 2’s *The Big Question*, 12.06.2005). Despite the assumption about the employability of the younger former freedom fighters, there was no attempt to assess the skills levels of those excluded from the SANDF. Furthermore, there was no attempt to do a labour market analysis as a way of determining the skills shortage and where ex-combatants would fit.

Although the Act was passed in 1996, by 2000 some APLA and MK soldiers who qualified to receive special pensions had still not received their benefits. This was blamed on a number of factors which included inefficiencies and staff shortages (*The Star*, 23.08.2000). A total of R1.5 billion has been paid out in Special Pension grants since 1996, benefiting a total of 14,800 people. In the financial year 2004/2005 a total of R303 billion was budgeted for the purposes of the Special Pension.²⁸

As stated earlier, when integration began there was no plan to deal with the release of former soldiers from the SANDF. The *Demobilisation Act* (No. 99 of 1996) was passed late in the process of military transformation and made no provision for long-term reintegration programmes; it only provided for demobilisation gratuities. As stated in Chapter 5, former members of MK and APLA who were unable or unwilling to serve in the SANDF due to advanced age, ill health or other reasons, as well as those cadres who had found alternative employment, were demobilised. Those who

²⁸ These figures were supplied by the Special Pension Office to the SABC’s *The Big Question*, broadcast on 12.06.2005).

were officially demobilised were entitled to a demobilisation gratuity. The amount of this gratuity was dependent on the length of time served in either MK or APLA. The breakdown is shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Categories and Commensurate Gratuities in Respect of Demobilisation

GROUP	REGISTERED WITH NON-STATUTORY FORCE	AMOUNT
A	On or between 1 January 1961 to 31 December 1972	R42,058
B	On or between 1 January 1973 to 31 December 1976	R34,313
C	On or between 1 January 1977 to 31 December 1982	R28,721
D	On or between 1 January 1983 to 31 December 1989	R20,201
E	On or between 1 January 1990 to 26 April 1994	R12,734

Source: Schedule of the *Demobilisation Act* (No. 99 of 1996)

In Chapter 7, it will be argued that the demobilisation gratuities were not enough to meet the immediate needs of demobilised soldiers. This was compounded by the fact that some of those who received the gratuities squandered the money within a few days. An informant from the uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA) states that the lack of financial management skills within MK ranks extended to those who integrated into the SANDF. She observes that some of them, after receiving their salary on the twenty-fifth of each month, spent their nights in nightclubs squandering the money. The problem associated with monetary benefits was identified by one of the respondents in Cock's (1993) study:

The provision of financial assistance for the demobilised soldiers should be avoided at all costs; other material assistance by all means but not money. Money is too easily squandered. There should be a concentration on educational and retraining packages – skills which a person can carry for life (Citizen Force officer quoted in Cock, 1993: 34).

The potential to squander money emanated partly from the lack of financial management skills. Some ex-combatants may have felt rich and started buying presents and throwing parties to please family members, friends and relatives. In the

short-term, this helped ex-combatants to gain a false sense of social reintegration as they were always surrounded by people who treated them as heroes. However, as soon as the demobilisation gratuity was finished, they were often rejected by family members and friends. (Some examples in the South African context are discussed later in Chapter 7.)

The administration of both the demobilisation gratuities and the special pension was characterised by corruption and the embezzlement of funds. In August 2001, the Pan Africanist Congress expelled its Deputy Secretary General, Wonder Masombuka, for four years following allegations that he defrauded former APLA soldiers of more than R350,000. In April 2001 Masombuka, pretending to be acting on behalf of the PAC, allegedly defrauded an APLA member of R220,000. In June 2001 he allegedly defrauded two former APLA members of R130,000 (*Sowetan*, 27.08.2001). Later, in November of the same year, an SANDF colonel and a retired colonel were arrested by the Scorpions (South Africa's elite crime-fighting unit) for twelve charges of fraud involving R380,000. Both were former members of APLA who had been integrated into the new SANDF. The two were deployed in the Department of Defence for the purpose of administering demobilisation gratuities. "They were supposed to verify and confirm claims before paying money out. Instead they allowed claims that were not supposed to qualify for payment and shared in the money paid out" (Gerrie Nel, head of the Scorpions in Gauteng, cited in *The Star*, 21.11.2001).

In 1999, the government passed the *Military Veterans Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999) in order to recognise the sacrifices that all military veterans had made in service of their country and their role in the liberation of South Africa from oppression and racial domination. This was followed by the opening of the Military Veterans Affairs Office in the Ministry of Defence in January 2000. The enactment of legislation so late into the process of military transformation was an indicator of the extent to which the government had failed to consider the reintegration of former soldiers as a priority. According to Lieutenant Colonel Kefioe Mathibe, the idea of a Military Veterans Affairs Office dated back to the beginning of the process of military transformation:

The Military Veterans Affairs Office was an idea of Joe Modise when he was still the Minister of Defence. It is not simply a reaction to problems associated

with demobilisation. It might have become a popular thought after problems experienced with demobilisation. These problems made us realise the need to speed up the process. However, the veterans' affairs office could not be opened without an Act of Parliament. The process took a long time from an idea by Joe Modise; an Act of Parliament was only passed in 1999. The office was opened as a Directorate for Veterans and Reserves in 1999 and became fully operational in January 2000 as a Military Veterans' Affairs Office (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Kefioe Mathibe, Deputy Director in the Military Veterans Affairs Office, Pretoria, 17.08.2000).

The *Military Veterans Affairs Act* defines a military veteran as anyone who served in either the statutory and non-statutory forces in war or armed conflict, regardless of the side that they fought on, in service of or for South Africa. Furthermore, the Act stipulates that the State President is Patron-in-Chief of all military veterans, and also provides for the establishment of an Advisory Board on Military Veterans' Affairs (ABMVA) to enable military veterans for the first time to speak with one voice. This was because of the existence of two military veterans' associations (the MKMVA and the Azanian People's Liberation Army Military Veterans Association – APLAMVA) and a Council of Military Veterans' Organisations (CMVO). The latter is a voluntary association of military veterans' organisations with similar objectives (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Kefioe Mathibe, Pretoria, 17.08.2000). The APLAMVA and MKMVA were not affiliated to CMVO, firstly because both former APLA and MK members felt that as former members of liberation forces they had a unique history and special needs which could not be addressed in the broader context of military veterans' affairs. This had largely to do with the fact that members of CMVO, unlike their APLA and MK counterparts, were able to contribute to a pension fund during their years of military service. *"These people were working, getting bonuses for attacking us and innocent people. We were doing it for the love of our people. We first have to sort our problems out"* (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999). The second reason for non-affiliation was the lack of reconciliation within South African military structures. This was captured in the following words: *"You cannot associate with [for example, the] South African Legion. When they meet they discuss some of their escapades against us. We also discuss escapades against them"* (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999).

In terms of the *Military Veterans Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999), the ABMVA was formed in 1999 and was made up of nominees from recognised military veterans' organisations of both former liberation and statutory forces. The board was made up of five members and four co-opted members who served in their personal capacity for a period of five years with effect from April 1, 1999. In terms of Section 9(3) of the Act, members of ABMVA can serve for a period not exceeding five years, but are eligible for reappointment at the end of their term of office. In an attempt to forge unity among military veterans' organisations and enable the structures to speak with one voice, at the time of the completion of this study the ABMVA was in the process of forming the South African National Military Veterans' Association (SANMVA). When formed, this would become a federal umbrella body to which all veterans' organisations would eventually be affiliated. In December 2003 the South African military veterans (including APLA and MK veterans) hosted the 24th General Assembly of the World Veterans Federation (WVF) in Sandton, Johannesburg. A year before the WVF General Assembly, APLA and MK representatives threatened to disrupt the event if the SANMVA was not properly constituted by then. "*They must not tell lies to the world that we have a military veterans' federation when such a structure does not exist*" (Interview with a former MK soldier, Broederstroom, 04.12.2002). However, the event took place without disruption and the Deputy Chairperson of ABMVA, Lieutenant General. D.P Knobel was elected Vice-President of the WVF.

The main shortcoming of the *Military Veterans Affairs Act* (1999) was its failure to focus on the specific needs of former APLA and MK soldiers. Guerrilla fighters, while not a homogeneous group, were a special category, which differed from veterans of a conventional military force. At the end of armed conflict, guerrilla soldiers require assistance in skills development training and job placement or assistance in starting independent livelihoods more than soldiers from conventional armed forces. As discussed in Chapter 3, post-independence governments in Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe implemented vocational skills training as part of the reintegration programmes for demobilised soldiers. A number of problems and weaknesses of such programmes were discussed. In South Africa the Department of

Defence established the Service Corps, to offer vocational training to demobilised soldiers.

6.3.3 The Service Corps

6.3.3.1 The Origins of the Service Corps

The Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee (JMCC) negotiated the establishment of a structure to facilitate the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into civilian society. The final design options were to be decided upon by the Minister of Defence, who took office after the April 1994 elections. However, since rationalisation was envisaged as the last of the three phases of military transformation, there was no urgency in planning for the reintegration of former soldiers into civilian society. When demobilisation began, there was no long-term programme for the reintegration of former soldiers into society. The Service Corps was introduced without adequate planning and preparation, evident in the fact that it was non-existent during the early days of demobilisation. Hence, most APLA and MK soldiers who were demobilised in 1995/1996 left the assembly areas without undergoing vocational training.

6.3.3.2 The Planning Phase

The planning for the Service Corps (then called the Service Brigade) began as early as September 1994. Planners envisaged that the SANDF would be initially involved in the establishment of the Service Brigade, which would eventually become a non-SANDF organisation. The Service Brigade was to be funded from outside the SANDF with accounts for the applicable department, local government or civilian institution. “The mission of the Service Brigade [was] to upgrade the vocational and life skills of the to be rationalized SANDF personnel giving them fall-back positions in the public and/or private sector as well as to afford those selected, career opportunities in the Support Services of the SANDF” (Department of Defence, 1994: 2). The role of the Service Brigade in the reintegration of rationalised soldiers was to train them in a variety of practical skills in order to equip them for civilian life or to provide selected members with a career in the Support Services of the SANDF (Department of Defence, 1994). It was envisaged that the Service Brigade would perform a number of functions which included to:

- manage the training of ex-soldiers and other volunteers in vocational and life skills;
- determine what facilities and instructors were needed and ensure their availability for training of members of the Service Brigade;
- liaise with other institutions to supplement the training capabilities of the Service Brigade;
- find ways and means to assist members of the Service Brigade in seeking/finding employment outside the SANDF;
- employ trainees after initial training on projects and special tasks until they find employment or until the individual's term expired;
- appoint a select members in the Support Services of the SANDF in permanent capacity and provide advanced training to such members to execute their tasks to the benefit of the individual, the SANDF and the community (Department of Defence, 1994).

Curricula for training were to be drawn up with input from the Department of Labour and the private sector, as well as possible international advice. It was argued that the Service Brigade was not in competition with any trade school or institution but was only supplementing. It was envisaged that the Service Brigade would be used in Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) projects and thus had to seek RDP funds. "The involvement of the Service Brigade in RDP projects, whether for management or the actual task, [had to] be determined by the nature of the project as well as tender and contract specifications. Any possible assistance [had to] be thoroughly investigated before accepting it" (Department of Defence, 1994: 4).

