

**RESTRICTED**

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE  
SA ARMY HEADQUARTERS

**HOW WE TRAIN TO FIGHT: THE FUTURE SA ARMY FORCE EMPLOYMENT  
STRATEGY TO OUTSMART THE NEW TYPE OF ENEMY**

SA ARMY WRITING COMPETITION 2016

98537061MC LT E.M. MACHETE

SO3 External Communication SA Army Corporate Communication  
September 2016

Telephone: (012) 355 1158	Department of Defence
Cellphone: 082 721 6203	SA Army Headquarters
E-mail: marumo_123@yahoo.com	Corporate Communication
	Private Bag X172
	Pretoria
	0001

**RESTRICTED**

**DECLARATION**

1. I, 98537061MC LT E.M. Machete, hereby declare that this is my own personal work, except where the work(s) or publications of others have been acknowledged by means of reference techniques.
2. I have duly acknowledged other sources in compliance with all rules against plagiarism and intellectual theft.
3. Due care has also been taken to respect and uphold the academic integrity of sources referenced.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'E.M. Machete'.

**(LT E.M. MACHETE)**

**SO3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION SA ARMY CORP COM: CAPT**

<b>CONTENTS</b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
1.	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
	Background	1
	Aim	2
	Scope	2
2.	<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	3
	Military doctrine	3
	Military strategy	3
	Conventional warfare	3
	Asymmetric warfare	3
3.	<b>THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONFLICT AND HOW WE FIGHT</b>	3
4.	<b>MODERN THREAT PATTERNS AND HOW WE FIGHT</b>	4
5.	<b>SA ARMY FORCE PREPARATION INTERVENTIONS FOCUSSED ON THE NEW ENEMY</b>	5
6.	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	6
	Summary	6
	Recommendations	7
7.	Appendices:	
	Appendix A: Bibliography	A-1

**STAFF PAPER FOR SA ARMY WRITING COMPETITION 2016 ON HOW WE TRAIN TO FIGHT:  
THE FUTURE SA ARMY FORCE EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY TO OUTSMART THE NEW TYPE  
OF ENEMY**

## Appendix A: Bibliography

**INTRODUCTION****BACKGROUND**

1. As the SA Army marches on towards its constitutional obligation to contribute to the safeguarding of the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty, while also operating in concert with other countries of the continent towards the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, there is a need to interrogate the way our landward force fights and whether the interventions we employ to achieve our military objectives, domestically and outside our borders, in today's ever changing battle space are adequate to see us through and deliver the aspirations of our constitution.
2. As the SA Army continues its resolute march into its third decade in defence of our country's democracy, it becomes more and more imperative that we ponder whether we are fit and ready for the security challenges that the future presents on our soldiers. A look at the dominant threats facing Africa today and in the near future and how the SA Army is dealing with them is crucial if we are to remain a force to be relied upon, locally and on the continent, to bring stability and peaceful co-existence for our people. How the SA Army fights is contained in the organisation's force employment doctrine and is heavily dependent on the type of training that the country's landward force receives as part of a force preparation and mission readiness regime to produce soldiers who are empowered with fighting and survival skills, and equipped to execute the mandate that it has as contained in the country's constitution.
3. With that said, like any other force, it is imperative that the SA Army positions itself in such a manner that it adapts to change and re-assess its doctrine and be empowered to face head-on the modern threat patterns that the African battle space presents. This then calls for the SA Army to counter and embrace new asymmetric warfare approaches, where in contrast to the conventional force preparation and fighting model, the unconventional ways of waging battles are mastered by our soldiers so as to be able to efficiently deal with the scantily resourced but menacing threats posed by elements such as Al-Shabaab, M23, Seleka, Al-Qaeda, ISIS and any form of terror, on the domestic front as well as in continental missions for peace and security.
4. A look into the future African battle space, a space that the SA Army is invested in going into the future, would be futile were it not to focus on solutions to mitigate the compounding security challenges our continent has seen gradually taking hold since September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the United States of America and September 21, 2013 Kenya Westgate Mall attacks and other similar asymmetric attacks across the world that exposed the new threat today's militaries and law enforcement agencies are faced with.
5. The Defence Review 2015 advances a few principles that the Defence Force must pursue and among them is Principle 4 which states: "The Defence Force must stand ready to: defend and protect South Africa; safeguard South Africa and its people; contribute to regional and continental security; and provide support in times of crisis and disaster - both domestically and regionally, man-made or natural." This is in concert with chapter 11 of the constitution of the country which confirms the role of the defence force as "to defend and protect the republic, its territorial integrity and its people" (South Africa 1996:s 200.2).
6. This principle sets the pace for what the Defence Force and the SA Army as the largest force contributor of our military is mandated to pursue and the aspirations of the Defence Review