General Andrew Masondo, a former MK commissar, was among the first contributors towards the conceptualisation of the Service Brigade.²⁹ Masondo (1994) envisaged that the Service Brigade would be established with three objectives. The first objective was to cater for SANDF members who, as a result of integration, needed to

²⁹ In October 1994, General Andrew Masondo submitted a "Staff Paper on a Contribution of the SANDF through the Service Brigade" to the South African Defence College.

be demobilised or rationalised. This would include people who would leave the defence force after integration either voluntarily or through employer-initiated retrenchment. The second objective was to cater for the contribution of the SANDF towards resolving the problem of the huge number of jobless and uneducated young people seeking a livelihood. The last objective was to cater for those members of the SANDF who needed upgrading in basic educational skills. The second objective contradicted the idea of diverting resources to social and economic development in the sense that if the military was mandated to address joblessness among the youth this could be used to justify increased military spending.

Masondo (1994) made some recommendations around planning which, if implemented would have produced an efficient institution. There are two points from his paper that deserve a brief discussion. First, he recommended the need to plan for all the logistic requirements of the Service Corps and that the Logistic Division had to check all existing facilities and advise where they needed to be augmented in terms of size or if additional facilities were necessary. This had to run ahead of or concurrently with the integration process. Second, Masondo (1994) recommended the need to conduct a skills audit by establishing a proper register of all those in the SANDF Certified Personnel Register eligible for the Service Corps. Those eligible had to be divided into different groups. These included: those who had skills and experience in the application of the skills and had documents; those who had skills but little experience; those who had practised skills but did not have documents (those also had to be divided according to areas of expertise); those who had no skills at all and who needed academic training. Masondo further argued for the need to ensure that the process of establishing a proper register of those eligible for the Service Corps ran concurrently with integration.

Despite all the recommendations, when demobilisation began the Service Corps had not yet come into existence. When the Service Corps became operational in 1995, it was clear that Masondo's (1994) recommendation on the need to plan for logistic requirements had been disregarded. The Service Corps had no facilities of its own; hence all logistical support was provided by the South African Army, and it was only in October 1996 that a Service Corps Head Office logistics personnel structure was developed (Department of Defence, 1996/1997). All Service Corps trainees were

housed within army engineer units in the regional military commands. When the Service Corps was established, most of the ideas in Masondo's (1994) paper were completely ignored. Consequently, the Service Corps was "*an ossified structure within the SANDF*" (Interview with Rocky Williams, Pretoria, 27.08.2000).

The need for the Service Corps was motivated to the Cabinet by the Department of Defence in a memorandum on January 18, 1995. After Cabinet approval the Service Corps was instituted in September 1995 in terms of Section 80(2) of the *Defence Act* (No. 44 of 1957) as a distinct organisation within the SANDF (*Service Corps brochure*). General Lambert Lehlohonolo Moloi, a former MK soldier, was appointed the first Chief of the Service Corps. On March 6, 1996, the Cabinet approved a mandate for the planning of a National Service Corps and tasked an Interdepartmental Committee to investigate the extension of the SANDF Service Corps to train the youth and unemployed. The Interdepartmental Committee, which was to consist of the Department of Defence, the Department of Labour and the Department of Public Works, was never established. This was attributed to the lack of political will and the reluctance of other departments, mainly the Department of Public Works, "*to take responsibility for a problem created by the Department of Defence*" (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.09.2000). Other sources within the Department of Defence argued that the lack of a universal understanding of the objectives of the Service Corps was in part an explanation for the reluctance of other departments to have any links with the Service Corps.

Informants within the Service Corps argued that it was intended for the reintegration into civilian society of former APLA and MK soldiers and that the process of demobilisation was never envisaged to go beyond 1997 (Presentation by General Quenton Painter, Broederstroom, 04.12.2002). However, due to various problems, which included delays in the finalisation of a Certified Personnel Register (CPR), the process of integration-demobilisation continued beyond 1997. In preparation for the process of rationalisation, the DoD had to establish a mechanism to facilitate the resettlement of members of the Department of Defence (affected by rationalisation) into civilian society. A Working Group of members from the Service Corps (SC), the South African Military Health Services (SAMHS), Army, Air Force, Navy and Chief Personnel (CP) was given the responsibility to conduct an investigation to identify a

mechanism to facilitate the resettlement process. The investigation led to the approval by the Defence Staff Council (DSC) in March 1998 for the Service Corps to act as Resettlement Agent of the Department of Defence (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

Once the Service Corps became a Resettlement Agent, prospective trainees were grouped into four categories: demobilised soldiers (former members of APLA and MK); members of the Department of Defence taking the voluntary severance package, resignations and pensions (age/medical); members of the Department of Defence rationalised on the basis of an employer-initiated retrenchment; all civilians who were not part of the Department of Defence but who wished to undergo vocational training at the SC centres (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.09.2000). Unlike the first three categories, members of the fourth category would cover their own training costs.

6.3.3.3 The Service Corps Reintegration Programme

The Service Corps had two functions. The first was to facilitate various training options. The Service Corps provided some of the training internally, using instructors formally employed by the SADF. Other forms of training, such as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) literacy, driving and security, were outsourced to various training institutions. The second function was to assist trainees to either find employment or start their own enterprises. It is important to note that the second function was introduced in 1998. However, informants within the Service Corps could not provide information on the number of trainees who were placed in jobs through the programme. The only evidence pointed to the failure of the Service Corps to perform its primary function effectively. It was anticipated that the SC would train close to 22,000 former soldiers between 1995 and 2001, of which 10,000 would be former members of MK and APLA. The Head Office of the Service Corps was based outside Pretoria in Gauteng Province. The SC had two main training centres, the Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) outside Pretoria and the Practical Business School (PBS) Mankwe outside Rustenburg. CAT was the main vocational training centre of the Service Corps. Vocational training that was offered at CAT was divided into technical and non-technical types. The development of CAT was sponsored by the Taiwanese government, which spent a total of R141 million, including the

equipment to be used for training. This was before the South African government cut ties with Taiwan in favour of mainland China (Interview with Tsepe Motumi, Pretoria, 18.04.2000).³⁰

Practical Business School (PBS) Mankwe was established on a closed military base (Mankwe Military Base) outside Rustenburg. The name was a misnomer because no vocational training took place at PBS, and there was no training in skills that were relevant for the local labour market. The centre offered Adult Basic Education and Training from level 1 to 4, driving and security training, all of which were outsourced. According to Lieutenant Ramolemogi of PBS Mankwe, Nosizwe Madlala-Routledge (then Deputy Minister of Defence) was surprised to discover (in November 2000 during her visit)³¹ that there was no practical training at PBS.

Apart from the two centres, there were seven provincial offices in Pretoria (Gauteng Province), Bloemfontein (Free State), Durban (KwaZulu-Natal), Polokwane (Limpopo Province), Cape Town (Western Cape), Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape) and Kimberly (Northern Cape). There were no provincial offices in the North West Province and Mpumalanga. General Painter attributed this to the lack of proper military veterans' structures on the ground to assist in the identification of potential Service Corps trainees. Thus, in order to avoid opening redundant offices, the Limpopo office served both the Limpopo Province and Mpumalanga, while the Gauteng provincial office served the North West Province.

The Service Corps reintegration programme was designed to take place over a period of eighteen months, but trainees could leave earlier if they choose to, or in accord with progress and available opportunities. Training was divided into five phases – Orientation, Introduction (ABET), Vocational Training, Practical Experience, and After Care (see Table 6.3). During the Orientation phase, prospective trainees were assessed. Initially the aim of the assessment was to assist a trainee in choosing a career path. This was done based on the trainee's strengths, weaknesses, potential and

³⁰ Evidence of CAT's Taiwanese connection was found on some of the equipment used for training. For example, all machines in the Fitting and Turning division were marked "Made in Taiwan". According to an instructor in the Fitting and Turning division, all the machinery was donated by the Taiwanese government.

³¹ Madlala-Routledge was appointed Deputy Minister of Defence following the second national elections in 1999.

self-knowledge. As Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto noted, however, it was not a real assessment. *“It was about our gut feeling about the trainee. We took about one to two days, but not more than a week in Orientation”* (Interview with Lt. Col. Mokonoto, Service Corps officer, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

Table 6.3: Service Corps Reintegration Programme (18 Months)

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
ORIENTATION	INTRODUCTION ABET	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE	AFTER CARE
Guide & assist Self Knowledge SWOT Opportunities & Potential	Elementary Training and Life Skills	Career Fields & Career Path	Practical Supervision Entrepreneur (On Projects)	Employment Service
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE				
PRE-RELEASE SUPPORT	BRIDGING SUPPORT		POST RELEASE SUPPORT	

Source: Service Corps

During the Orientation phase, trainees were assisted to reach a decision on their career path by examining the various options available. This was done on the basis of increasing self-knowledge, and by providing a clearer appreciation of the choices open to them. Trainees examined their individual strengths and weaknesses, and the available opportunities and potential stumbling blocks which needed to be overcome in order to maximise their opportunities. Orientation was followed by Adult Basic Education and Training, which was the phase of Introduction. In this phase trainees went through elementary training which covered aspects such as career development, leadership, outdoor activities, technological issues, personal and organisational behaviour, personal and functional discipline, and physical training and sport. Introduction also encompassed life-skills such as communication, handling conflict, life planning, problem solving, social interaction, self-esteem, decision making, personal stock-taking and work ethics. The main idea behind this phase was that in order to teach people some skills you first had to deal with the problem of literacy and numeric skills. Hence, most trainees had to start with ABET. Initially ABET was not linked to any skills training. Thus, someone doing bricklaying would attend the same ABET classes as someone training for domestic appliances repair.

Ours was a general ABET. Thus there were problems, people saying 'we don't want to sit in class, we have long passed this' or 'we could not do it in the past, we can't do it now' ” (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi, Service Corps officer, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

After Introduction, trainees moved on to vocational training. At the beginning it was envisaged that vocational training would involve over 600 approved career-orientated courses. Trainees were assisted in choosing a suitable career path. A set of relevant interlocking courses were completed during the three-month period. These courses led to an accredited certificate of competence. If competence was achieved before the end of the three-month period, trainees could choose to leave (*A Service Corps information booklet*). At the beginning, the SC used to give trainees two chances in this phase. If a trainee failed in one field, (for example, domestic appliance repairs) they could move to another (such as domestic and industrial electrical installation). General Masondo stated that when he took over as Chief of the Service Corps from General Lehlohonolo Moloji he made certain aspects of the training compulsory:

If people have educational problems, then Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is compulsory, life skills are compulsory, entrepreneurial skills are compulsory. I have also made basic computer skills compulsory and driving, and after that people can choose what they want to do (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Chief of the Service Corps, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

Vocational training was followed by practical training in which trainees applied the theoretical skills that they had learnt in class. Initially it was envisaged that Service Corps trainees would be provided with specific training to perform their tasks for the benefit of the community. The plan was to use them to assist in maintenance and development programmes of national interest. These included the provision and repair of housing, schools, sanitation and other urban services, basic agricultural extension and rural developments. In order for trainees to gain practical experience, it was envisaged that they would contribute to projects of the SANDF, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and National Public Works Programmes as well as the private sector (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

However, for various reasons that are discussed later, the practical training phase never took place until 1997.

The length of the programme was to a large extent influenced by the literacy and numeric skills of each trainee. People with low levels of literacy and numeric skills had to go for ABET. Thus, different trainees entered the Service Corps training at different levels. A trainee with low levels or no basic literacy and numeric skills would spend six months on ABET, six months on vocational training and the last six months on practical experience. Initially there was no attempt on the part of the Service Corps or government to place graduates in jobs. The phase of After Care was introduced in 1998, with the aim of helping trainees with job placement on completion of their training (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.08.2000).

6.3.3.4 The Service Corps' Performance

There have been a number of official inquiries into the performance of the SC, all of which have found it to have significantly under-performed and been ineffective in fulfilling its mandate. In 1999, the Inspector General reported that the SC employed 252 staff members, while there were 202 trainees. In addition, it was reported that a major component of the SC training was out-sourced. In September 2000, an independent audit found that although the Service Corps had swallowed up more than R30 million between 1995 and 2000, it had produced relatively little. According to the audit the Service Corps “could have trained each of its recruits to PhD level for the money it had cost to provide basic literacy” (*Mail and Guardian*, 08 - 15.09.2000). Further evidence of the poor performance of the Service Corps was that in the period November 1998 to November 2000, CAT trained only 815 demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers (Interview with Captain Mohau Modise, Pretoria, 01.12.2000). The official figures from the SC showed that only 4,600 demobilised soldiers had been trained through the Service Corps during the period 1995 to 2004.³² This was far below the 22,000 that was envisaged at the creation of the SC.

³² These figures were supplied by General Quinton Painter, then Deputy Chief of the Service Corps.

In a survey of 395 respondents,³³ only 186 reported that they were informed about the Service Corps when they were demobilised, while 165 reported that they had not been informed about it. Only 106 respondents joined the Service Corps for vocational training. This was partly because the Service Corps was not yet operational, and some former combatants took their demobilisation gratuities and left for home. It was also partly because of either the anger at being demobilised or the excitement of receiving the demobilisation gratuities. As General Masondo put it, some of them thought they were rich and refused to attend training. However as late as 2000, former APLA and MK soldiers were returning to the Service Corps with requests for training.³⁴ General Masondo and other Service Corps officers argued that such people were entitled to the training and thus could not be turned away.

However, “joining the Service Corps” was not equivalent to completing the training. Four respondents in the sample of 395 stated that they had joined the Service Corps but left before training began, after spending a long period in military camps. Respondents spent varying periods while waiting for training. Thus, the time spent in the Service Corps was not equivalent to the time spent in training (see Table 6.4). For example, three respondents from Limpopo Province spent just over three years (39 months) within the Service Corps structures on full monthly allowances while waiting for training. They finally received two to three weeks of training, because, Service Corps officials argued, they had overstayed their time in the Service Corps.

Table 6.4: Time Spent in the Service Corps (not necessarily time spent in training)

DURATION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1-6 Months	43	11
7-12 Months	26	6
13-18 Months	13	3.2
Less than 1 Month	11	3
More than 18 Months	3	1
Several months	1	0.2
Still attending training	5	1.2
Not Disclosed	3	1
Not Applicable	290	73.4
TOTAL	395	100

³³ They were part of the 410 former APLA and MK soldiers surveyed for a study by the CCR (2003); see Appendix 1 for details.

³⁴ The interview with General Masondo was continuously interrupted by former MK soldiers who came to see their former commissar to request permission to enrol for training through the Service Corps.

However, others were not patient enough to wait for a long time in military camps and decided to quit the Service Corps:

I joined when it was still called the Service Brigade. We were supposed to be trained but we decided to leave after waiting for a long time. The SADF wanted to control the thing because if it us in charge, it would threaten the establishment. Hence its establishment was delayed (Interview with a former MK soldier, Botshabelo, 11.01.2002).

General Masondo reported that “over 400 people have been discharged from the programme for various reasons” (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 05.06.2001). In his report to the Portfolio Committee on Defence, General Masondo did not provide reasons for discharging Service Corps trainees. One respondent from Hammanskraal in the North West Province reported that he was dismissed for misconduct:

I enrolled for motor mechanics but did not complete the training. I only spent seven months. The quality of the training was poor. The former enemy dominated the Service Corps and I was dismissed from the Service Corps by a former enemy named Captain Snyman based at the Service Corps Headquarters (Interview with a former MK soldier, Lethabong, 04.06.2002).

The respondents who reported that they had completed training stated that they had enrolled for various courses, the most common being Motor Mechanics (18 respondents) followed by Security Officers training (11 respondents). Motor Mechanics was chosen by those who were planning to engage in self-employment projects, whereas those who went for Security Officers’ training were hoping for jobs in the private security industry.

Some demobilised soldiers opted for training at institutions such as Chamdor in Krugersdorp because they felt that the Service Corps training was not of the required standard in the industry, while others were trained by Steven Corry at 17 Shaft Conference and Training Centre (discussed later in this chapter). While some of those

(in the sample) who obtained Security Officers' training through the Service Corps found employment, none of the respondents who chose Motor Mechanics were able to create their own self-employment projects.

6.3.3.5 Reasons for the Low Enrolment Figures

There were at least eight reasons why ex-combatants did not take advantage of the opportunity for vocational training at the Service Corps. The first and main reason was the fact that at the beginning of the demobilisation process the Service Corps was not operational. When demobilisation began, there was no Service Corps office at De Brug, Hoedspruit or Wallmannstahl military bases where soldiers were assembled for integration into the SANDF. Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto states that while those soldiers who were accepted into the SANDF knew exactly where to go, this was not the case with those who were demobilised and wanted to join the Service Corps.

There were different offices for engineers, army, navy, infantry etc., but no office for the Service Corps. What existed at the time was a Service Corps directorate which was expected to go to Wallmannstahl and sell the Service Corps to the demobilising soldiers, but it was at that time that we needed the Service Corps the most. It had to be there to look at the needs of these people (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

As the above quote indicates, the Service Corps was not ready to start enrolling demobilised soldiers. However, despite the fact that it was not operational, Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto stated that people who failed to meet the criteria for integration were told to go to the Service Corps. Demobilised soldiers were promised that the Service Corps would offer them skills, even though there was neither a Service Corps office nor any Service Corps personnel to deal with enquiries from those interested in vocational skills training. Some of the respondents stated that at the time of their demobilisation no one informed them about the Service Corps. Some respondents claimed that they only got to know about the Service Corps through e.tv's *Third Degree* (a current affairs programme) on July 14, 2001. However, when some of them found out about it, they were influenced by their comrades who had been through Service Corps training and had negative perceptions about the institution. The most discouraging factor was the general perception that the skills acquired were worthless:

No one told us anything about the Service Corps. I only learned about it almost a year after I was demobilised. Nonetheless all the people I know who did take courses with the Service Corps are all unemployed, we are the same (Interview with a former MK combatant, Cape Town, 16.12.2001).

The second reason why some former soldiers did not join the Service Corps was because they were either employed or desperately looking for work. At the Service Corps, trainees received a monthly R600 (some former trainees said it was R700) living allowance. This was money given for basic needs such as cigarettes and toiletries and did not cover food and accommodation, both of which were provided by the Service Corps. In areas where the Service Corps did not have accommodation facilities or where trainees chose to commute to and from home, this allowance was used for transport. It was an inflexible system, which did not cater for individual circumstances. The main reasoning behind this was that trainees still had their demobilisation gratuities and thus the living allowance was meant to help them with day-to-day needs. What was ignored, either deliberately or due to lack of understanding of the problems faced by returning ex-combatants, was that most ex-combatants had already used their demobilisation gratuity. They had used it to erect a shack (which in some cases included buying the stand) or to buy furniture or food and clothing for the family. Thus, the economic and social circumstances of some former soldiers pushed them to search for work instead of going to the Service Corps.

Disability and/or ill-health was the third factor that prevented some ex-combatants from taking advantage of Service Corps training. While there was no evidence to suggest that disabled ex-combatants would have been turned away from the Service Corps, some of the disabled ex-combatants who were interviewed for this study stated that they chose not to go to the Service Corps because of their disabilities. This included those with either an amputated arm and/or leg and in some cases with both legs amputated. There is no evidence that points to the preparedness of the Service Corps at its inception to deal with disabled ex-combatants. The latest Service Corps brochure also does not comment on skills development for former combatants who were disabled while serving in the military.

Because of illness, some could not join the Service Corps or left in the middle of training. For example, a respondent from Soweto reported that he had left the Service Corps because he was suffering from cerebral malaria. Asked why he did not return, he said that he was afraid of being charged with desertion since he left without official permission. On further investigation, it was discovered that he was also suffering from some psychological problems.

The fourth factor explaining why some former APLA and MK combatants did not join the Service Corps was that most of them had expected to become members of the new national defence force. Thus, when they were demobilised most of them were so disappointed that they would not consider reintegration assistance from an institution which had rejected them. Some of the respondents stated that during the process of demobilisation the SADF officers had made them feel unwanted. Hence, they took their demobilisation gratuities and left the assembly areas as soon as possible. The feeling of some of the ex-combatants at the time was summarised in the words of an ex-combatant from the Northern Cape: *“I did not attend the Service Corps training because I was demoralised. I was not expecting to be demobilised* (Interview with a former MK soldier, Kimberley, 22.02.2002).

The fifth reason why relatively few ex-combatants joined the Service Corps was because the institution was conceptualised as part of the military. Some of the respondents stated that they were not interested in subjecting themselves to more military culture, which would result from undergoing training in a military environment. These fears were confirmed because, as stated earlier, when the Service Corps became operational, it had no facilities of its own and thus all Service Corps trainees were housed within army engineer units in the regional military commands. In retrospect, Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi noted that this was an inappropriate arrangement and contributed to the poor performance record of the Service Corps:

You cannot provide skills to someone who is migrating to civilian society inside the military environment. All it said was that they had to do what all the soldiers in the units did [meaning that they had to live and operate according to military culture and rituals]. This had to take place because the Service

Corps had no facilities (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi noted that there were many frustrations among Service Corps trainees. While they were housed in army engineers' units, they differed with the engineers in that they wore overalls instead of uniforms. This led to conflicts between those who had integrated and those undergoing training, as those who had integrated mocked the Service Corps trainees. Thus, the trainees found themselves in a situation where it was not conducive to learn. Part of the problem was that even though Service Corps trainees were demobilised soldiers, they were not treated as civilians. *"I kept on telling [the Service Corps officers] that they must not treat me like a junior officer. I am now a civilian and expect to be treated as such"* (Interview with Lota Mbalati, former Service Corps trainee, Polokwane, 08.12.2000). Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi expanded on the situation facing the Service Corps trainees by stating that:

While soldiers learned how to use rifles, how to shoot, they [Service Corps trainees] were in class learning. [The training they received] was ABE, it was not linked to [vocational] training, so it was not ABET. From 8 am to 4 pm they read: 'John is going to the tap. The tap has got water'. So, it was a mockery for them. This is why maybe our results were not positive between 1994 and June 1997. It is only now that we have our own facilities (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi, Pretoria, 26.08.2000).³⁵

Linked to the fifth reason is that some former APLA and MK soldiers resented the prospect of learning under the instruction of "a former enemy". Given the reality that the country and the region were emerging from 30 years of armed conflict, it was inevitable that hostilities between members from the opposing sides would not disappear overnight. The view of "us and them" was more pronounced among some former MK members who were not happy because the "enemy" was not defeated. The common argument raised during interviews was that "those people were my enemies

³⁵ However, Lt. Col. Ramasodi could not provide evidence of the difference brought about by the Service Corps's acquisition of its own facilities.

yesterday; they cannot be my friends today”. This was largely confirmed by former Service Corps trainees. A number of them revealed the bad treatment that they suffered at the hands of Service Corps officers during training:

I took a fire-fighting course at Bloemfontein Training Centre and ABET in Queenstown for a total of ten weeks. Everything was fine in Bloemfontein but not in Queenstown. Living conditions were bad and people hostile. If you complained about something they made things worse. At one point the Police Internal Stability Unit was called to maintain the so-called order. They said we were complaining too much. We even left there before our contract expired (Interview with a former MK soldier, Botshabelo, 04.01.2002).

Another respondent had the following to say:

I took a security course and carpentry for a period of six weeks. I attended Service Corps training in Pinetown (Durban) and in Cape Town. We were treated badly, especially in Durban. At some stage the police were called in and they set police dogs on us. We were treated like dogs. Our instructors were rude to us. They spoke to us in Afrikaans; we could not understand each other (Interview with a former MK combatant, Durban, 07.02.2002).

When training began at the Service Corps, there were no black instructors (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000). Thus, apart from allegations of bad treatment, former Service Corps trainees complained about the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction by some white instructors. The lack of black instructors confirms Preston’s (1993b) argument about Service Corps-type institutions. Based on the experiences of the Namibian Development Brigade, Preston (1993b) argues that when embarking on such programmes, competent local staff is often not available to work as instructors or at managerial levels. When establishing the Service Corps, it seems planners did not seriously consider the need to train special staff to handle the training or enlist the services of BMATT instructors.

The training of demobilised former APLA and MK members was the Service Corps’ priority for most of its history. This specificity was the seventh reason why some

former soldiers did not join the Service Corps. The Service Corps was allowed to train demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers and civilians only. However, there were some APLA and MK soldiers who initially joined the SANDF on short-term contracts, and whose contracts were not renewed. Others left either through dismissals or resignation. Former soldiers from these groups could not join the Service Corps because they were not formally demobilised. They had to wait for the Service Corps to obtain the mandate to train members of their categories. This was despite the fact that very few demobilised former APLA and MK members were joining the Service Corps. Consequently time and money were wasted on instructors who had no one to train. During the author's visit to the CAT in December 2000, a training instructor in the fitting and turning department complained about the waste of resources. *"Look at all these machines, other institutions would like to own this type of training equipment. We have the best training equipment but no one to train"* (Interview with a CAT training instructor, Pretoria, 01.12.2000). As a consequence training instructors were "paid to sit on their bums the whole day" (Debra Patta in an interview with General Andrew Masondo on *Third Degree* (e-tv), 14.07.2001).

The quality of the Service Corps training was the last reason why some ex-combatants did not join the Service Corps and why others did not complete their chosen courses. Some of those who had earlier joined the Service Corps went out to discredit the Service Corps, making others lose interest in the training. Former Service Corps trainees complained that the quality of the training was poor since in most cases it involved theory, which was offered over a short period of time:

Training was not fine. The courses were meant to get rid of former APLA and MK combatants. This is why I opted to study through correspondence. Instructors knew nothing about Private Investigation. We clashed on many occasions till I decided to study through correspondence. That is why we are still thirsty for education. People are unemployed despite the skills provided by the Service Corps. There were high expectations. They promised us skills and help in job placement. There are no people who have found employment through the Service Corps. The skills provided were not useful and failed to create any employment opportunities (Interview with a former MK soldier, Gugulethu, 16.08.2001).

Another respondent said:

I studied motor mechanics repair for eighteen months but only as far as theory is concerned. There was no practical training and at the end I received a Repair Assistant Certificate. Although training was offered on a regular basis it was of poor quality because you were trained to become an assistant and not a fully qualified motor mechanic. I am still unemployed despite the fact that I spent eighteen months at the Service Corps (Interview with a former MK combatant, Lethabong, 04.06.2002).

Another respondent, who also spent eighteen months at the Service Corps, commented on the inadequate training he received:

I spent eighteen months at the Service Corps but received training for ten days only, after which I was awarded a diploma. The training was offered by two separate institutions and it did not include any practical training. As a result my training qualifies me only as an assistant (Interview with a former MK soldier, Polokwane, 25.01.2002).

From a total of 106 respondents who had joined the Service Corps, only 36 stated that they acquired useful skills to help them to either open their own small businesses or find employment in the private and public sectors. Meanwhile, only 13 of the 106 respondents reported that their expectations of the Service Corps were met; the number included those who had managed to start up small businesses such as garment making and backyard welding workshops. Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi conceded that the quality of the training made it difficult for Service Corps trainees to compete with graduates from other institutions: “*Our trainees on completion of training could not compete with civilians in the formal sector, who had gone through three to four years of formal training because our trainees only got six months’ training*” (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi, Pretoria, 26.09.2000). The general perception about the quality of the training offered by the Service Corps was summarised by an ex-combatant from the Free State: “*The Service Corps does not help. People who attended Service Corps training are still unemployed. They are*

sitting in the township with me and doing nothing” (Interview with a former APLA soldier, Botshabelo, 07.11.2001). The few respondents who spoke highly about Service Corps training were those who received outsourced training. However, they were also faced with certain impediments, which made it difficult for them to acquire the necessary skills

I enrolled for a six months’ course in Public Relations through Damelin in Durban. The quality of training was satisfactory. The problem is that the Service Corps did not want us to continue with the course beyond six months. They said that there was no money to finance my studies. I did get the skills, I think the course was exciting. That is why I want to continue with it. My expectations were not met; I expected to find work after completing my training (Interview with a former MK soldier, Durban, 26.02.2002).

In Limpopo Province a former Service Corps trainees complained that Service Corps officials attempted to frustrate their efforts to improve their skills. According to former trainees, this took various forms. In some cases Service Corps officers would change instruction hours (from morning to afternoon) or would reduce the duration of the training without informing the trainees placed at private institutions. Since the Service Corps was responsible for paying the fees, service providers (such as PC Training College and Damelin) had no option but to take instructions from the Service Corps office.

Apart from the eight reasons to explain the low number of former soldiers joining the Service Corps, the poor performance of the Service Corps is attributable to the fact that the institution was established without adequate planning. The lack of adequate planning was even more evident when it came to practical training. When the Service Corps was established it was envisaged that the practical aspect of training would be obtained in three different areas. First, learners would be deployed within the SANDF. In September 1997, it was reported that 89 adult learners were undergoing practical experience training at SA Air Force bases throughout the country. The SA Navy and SA Medical Services had also pledged their support for this initiative and

received their first group of adult learners during August 1997 (Department of Defence, 1996/1997).

The second area identified for practical training was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) projects. Planners envisaged that after the completion of their training, learners would be in a position to participate in such projects. However, when the Growth Employment And Redistribution (GEAR) strategy replaced the RDP in 1996, the potential for former soldiers to participate in RDP projects disappeared.

Lastly, planners envisaged that Service Corps trainees would gain practical training through their engagement in private sector projects. In 1997 the Department of Defence reported that many companies and industries in the private sector had indicated their willingness to give Service Corps trainees the opportunity of gaining practical experience within their field of skills training. However, as late as 1997 Service Corps regulations restricted the practical implementation of the private sector option (Department of Defence, 1996/1997). Despite the restriction, some of the trainees were placed in private sector companies for practical training. Those who were affected by this arrangement reported that they faced a number of problems. First, they were deployed among full-time workers who earned a regular salary. Service Corps trainees, however, received a living allowance from the Service Corps. This created problems because some full-time workers mocked Service Corps trainees for depending on handouts after “wasting many years in the bush”. Lieutenant Colonel Ramasodi conceded that in retrospect, the deployment of Service Corps trainees among full-time workers was a bad decision on the part of Service Corps management. It was reported that managers and owners of private sector companies abused Service Corps trainees verbally, calling them names such as “baboons” and “kaffirs”. In a few extreme cases trainees were threatened with physical assault, which often led to their withdrawal from such companies (Interview with Lota Mbalati, Polokwane, 08.12.2000).

The lack of proper planning for practical training led to inadequate skills development, so that Service Corps trainees received theoretical training without any practical skills. Perhaps the worst mistake committed by planners was their failure to

link skills development training to the demands of the labour market. Ironically, the aim of the Centre for Advanced Training was “to offer various levels of vocational training to equip [trainees] with skills of an acceptable standard *as required by the labour market* in order to render successful employees and to promote entrepreneurship” (Interview with Captain Mohau Modise, Pretoria, 01.12.2000, emphasis added). Due to a failure to link skills development to labour market needs, Service Corps trainees tended to choose “fancy” skills, which were irrelevant for the labour markets in their home regions or where they planned to settle. Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto attributes the problem to the lack of proper structures to deal with issues such as career guidance:

We did not have the kind of guidance to say ‘hi, you cannot go for motor mechanic because you want to settle let’s say in Mamelodi and in Mamelodi, there are motor mechanics and five of them are busy going down under. You can’t get business there. If you want to do motor mechanic you must go and settle, let’s say in Soweto because there motor mechanics are needed. But there was no such guidance. So people chose what they wanted and they tended to go for fancy things. So what they chose was very often not relevant for market needs. This led to the need to provide guidance, hence the establishment of the Employment Service (Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto, Pretoria, 26.09.2000).

General Masondo conceded that the lack of a proper labour market analysis was a mistake, but despite his earlier recommendations in the Staff Paper (Masondo, 1994) he argued that the urgency of the situation demanded speed. His statement confirmed the argument that demobilisation was an after-thought; from his argument it is clear that planning for the Service Corps began while demobilised soldiers were already enrolled for training:

We are now trying to do [a labour market analysis]. You see, people have a rigid way of looking at programmes. It is not like we were going to have demobilisation in five years’ time. These people were getting out now. So then

you start to prepare. Now the Service Corps has established the Employment Service to look at things of that nature. The development of the Service Corps was a process... (Interview with General Andrew Masondo, Pretoria, 16.08.2000).

Despite the late attempt by the Service Corps to link skills development training to the needs of the local labour market, a new obstacle faced the training programme. The Service Corps offered skills development training only if such training was accredited by the Department of Labour (DoL). The result was that the skills acquired by Service Corps trainees were suitable only for the formal sector. This made it difficult for them to start their own businesses on the completion of training. An example was that those in garment making focused on how to manufacture work uniforms instead of receiving training in the skills of manufacturing curtains and duvet covers. As Lieutenant Colonel Mokonoto correctly observed, it is more profitable to produce curtains and duvet covers for sale in black townships. This is because such a business venture can be conducted on one's residential premises and requires little capital input. Another aspect of poor planning was that despite Masondo's (1994) recommendation, training programmes were designed without proper analysis of existing skills among demobilised soldiers as well as their career aspirations and socio-economic needs. Furthermore, there was no consultation with the affected people, that is, demobilised soldiers. Kingma (2000) argues that reintegration programmes should be designed, and if needs be redesigned, in consultation with former soldiers who are the intended beneficiaries of the programmes. In South Africa this was not done.

There were some long meetings. [They would ask], how are you going to deal with this money? The military wants to assist with integration. What are you going to do with your life?... and there was absolutely nothing there. They didn't ask what we wanted, what kind of training we needed. They didn't ask anything. They just said this is what they had. I don't know who went for what they offered (Interview with Shirley Gunn, Cape Town, 25.07.2001).

While it is an obvious exaggeration to argue that none of the former Service Corps trainees was able to secure employment, there was no way to evaluate the rate of (un)employment among former Service Corps trainees. General Quenton Painter, the Deputy Chief of the Service Corps, stated that the institution did not have mechanisms in place to follow developments regarding former trainees. He argued that the only way to receive such information was if former trainees voluntarily reported their circumstances to the Head Office of the Service Corps. As General Painter correctly observed, this was problematic since the arrangement was completely voluntary. This was another sign of the failure of the Service Corps to properly manage and monitor the reintegration of former soldiers into society. However, in defence of the government and the Department of Defence, the Deputy Minister of Defence argued that for many years the Service Corps was going through a learning curve.

I would agree that there were mistakes which were made in the past which we are busy correcting now. In the past we used to train them and take them back to the street... what we are doing now is completely different starting from this year. We are training them and find jobs for them. So we are not just training them to throw them back into the street. We have 105 [who] we are training now, who started on June 1, [2005], and now we are already looking for jobs for them (Muleleki George, Deputy Minister of Defence on SABC 2's *The Big Question*, 12.06.2005).

The statement by the Deputy Minister had been previously used by Service Corps officers such as General Masondo to defend inefficiencies in the Service Corps. In an interview in August 2000, General Masondo argued that the Service Corps was busy learning from previous mistakes. It is worth noting that the Deputy Minister's statement came two years after the completion of integration and demobilisation. This meant that former APLA and MK soldiers could not fully benefit from the Service Corps between 1995 and 2004 because the Department of Defence was still in a learning process. The processes included the implementation of the South African Veterans' Employment Project (SAVEP) in late 2002 to develop and test a reintegration and re-skilling model.

6.3.4 The South African Veterans Employment Project

6.3.4.1 The Origins of the South African Veterans Employment Project

In 1999, recognising the need to address veterans' employment issues, the government of South Africa requested technical assistance from the United States. In mid-2000, the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) agreed to develop a demobilisation project focusing on job training and counselling for military veterans. In September 2000, USDOL appointed Aurora Associates to implement the South African Veterans Employment Project (SAVEP). The project was aimed at improving the transition of demobilised veterans (former members of both the Statutory Forces and of the Non-Statutory Forces) to civilian society through the provision of employment and training. However, for various reasons, the project made little progress for the first one and one-half years. "Possible explanations for this [were] that the South African Department of Labour was essentially uninvolved in the project, and USDOL's project design did not allow for an on-the-ground Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), making coordination and administration difficult" (Hurst, White and Statman, 2004: 1).

Facing possible termination of the project in early 2002, it was proposed that resources be redirected into a pilot project to assist veterans' reintegration through access to jobs, self-employment, or higher education. The practical implementation of the idea was the Tswelopele³⁶ Pilot Project commissioned by the South African Department of Defence through a bilateral project with USDOL/Aurora Associates International to develop a holistic model for the reintegration and re-skilling of ex-combatants and military veterans in South Africa. The project was implemented by the University of South Africa (UNISA), Florida Campus (formerly Technikon South Africa). UNISA was responsible for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Portfolio Development Course, Vocational Planning and Career Guidance, Professional Life Skills Development, Basic Information Technology and Business Management Course, and an Academic Literacy Course. The implementation partners were the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) in Johannesburg and Cape Town, which was responsible for the mental health screening, psychosocial support and Psychological Life Skills course.

³⁶ *Tswelopele* is a noun common to Sepedi (Northern Sotho), Sesotho (Southern Sotho) and Setswana languages; it which means "progress".

The first pilot of Tswelopele Project (referred to as Tswelopele 1) comprised 40 ex-combatants from two military groups (20 former APLA and 20 former MK soldiers), and ran from October to December 2002. The second pilot (Tswelopele 2) ran from October 2003 to June 2004, and comprised 40 ex-combatants from four military groups (10 former APLA, 10 former AZANLA, 10 former MK and 10 former SADF soldiers). Differences between Tswelopele 1 and 2 included: increased length from three months to eight months; fewer and more expert staff; a new life skills and psychosocial support course; courses on vocational planning and professional development; focus on referral; and focus on veteran advocacy and networking (Tswelopele, 2004).

6.3.4.2 The Structure of the Re-skilling Programme

The aims of the Tswelopele Pilot Project were to develop and strengthen the capacity of military veterans to advocate for and contribute towards the process of reconstruction and community development in South Africa. It was a three-phase pilot project which combined indigenous healing models with psychosocial support and mental health assessment. The first phase involved the screening and identification of barriers to learning. This was a six-week process during which participants were psychometrically evaluated for the identification of barriers to learning. The task was carried out by registered psychologists and assessed various issues ranging from post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and relational difficulties to family difficulties. Once difficulties for learning were identified, these were dealt with in therapeutic support groups and where necessary individual therapy (Tswelopele, 2004). Recognition of prior learning ran concurrently with the screening and the identification of barriers to learning. Participants documented their competencies and the skills that they had acquired during the course of their lives. These included skills that might not have been formally acquired or accredited.

The resultant portfolio of evidence was used to accredit the skills of the participants, provided that sufficient competencies could be demonstrated. The first phase also involved an attempt to forge a learning progress map from which the participants could navigate their personalised curriculum and set learning and career goals. In the second phase learners enrolled in courses relevant to their capabilities and

preferences. Participants continued to receive psychosocial support. The last phase involved negotiating job-seeking skills with the participants, and industry partners assisted in the placement of learners in Learnerships.³⁷ Table 6.5 indicates that while 83 per cent of participants in Tswelopele 2 completed the course compared to 100 per cent in Tswelopele 1, overall there was some improvement on the first pilot.

Table 6.5: Comparisons — Tswelopele 1 and 2

Number of Participants...	Tswelopele 1		Tswelopele 2	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
that started programme	40		40	
that finished programme	40	100%	33	83%
entering into higher education after graduation	5	13%	17	52%
hired in a <i>formal</i> job	5	13%	8	24%
hired in an <i>informal</i> job	6	15%	8	24%
establishing a micro-enterprise in the <i>formal</i> sector	2	5%	7	21%
establishing a micro-enterprise in the <i>informal</i> sector	5	13%	3	9%

Source: Hurst, White and Statman (2004: 7)

In total, USDoL spent US\$1,149,678 on the South Africa Veterans Employment Project (Hurst, White and Statman, 2004). In October 2004, prior to the completion of Tswelopele 2, the USDoL contracted Development Associates Incorporated to conduct a final evaluation of the project. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effects of project activities and outputs on the target group, in particular, the effects of the counselling and training model, and the contribution of the system supporting research, policies, programmes and services for military veterans. Some of the main findings are as follows:

- The project generated a viable model to improve the quality of life of South African military veterans.

³⁷ A Learnership is an education and training programme which consists of a structured learning component plus practical work experience of a specified nature and duration. A Learnership must lead to a qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and must be registered with the Department of Labour.

- Fundamentally and pragmatically, *employability* of Tswelopele graduates is ultimately not enough. Actual *employment* is the end-game, the acid test by which employment programs are judged. In procuring and sustaining project funding, an *employability* objective will prove inadequate.
- Contrary to adult learning best practices, the Tswelopele design did not contend with differences in skills, literacy and language levels of participants.
- Tswelopele had no dedicated classrooms, counselling/facilitator offices, resource areas, computer facilities, and meeting/socializing places. A Tswelopele ‘home’ with rooms for classes, activities, and equipment would have given the project a tangible identity and contributed to its overall success.
- Project performance was impacted by the TSA/UNISA merger, the departure of two key staff in the final project phases, and the part-time nature of the staff’s contracts.³⁸
- The project developed valuable training and counselling tools, curricula, modules, resources, and materials that can be used for future veterans’ employment endeavours.
- Tswelopele conclusively demonstrated the criticality of counselling in veteran employment and integration projects.
- Tswelopele’s placement phase disregarded pragmatic job enabling steps that are final and vital links to job placement or creation (e.g., a graduate has carpenter skills but needs to buy tools and set-up a workshop). The inability to develop truly workable tactics for participants to procure essential equipment to enter jobs, or to procure funding to start enterprises, is a deficiency of the Tswelopele placement phase.
- A number of Tswelopele graduates have taken leadership roles in townships, have established and assumed key positions in veterans organizations, and have become involved in community work and NGOs.
- The project enabled participants who were former enemies to interact positively and promoted reconciliation between their military factions (Hurst, White and Statman, 2004: iv-v).

At the time of final evaluation (October 2004), there was no commitment to develop Tswelopele (SAVEP) into a fully-fledged reintegration programme. Earlier in September 2004 the Ministers of Labour and Defence had approved the release of R39 million for a Military Veterans Project. The aim was to train military veterans

³⁸ In 2003, Technikon South Africa (TSA), the key subcontractor for Tswelopele, merged with the University of South Africa (UNISA). Resulting changes and demands impacted on Tswelopele staff focus and contributed to early departures of several key staff from Tswelopele.

through the Service Corps' Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) using a semblance of the Tswelopele (SAVEP) model. Rachel Prinsloo, who had co-ordinated SAVEP, was invited to meet the new trainers to make sure that they understood the complexity and components of the model for holistic service delivery, mental health, psychosocial support and re-skilling (e-mail correspondence from Rachel Prinsloo, 06.06.2005).

Despite the failure of the Service Corps to deliver on its mandate to re-skill former APLA and MK members, it was retained as the main training institution of the SANDF. This was largely because of the incestuous relationship between the Department of Defence and the Diplomacy, Intelligence, Defence, and Trade Education and Training Authority (DIDTETA).³⁹ Rear-Admiral Lukas Bakkes (a retired SADF navy officer) was the Director of the Military Veterans Affairs Office and worked closely with Lieutenant-General D.P. Knobel (retired Surgeon General of the SAMHS), who was the Vice-Chairman of the ABMVA, General Quenton Painter (former SADF officer), who was then Chief of the Service Corps, and E.F.O. Louw (a retired SADF Air Force officer) who was the DIDTETA Skills manager. All these individuals were in different areas of influence and constituted a formidable force which was difficult to permeate.

6.4 Non-statutory Reintegration Programmes

6.4.1 Introduction

In Section 6.3.3 it was argued that one of the reasons some former APLA and MK soldiers did not join the Service Corps was because it was located within the military, and was based on military culture and command and control. Furthermore, for many years training instructors were seconded from the former SADF. A number of non-

³⁹ DIDTETA was one of the 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) under the National Skills Authority in the South African Department of Labour. SETAs have been established to ensure that the skill needs for every sector of the South African economy are identified and that training is available to provide for these skill needs. On July 1, 2005, the Police, Private Security, Legal, Correctional Services and Justice Sector Education and Training Authority (POSLEC SETA) and DIDTETA were amalgamated to form SASSETA (Safety and Security SETA).

governmental organisations served as alternatives to the Service Corps. These included the South African Council of Churches, Khumbula, a national organisation with a strong base in Cape Town, Ndabikum, based in Cape Town, the Western Cape Action Tours (WECAT), based in Cape Town, and 17 Shaft Training and Conference Centre, based in Johannesburg. Most of the NGOs did not cater exclusively for former APLA and MK soldiers, and thus the focus of the following sections is on 17 Shaft and WECAT, which were formed and run by former soldiers.

6.4.2 17 Shaft Conference and Training Centre

17 Shaft Conference and Training Centre was run by Steven Corry and Parks Mamabolo. Steven Corry was born in New Zealand and has a rich military background, which included working as a professional soldier in the Pacific basin and East Asia. After marrying a South African woman, he immigrated to South Africa. He joined MK in 1991 (after the suspension of the armed struggle).⁴⁰ In 1992, Corry bought an old gold mining compound some few kilometres outside Soweto, south of Johannesburg. This he used to host conferences for the ANC and its allies, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The presence of the ANC leadership during conferences necessitated strict security measures during the volatile political climate of the early 1990s. Corry used to hire security officers from private security firms to work at the conference centre. According to Steven Corry, one evening after a conference he and another former MK soldier (not Parks Mamabolo) conceived the idea of training unemployed former MK soldiers as security officers and guards. This led to the establishment of Trans Sizwe Security Company. Parks Mamabolo started his political career in the Black Consciousness Movement in 1976, and later joined MK. He stated that between 1985 and 1986 he carried out missions between Botswana and South Africa. During the interview, he described himself as a disillusioned former MK member. He reported that he was not happy with the compromises made by the ANC during negotiations. Thus, he opted for demobilisation instead of integration, and later joined Steven Corry at 17 Shaft.

⁴⁰ In terms of the MKMVA Constitution, he does not qualify for membership.

Initially, Steven Corry raised R3.5 million from the British Department for International Development (DfID) to start a skills training project. Using part of this funding, Corry trained 30 security guards, and this laid a foundation for Trans Sizwe Security Company. However, seventeen of the first 30 security officers trained at 17 Shaft passed away under various circumstances. At the time of this study, Trans Sizwe employed 1,000 security officers. The company had won a contract to guard Metro-rail property (including train stations). However, only 10 per cent of all security officers employed by Trans Sizwe came from APLA and MK (including the Self-Defence Units). Corry argued that most former APLA and MK soldiers suffered from severe psychological problems and that some of them were beyond rehabilitation. Thus, he argued, they could not be employed as armed guards (Interview with Steve Corry, Johannesburg, 26.11.2000). This motivated him to start skills training in basic carpentry, plumbing, bricklaying, plastering and tiling. A total of 1,100 people were trained in different skills, and about 50 per cent of this group were former members of APLA and MK (including members of the SDUs).

Some of the ex-Service Corps trainees who were described as under-trained after receiving training from the Service Corps, received their second chance at 17 Shaft. Corry stated that he raised R1.2 million from a foreign government and requested the Service Corps to send demobilised soldiers to 17 Shaft for training. According to Corry, the understanding was that after he had trained the demobilised soldiers, the Service Corps would find jobs for them. Corry trained 80 ex-Service Corps trainees under this programme. The training was followed by a job offer for all 80 trainees at a construction site in Atteridgeville outside Pretoria. According to Corry, he contacted the Service Corps Head Office and advised the officers to probe the credentials of the labour broker and to instruct him to deploy the trainees as soon as the Service Corps had finished with the investigation. Corry was eventually instructed to deploy the trainees, but it later became evident that there had been no proper probing.

The trainees were deployed before the Pretoria City Council approved the building of houses on the identified site. The ex-soldiers were deployed in August [2000] and in October it was clear to me that nothing would happen at the site. However, nobody listened to me. Both the labour broker and Magae A Bana Construction kept on promising that jobs would be forthcoming. The

guys received employment contracts and pay slips but were never paid. I visited the guys every week for eight months and gave them some money to live on (Interview with Steven Corry Co-director, 17 Shaft, Johannesburg, 19.06.2001).

Some 30 of the 80 APLA and MK ex-combatants deployed at Attridgeville, who had dedicated their lives to fighting for the right to vote, were denied that right. In December 2000, while the rest of the country was participating in local government elections, these soldiers were left stranded in Attridgeville without food and without money to go to their home regions to vote. According to media reports, the director of Magae A Bana Construction stated that the delay in starting the project was caused by bureaucratic delays on the part of the government's housing department (cited in *Sowetan*, 07.12.2000). Corry noted that during the eight months of the ex-combatants' suffering, no one from MKMVA in Attridgeville, the regional office or the national office visited the former combatants at the construction site. He stated that the first intervention came when he threatened legal action against the construction company. According to Corry, he invited Lebone Mosia, the General Secretary of MKMVA, to attend a meeting at Service Corps head office. The meeting bore some fruits, as twenty trainees from the inactive construction site in Attridgeville were recalled and placed at a construction site in Johannesburg. Another fifteen were deployed at another construction site, and Corry negotiated for the deployment of a further 35 ex-combatants.

At the time of the interview, some of the compounds at 17 Shaft had been converted into two-bedroom apartments. Corry stated that the aim was to make them available to ex-MK and APLA soldiers and their families who would then be trained to join Trans Sizwe Security. Peta Krost of the *Saturday Star* described the project as a modern day "kibbutz" (*Saturday Star*, 03.02.2001). However, Corry stated that he never used the word kibbutz and that it was the journalist's interpretation of the project. Among his plans was an attempt to gain repossessed office blocks and convert them into residential areas for ex-MK and APLA soldiers. These ex-combatants would have to renovate the houses using the skills they had gained at 17 Shaft.

The 17 Shaft project attracted a Chinese citizen who wanted to invest US\$1.5 million in horticulture in South Africa, and wanted to draw 17 Shaft into the production and export of exotic vegetables. However, Corry stated that he was cautious of such deals as they might later turn out to be a strategy to achieve something else, “*These Chinese would sell their mothers to get a [South African] visa*” (Interview with Steve Corry, 19.06.2001).

17 Shaft received R1.5 million from the National Lottery in November 2002. According to Corry, 17 Shaft has applied for more funding including R1.8 million from Umsobomvu Fund and an undisclosed amount from the Ford Foundation.

6.4.3 Western Cape Action Tours

Western Cape Action Tours (WECAT) was formed by former ex-combatants in Cape Town. Yazir Henry left South Africa at the age of sixteen to join MK in exile where he spent four years, returning to the country in 1989 (*SA City Life*, 1999). Six months after his return he was arrested under Section 29 of the *Internal Security Act* (No. 74 of 1982) for terrorism and treason (*Leadership*, 1999/2000). He spent seven months in prison before he was released with other political prisoners in 1990 (*SA City Life*, 1999). Henry stated that his name did not appear on MK’s Certified Personnel Register at the time of integration to from the SANDF; thus he could neither join the SANDF nor receive a demobilisation package. However, instead of engaging in self-pity and blaming his political leaders for his misfortune he chose to start a programme that would keep him occupied. Explaining his situation he said: “*I kept on going to the Castle [where integration was administered in Cape Town]. I submitted my name but nothing came out of it, so I gave up. Together with my colleagues we came together with the sole idea of uniting ex-MK combatants in the Western Cape. However, this failed since age was a major issue*” (Interview with Yazir Henry, Cape Town, 25.07.2001). The older generation of MK did not want to identify with the younger generation, whom they also attempted to exclude from the definition of “war veteran”.

Henry stated that he and his comrades used to wake up and hang around the township doing nothing. However, this became a problem when people in the township started laughing at them. “*I left school when I was in standard seven. Now I am unemployed*

and had to rely on my mother for bread. Waking up and coming to town was meant to run away from the frustration of the township” (Interview with Yazir Henry, Cape Town, 25.07.2001). According to Henry, after several attempts at getting help from the ANC, he and others gave up. They decided to embark on projects to help themselves to survive. Henry and his comrades formed the Western Cape Action Tours Project without money. According to Henry, they decided to form WECAT because they “*did not want to sit down and continue pointing fingers at the ANC or government. Doing that is very hurting to us; it destroys our self-esteem*” (Interview with Yazir Henry, Cape Town, July 2001).

WECAT had eight male members who were all former liberation soldiers. According to Henry, WECAT did not discriminate against any group of former liberation soldiers. The aim was to unite ex-combatants in their quest to find meaning after the war of liberation. The main activity of WECAT was to take people on tours of Cape Town townships with an emphasis on places of historical importance as far as the struggle of liberation was concerned. According to Henry, the project provided employment, helped people to remember the history of the liberation struggle, and helped them to honour those who fell and keep alive the memory of the struggle (*SA City Life*, 1999: 29). Expanding on the purpose of the project, Henry said, “We visit sites of death often times, where people are not being remembered, and through visiting those sites of death and speaking about histories, hopes and aspirations of those individuals as well as our own we become the plaques that remember. So we become the memorial markers that begin to transmit the memory of our generation” (Yazir Henry on SABC 2’s *The Big Question*, 12.06.2005).

Apart from township tours, WECAT established the Direct Action Centre for Peace and Memory. This was a self-healing programme which created a space for former soldiers of the liberation movement for psychosocial support. This included a support group for mothers of ex-combatants and former political activists, who had either died in combat in foreign countries or disappeared without trace. The support group met once a week at WECAT’s offices. This allowed former combatants and their families an opportunity to “record the unwritten histories of anti-apartheid fighters and black communities in the Western Cape” (*Mail and Guardian*, 26.04 – 03.05.2001). Ex-combatants were given the opportunity to express themselves through music, poetry

and art. The project included the *Fragments of the Scattered Heart – The Music, Poetry and Art Project*, which enabled ex-combatants to express their creativity in any of the different art forms. At the time of the interview, Henry was looking for partnerships to publish poems produced from the programme.

The project was started without funding, and was mainly funded through the township tours. WECAT paid a stipend rather than a salary to its members; this ranged from R200 to R2,000 per month. The South African Revenue Services (SARS) expected WECAT to pay company tax, and Henry viewed this as being unsympathetic to the plight of the freedom fighters.⁴¹ According to Henry, the Western Cape Tourism Authority was hostile to WECAT for three reasons. First, unlike major tour operators, WECAT took tourists to the townships “to make them see the real Africa”. Second, WECAT members refused to take tourism courses offered by Western Cape Tourism Authority, and lastly WECAT members refused to use badges of the Western Cape Tourism Authority. Another challenge facing WECAT was that not all ex-combatants in and around Cape Town were happy with the Townships Tour project. The main concern was that Henry and his group were exploiting historical resources to enrich themselves without giving anything back to the community (Interview with Shirley Gunn, Cape Town, 25.07.2001).

However, the main reason why Henry’s former comrades resented WECAT was because during his interrogation and torture by the security forces he led them to the hiding place of a comrade-in-arms, Ashley Fransch, whom the police assassinated. “After my release in mid-1990, the security forces set me up as a traitor. I was ostracised. Nobody wanted my skills and experience” (*SA City Life*, 1999).

The years following Henry’s release from prison were characterised by problems of social reintegration. He was on the run from his former comrades who, apart from accusing him of selling out a comrade, used the death to support the rumour that prior to Henry’s release he had changed sides and become an informant or *askari* (*Leadership*, 1999/2000). The stress became too much for him and, on the brink of a nervous breakdown, he decided to make a submission to the TRC (*SA City Life*, 1999;

⁴¹ This indicated Henry’s lack of knowledge about taxation law and principles. For example, filling in a tax return form annually is not the same as paying income tax.

Leadership, 2000). His appearance before the TRC seemed to have infuriated his former comrades. Shirley Gunn, who at the time of the study had just opened the Human Rights Media Organisation, dismissed any suggestion of collaborating with WECAT and described Henry as a traitor. “*When they came to assassinate Ashley, Yazir was sitting inside the police van. He joined the struggle while he was too young and hence he cracked under interrogation*” (Interview with Shirley Gunn, Observatory (Cape Town), 25.07.2001).

6.4.4 uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association

6.4.4.1 History of uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association

The uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA) was launched in December 1996. Its forerunner was the Interim Committee of MK Veterans, which was made up of mainly former MK members who were 50 years and older (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999). This was based on the misconception that veterans are old people and indicated the extent to which the identity of ex-combatant or veteran was contested within MK ranks. There was later recognition that the definition that was adopted excluded a large number of people who had served in MK. The concept was redefined to include people in administration, communication and other aspects of a war campaign (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999). According to the Constitution of MKMVA, MK veterans are all those people who joined MK before the suspension of the armed struggle and who never deserted the ranks of MK. When MKMVA was launched, members were not clear about its role and relationship to the ANC.

At the conference to launch MKMVA, we did not know where we were going. In the minds of many, MKMVA was to be part of ANC structures. However, it was recognised that constitutionally the ANC did not have an army, but had a military wing which was disbanded. It was agreed that MKMVA would be a non-governmental organisation (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999).

The first challenge facing MKMVA was that it was launched without resources to sustain itself. The organisation appealed to the ANC for office space and this was

provided in all the provinces even though MKMVA was unable to pay the salaries of staff employed in provincial offices. According to Bob Mabaso, the association approached Nelson Mandela for help:

We approached Nelson Mandela as the first commander of MK and said to him, we have launched this monster but the monster can't start moving. This was not Nelson Mandela's first fund-raising effort. He raised an overall R25 million before the formation of MKMVA. However, all this money was handed out to former MK soldiers in small amounts. They would make noise and we would give them R2,000. They would go away, come back to make noise and we would hand out R2,000 again.

When Nelson Mandela raised R10 million he called a conference and advised that 'you cannot rely on handouts, you have to use this money for projects. You need to come together to form business'. However, most people were destitute, they had nothing. Most cadres came back from exile with suitcases carrying their clothes and had no roofs over their heads, no pots, nothing. They argued that business projects were long-term goals. They needed to survive at the time (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999).

In 1998 Nelson Mandela formed the uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Trust with a seed donation of R100 (*Business Report*, 14.08.2005). According to a key MKMVA informant, Nelson Mandela raised R20 million for the trust. The money was intended to support orphans of MK soldiers who had died while serving in the struggle for liberation (Interview with a key MKMVA informant, Johannesburg, 13.11.2002).

Membership was open to returned MK exiles and combatants who had never left the country. Former members of MK who were still part of the SANDF were allowed to join MKMVA with the proviso that they did not hold office in MKMVA (Interview with Bob Mabaso, Johannesburg, 09.07.1999). However, during the course of this study, it became evident that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the membership of MKMVA. According to an MKMVA source, initially an attempt was made to rely on the Certified Personnel Register to determine the membership of

MKMVA. However, this was found to be unreliable because “*during the process of integration [to form the SANDF] MK realised that the number of soldiers in its ranks was far too low to make any impact in the new national defence force and thus recruited members of the Self-Defence Units (SDU) to inflate the numbers. Other problems include the fact that some genuine MK soldiers were not included in the CPR*” (Interview with a key MKMVA informant, Johannesburg, 13.11.2002).

Due to the absence of a reliable database of members, different MKMVA sources provide different figures depending on the purpose. During public hearings on the *Demobilisation Amendment Bill* (2001) and *Termination of Integration Intake Bill* (2001), MKMVA representatives stated that “MKMVA has a constituency of 45,000 people spread all over the Republic of South Africa. Our membership complement is spread and organised into nine (9) provincial structures represented by Provincial Executive Committees” (Minutes of the Portfolio Committee on Defence meeting, 02.10.2001). Contrary to the estimate of 45,000, an MKMVA source estimated the membership at 30,000 (although there was no basis for this estimate) and argues that 45,000 is an exaggeration (Interview with a key MKMVA informant, 13.11.2002). Other MKMVA sources estimated the membership at 60,000 (*Profile of uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association*, nd). An MKMVA informant stated that the way forward was to embark on a programme to capture the membership on computer in each region. In 2002, MKMVA bought ten computers (with funding from the ANC), one for the national office and the rest for the provincial offices. However, a key MKMVA informant argued that to achieve the objective, MK members had to be trained to handle the job, and that there had to be a screening committee to determine the authenticity of some former MK soldiers. When this study was completed, the process of compiling a database of former MK soldiers had not yet begun.

6.4.4.2 MKMVA Reintegration Initiatives

From MKMVA documents, it was evident that the main reason for the formation of a veterans’ association was to facilitate the economic reintegration of former MK soldiers into society through various activities and initiatives. A number of activities were identified, including: assisting veterans of uMKhonto we Sizwe who were unable to fend for themselves due to old age and disability; creating and developing community-based income-generating projects which would involve veterans; assisting

in vocational training, education and re-integration of veterans into civilian society; providing assistance to dependants of veterans who fell during the struggle for a non-racial South Africa; promoting and defending the rights and dignity of all MK veterans; and promoting the history and heritage of uMKhonto we Sizwe (*Profile of uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association*, nd).

In order to address the economic reintegration of MK ex-combatants, MKMVA formed Veterans Heritage Investments (VHI) (Pty) Ltd., with MKMVA as a 100 per cent shareholder. MKMVA identified certain opportunities in the local and export market for aviation, automotive and other electronic components, metal and leather goods for aircraft and cars, wood and metal furniture, workplace overalls and other garments, and agricultural products and flowers (*MKMVA Business Plan for National Industrial Participation*, nd).

To take advantage of the opportunities that MKMVA identified, the ANC donated a farm in Doornkuil, south of Johannesburg. The plan was to build an Industrial and Agri-Business Park and a training centre. British Aerospace (BAe), through the Airborne Trust, donated R5 million to the projects. Both organisations committed themselves to providing the technical and market-related support for the Industrial Park Company and the enterprises located on the site (*MKMVA Business Plan for National Industrial Participation*, nd). At the time when the business plan was launched, hopes were very high. It was estimated that when completed the centre would provide a resource centre for at least 20,000 former liberation movement combatants and retrenched members of the SANDF. “Veterans will become self-sufficient, deriving income through job creation, training and the marketing and sale of products. The long-term benefits will be the provision of housing and support for veterans from disadvantaged groups” (British Aerospace News Release, 25.03.1998).

When announcing their support for the MKMVA project, British Aerospace’s officials noted that their company had committed funds to support programmes and projects aimed at retraining and reintegrating into society members of South Africa’s former liberation forces. The aim of the support was for “the development of small and medium business enterprises, housing, training, and sport in our drive to provide job opportunities, prevent crime and foster social stability and economic

empowerment for former liberation movement combatants” (British Aerospace *News Release*, 25.03.1998). Some arms industry experts were quick to observe that enterprises in the industrial park would become preferred suppliers to British Aerospace and Sweden’s Saab aircraft and automotive giant. The media also speculated that the contribution to the MKMVA project was influenced by BAe’s bid for major SANDF defence contracts. While BAe’s representatives denied this, one MKMVA document confirmed the experts’ speculation:

Through the establishment of an Industrial and Agri-Business Park under the auspices of a separate company, MKMVA together with the Airborne Trust and other black enterprises *will directly contribute to the BAe bid* by setting up a set of small enterprises in the Industrial Park that will supply inputs for BAe and its partners in South Africa (*MKMVA Business Plan for National Industrial Participation*, emphasis added).

The experts’ speculation was confirmed when “in November 1998, BAe was named as the preferred bidder for Hawk trainers and the Gripen jet fighter. The company was awarded the contract in September 1999” (*Mail and Guardian*, 02.03-08.03.2001).

The arrangement was that Veterans Heritage Investment would own the majority share of the Industrial Park company, and that BAe and the Airborne Trust (AT) would each own a percentage of preferred shares. The Industrial Park would initially consist of four clusters of small enterprises producing goods for the identified markets (see Table 6.6).

Table 6.6: Description of VHI’s Industrial Sector, Market and Customers

PRODUCTS	NATIONAL/EXPORT MARKETS	MARKETING FACILITATION
Plastic, Metal & Leather components	Aviation, Automotive	BAe, AT, SAAB, VW
Wood and Metal Furniture	Germany	
Workplace Overalls & other garments	Aviation, Automotive	BAe, AT, SAAB
Agricultural Products and Flowers	Aviation, Britain, Germany & Sweden	BAe, AT, SAAB

Source: *MKMVA Business Plan for Industrial Participation*, nd

In addition, planners expected that the company would manage and market the goods and establish a design and vocational training centre on site. The on-site training and vocational centre would provide training and education to ensure that the required skills were available for sustainable development and expansion of the industrial park and its facilities, as well as possible expansion into other centres in South Africa. It was envisaged that the Industrial Park company would become the preferred supplier for plastic, metal and leather components, wood and metal furniture, workplace overalls and other garments, agricultural products and flowers for BAe and associated companies, the Airborne Trust and other targeted local and export markets. It was estimated that the four clusters would initially generate employment for 150 persons, both skilled and unskilled. The estimate excluded managers and people employed by the Industrial Park company. The estimate also pertained to direct jobs and did not include secondary jobs that would be created in the communities around the Industrial Park (*MKMVA Business Plan for Industrial Participation*, nd.).

According to the business plan, the small businesses located in the industrial agri-business park would focus on specific domestic and export markets. It was expected that the national and international networks of BAe and Airborne Trust would facilitate entry into industries such as aircraft manufacture, motor vehicles, cellular phones and electronic and other weapon systems. In addition, it was envisaged that the agri-business enterprise could become a preferred supplier of specialised agricultural products for the catering needs of some partners and related companies.

However, despite continuous promises to start projects that would generate income for MKMVA and its members, by March 2002 no projects had begun on the MKMVA farm. This led to allegations that the R5 million had been embezzled (*Mail and Guardian*, 02.03 - 08.03.2001). These reports were denied by both MKMVA treasurer-general Mr. Dumisane Khoza and British Aerospace's spokesperson, Mr Linden Birns. According to Mr Khoza, "Only R84 894 had been used on services such as surveying of the land in Doornkuil, south of Johannesburg, its master planning, project management and legal fees. The bulk of the funds are lying in the bank" (*Sowetan*, 08.03.2001).

At the beginning of November 2002, MKMVA had not yet engaged in any income-generating project. There were a few cows, ploughing implements and four workers on the farm. The main problem seems to have been confusion around the control of the farm. A key MKMVA informant noted that workers on the farm were controlled, paid and accountable to the ANC and not to MKMVA. The leadership of MKMVA had no control over the workers, and *“if you speak to them about their jobs they argue that changing their job description is similar to dismissing them”* (Interview with a key MKMVA informant, Johannesburg, 13.11.2002). Thus, one of the reasons explaining the lack of productive activities on the farm was the fact that MKMVA had no control over either the farm and the workers employed on the farm. At the end of 2002 an MKMVA informant stated that MKMVA had set up a structure to embark on projects to make the farm productive. To achieve this, a site manager (whose salary was to be paid by British Aerospace) had been hired to help in the running of the farm. However, at the time of the completion of this study, MKMVA had not initiated a single project to facilitate the reintegration of its members into society.

6.4.4.3 Reasons for MKMVA’s failure to start Reintegration Programmes

There were three main reasons for MKMVA’s failure to start reintegration programmes. The first reason was that MKMVA operated on limited resources within ANC structures. The ANC had allocated office space to MKMVA and was responsible for MKMVA’s telephone and other bills. In some provinces, such as Limpopo and Mpumalanga, MKMVA provincial structures had been allocated one office within the ANC’s provincial offices. In other provinces, such as the North West, MKMVA operated from a desk and not an office. In the North West Province (at the time of this study), the Provincial Secretary of the ANC doubled as Provincial Secretary of MKMVA. The organisation was funded by the ANC national office and, according to an MKMVA informant, they did not always get what they requested. In October 2002, a key MKMVA informant stated that due to the lack of funds MKMVA was forced to start using interest earned from the R20 million raised by Nelson Mandela (for the MKMV Trust) to pay staff salaries. *“If something is not done very soon we will end up using Madiba’s [Nelson Mandela’s] money and surely this will get us into trouble because the money was meant to support MK orphans and not to run MKMVA offices”* (Interview with a MKMVA key informant, Johannesburg, 13.11.2002).

The second reason to explain the lack of meaningful progress was the limited human resources in the MKMVA national office. The office was staffed by five people, and the top five National Executive Committee members were unable to attend to their duties on a full-time basis. Since MKMVA operated on limited resources, it would have been difficult to maintain their offices as well as pay their salaries. This led to serious problems for the organisation, one of which was the lack of project co-ordination at a national level. Two cases serve as evidence of the lack of co-ordination at a national level.

First, in July 2001, the MKMVA Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary, Mmaruseng Moyo, reported to *African Eye News* that his organisation intended reactivating dormant gold and coal mines in Mpumalanga province to create jobs and wealth for unemployed liberation soldiers. According to the report, this was a resolution adopted at MKMVA's Mpumalanga provincial conference. Other initiatives included plans to establish specialist security companies to guard schools and municipal offices (<http://allafrica.com/stories/200107050044.html>). However, there was no evidence to show that the resolutions had received the approval of MKMVA at national level. The projects never took off, and at the time of the author's visit to Nelspruit in April 2002, former APLA and MK soldiers complained about poverty and unemployment.

The second case was from Limpopo Province. According to the provincial chairperson of MKMVA in Limpopo, Richard Takalo, the MKMVA office in Polokwane seconded six members to participate in a mango farming project in Nkowankowa. However, it later became clear that MKMVA officials did not conduct proper investigations before embarking on the project. The person who initiated the project disappeared, and on investigation MKMVA learned that all members of the executive committee elected to run the project were either close family members or relatives of the individual who had initiated the project and was appointed chairperson. Furthermore, all 39 non-MK members on the project were family members and relatives. These details had not been disclosed to the MKMVA office. It became clear that MKMVA had been used to legitimate the project. Apparently MKMVA withdrew from the project.

Another clear sign of the lack of co-ordination was the fact that the provincial General Secretary of MKMVA in Limpopo Province was shocked when the author told him about the existence of an unused MKMVA farm in Doornkuil.

Lastly, internal divisions also hampered the development of income-generating projects to facilitate the reintegration of former soldiers into civilian society. The author first became aware of these divisions in August 2004 during a Symposium on Military Veterans Affairs in Johannesburg. An unidentified MKMVA member asked how his organisation would contribute to military veterans' activities since it was divided. He stated that one faction was led by Nombeko Daniels (also known as Pamela Daniels), then based at the Gauteng MKMVA provincial office, and another faction by Deacon Mathe, then the national chairperson of MKMVA. The divisions were partly related to the business activities of some members of the MKMVA National Executive Committee. During the November 29 – December 6, 2002, *Military Veterans' Leadership Training Programme Workshop*, Deacon Mathe, chairperson of both MKMVA and the ABMVA, was absent for the entire workshop. According to one MKMVA source, the reason for Mathe's absence was that he was attending a business meeting of the Makana Investment Company,⁴² held on Robben Island during the same week (Interview with an MKMVA informant, Broederstroom, 02.12.2002).

During the course of the study, some former MK soldiers complained that Deacon Mathe (national chairperson) and Dumisane Khoza (treasurer general) fraudulently used the name of MKMVA to enrich themselves. One former MK soldier stated that he was a founder member of MKMVA, but had decided to distance himself from the organisation when he realised that some people were using it for self-enrichment. "*I decided to move out before people start fighting over money made in the name of MKMVA*" (Interview with Kho Maluke, Soweto, 01.11.2002). Attempts to verify the allegations of divisions within MKMVA failed until press reports to that effect appeared.

⁴² Makana Investment Company is owned by former Robben Island political prisoners.

However, signs of discontent were present earlier on. For example, in June 2003 MKMVA members marched on Luthuli House in Johannesburg, the headquarters of the ANC, to demand the removal of Deacon Mathe and Dumisane Khoza from their positions in MKMVA (*Business Report*, 07.08.2005). The demonstration was meant to coincide with the meeting of the ANC's six top officials – President Thabo Mbeki, deputy president Jacob Zuma, ANC secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe, ANC deputy secretary-general Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele, national chairman Mosiuoa Lekota and national treasurer Mendi Msimang (*Business Report*, 07.08.2005). It was reported that the ANC leadership dismissed the protestors, and further that Mthembu-Mahanyele asked the protestors to prove that they had personally contributed towards Mathe's and Khoza's business fortunes (*Business Report*, 07.08.2005).

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed some of the statutory and non-statutory reintegration programmes that were implemented in South Africa since 1995. These included the *Special Pension Act* (No. 69 of 1996), which provided for monetary compensation to people who could not provide for their own pensions because of one or a combination of factors. It was for those who had engaged on a full-time basis in a liberation movement, those who had been imprisoned for political activities, those who had been in exile for political reasons, and those who had been under banning orders for most of their lives. The pensions ranged from annual amounts of R6,000 to R84,000. This was limited to people who were 35 years or older when the Act came into effect. However, while legislation was passed in 1996, by 2000 some former APLA and MK soldiers who qualified to receive special pensions had still not received their benefits. This was blamed on a number of factors which included inefficiencies and staff shortages. Apart from the exclusionary Special Pension, former APLA and MK members who were demobilised from the SANDF were entitled to a demobilisation gratuity, the amount of which was dependent on the length of time served in either MK or APLA. However, apart from the demobilisation gratuities, the *Demobilisation Act* (No. 99 of 1996) made no provision for long-term reintegration programmes. While the *Military Veterans' Affairs Act* (No. 17 of 1999) was meant to recognise the

sacrifices that all military veterans had made in service of their country, it did not provide for the special needs of former guerrilla soldiers.

The lack of focus on the special needs of former guerrilla soldiers was largely due to the fact that planning for reintegration programmes was aimed at addressing the needs of soldiers affected by rationalisation. As argued earlier, the demobilisation of former APLA and MK soldiers was not part of the process of forming the SANDF, and thus there was no immediate planning for the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into civilian society. This chapter provided the evidence to support the argument that planning for reintegration programmes was aimed at addressing the needs of soldiers affected by rationalisation. The first group of former APLA and MK soldiers was demobilised in September 1995 (as stated in Chapter 5), and in the same month the Service Corps was established. While the planning for the establishment of the Service Corps began as early as September 1994, when implemented in 1995, it was done without adequate planning.

Some of the strategies that could have been adopted to plan for the reintegration of demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers were used later. In 1999, in preparation for rationalisation, the CCR and the Department of Defence finalised a project proposal for the World Bank on the demobilisation and reintegration of military personnel in South Africa. The aim of the project was to conduct research and provide other forms of support to the DoD's planning and preparations for large-scale demobilisation (rationalisation) and the productive reintegration of soldiers into civilian society. The research, which was funded by the Post-Conflict Unit of the World Bank, began in late 2001 and ended in March 2003. This could not contribute to the demobilisation of APLA and MK soldiers, which officially ended in December 2002.

In 1999, the same year in which the CCR and DoD finalised the project proposal for World Bank funding, the Department of Defence requested technical assistance from the United States. While the US Department of Labour agreed in mid-2000 to develop a demobilisation project focusing on job training and counselling for military veterans, the first pilot of the Tswelopele Project (the SAVEP) ran from October to December 2002 and the second one from October 2003 to June 2004. It was aimed at

improving the transition of demobilised veterans (former members of both the Statutory Forces and Non-Statutory Forces) to civilian society through the provision of employment and training. At the time, the demobilisation of former APLA and MK soldiers was nearing completion. Like the World Bank-funded research, this project was too late to contribute to the reintegration of demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers into society.

The fact that the appropriate planning strategies were adopted only in 1999 meant that the Service Corps (instituted in 1995) was implemented without adequate planning. Thus, at the beginning of its operation, the Service Corps was housed in army engineer units, without its own logistics. Other evidence of the lack of adequate planning was that no instructors were trained for the Service Corps. Instead former SADF training instructors were employed to train former APLA and MK soldiers within a military set-up, in preparation for their return to civilian life. The courses provided by the Service Corps were not related to the realities of the areas in which demobilised former APLA and MK soldiers planned to settle. This was linked to two weaknesses in the planning process. First, there was no attempt to conduct a skills audit of those who would be affected by demobilisation before the beginning of the process. Second, there was no analysis of the labour market and the socio-economic context into which former APLA and MK soldiers were to be demobilised.

The discussion also included a number of non-statutory reintegration programmes, beginning with the uMKhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA), which had failed to facilitate the reintegration of its members into civilian society due to a number of reasons, including lack of resources and internal divisions. There was also a focus on 17 Shaft Conference and Training Centre based in Johannesburg, and Western Cape Action Tours (WECAT) based in Cape Town. In assisting with the reintegration of former soldiers into society, non-governmental organisations faced a number of challenges. First, were internal divisions among ex-combatants. For example, as stated in this chapter, MKMVA was internally divided and thus, in dealing with ex-combatants, it became difficult to determine their legitimate representatives. The second challenge was former soldiers' culture of protest. Some of the ex-combatants were still in a struggle mode because they felt that the "enemy was not defeated". Third, since NGOs depended on donor funding, they had to be seen to

deliver even if it meant emphasising quantity above quality. NGOs also faced three main constraints in their operations. First; they were limited in size, scope and budget. Due to their small staff component and budget they could often reach out to only a small number of the target audience. The second constraint was that NGOs suffered from a lack of formal authority; even when they had good intentions, their aims and functions were not clearly understood by the public. Third was the lack of permanence of NGOs, which related to the lack of sustained funding.

NGOs also had a number of strengths. The first was that they were more flexible than state institutions in terms of strategy, and could experiment and improve. Second, NGOs were frequently more connected to the grassroots and, because of their limited bureaucracy, they were easily accessible to ordinary people. Their main advantage was that they worked in the world which former soldiers were joining. Another fact in favour of NGOs was that, due to their flexible form, they were able to fill gaps in the formal processes – for example, counselling, which was ignored in formal process of demobilisation. Linked to filling the gaps was the fact that NGOs could be used to test new strategies for formal processes. Another feature of NGOs was their ability to facilitate the relationship between the government and former soldiers. The last factor was that NGOs had the ability to play a monitoring and advocacy role in relation to the needs of former soldiers. However, due to the challenges and constraints identified above, the non-statutory reintegration programmes failed to serve as viable alternatives to the Service Corps. Consequently, there was no proper reintegration of former APLA and MK soldiers into civilian society. This argument will be developed in the next chapter through an analysis of the socio-economic needs of 395 former APLA and MK soldiers.