and in extension the constitution of the republic can only be advanced if the army is able to adapt to rising challenges that calls for it to be versatile and able to wage both irregular and conventional warfare.

7. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to interrogate how the SA Army fights and employs strategies to counter the new enemy that presents asymmetric and irregular non-conventional threat patterns to gain the objective and continue being a force for good domestically and on the continent.

## **AIM**

8. This paper is an entry into the SA Army Writing Competition 2016 and addresses the issue of how the SA Army trains to fight in such a way that it outsmarts the new enemy – the enemy that employs asymmetric warfare with a whole new set of threat patterns that defies the strategies and tactics that conventional warfare was intended to defeat. These threat patterns manifest themselves in conflicts across the continent where the SA Army operates as part of the continental efforts to bolster stability, peace and security directed by the United Nations Organisation and the African Union.

## **SCOPE**

9. This entry first interrogates the interrelated concepts of military doctrine and strategy, conventional warfare and asymmetric warfare in relation to the operational theatre the SA Army finds itself in and goes on to define them. This is done to help eliminate confusion that emanates when concepts are used interchangeably and result in the author's message falling through the cracks because of a lack of common understanding of the terms and concepts in as far as the essay is concerned.

10. The paper further touches on the important aspects of the changing nature of modern day conflict which necessitates the regular update of army doctrine to plug the gaps that over-reliance on the conventional battle tactics, techniques and procedures as opposed to irregular ones exposes. Modern threat patterns are then discussed looking at the global experience of security agencies and militaries before outlining a few force preparation interventions that the SA Army has put in place to empower its forces to fight the new enemy and defeat it. The pen-ultimate segment of the paper sheds some light on the selected battles that the SA Army has waged in recent times, acquitted itself well, in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, largely because of the focussed force preparation interventions that were employed following lessons learnt by our landward force in previous missions, thus directly responding to the manner in which we fight in the contemporary African battlespace. Lastly, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made, based on the experiences touched and body of work that the paper handled.

## **WHAT ARE MILITARY DOCTRINE, STRATEGY, CONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND ASYMMETRIC WARFARE?**

11. In order to better understand the direction and the message that this paper intends to provide, it is crucial that the above-mentioned concepts are defined for the purposes of and within the parameters of this paper so as to have a common understanding of what they refer to in as far as this entry is concerned. The concepts mentioned are common jargon in military parlance but it cannot be left to chance and assumed that every soldier understands their meaning, hence the decision to clarify them in the definition of terms section of our paper, at least for our purposes. Once we have a common understanding of what they stand for, it then opens up an opportunity for us to be able to clearly engage and appreciate the informational thrust that the paper pursues.

12. We first define military doctrine and strategy - borrowing from the already existing rich body of work on the subject from earlier scholars, followed by conventional warfare, and then closes our definitions section with clarity on what asymmetric warfare is about.

## DEFINITIONS

13. Military doctrine. Fuller (1926) defines doctrine as the central idea of an army which to be sound must be based on the principles of war, and which to be effective must be elastic enough to admit to mutations in accordance with change in circumstance. In its ultimate relationship to the human understanding, this central idea or doctrine is nothing else than common sense – that is, action adapted to circumstance.
14. Military Strategy. A simplistic definition of military strategy highlights the ends, ways and means through which coercion is employed to create an untenable situation for an opponent, thus gaining the advantage for the initiator (Lykke: 1989).
15. Joint Warfare Publication 137 on Defence Doctrine goes on to say “the object of military strategy is to achieve and maintain freedom of action and tries to limit the opposing forces with the ultimate purpose of gaining his submission.”
16. Conventional Warfare. “Conventional military warfare strategies involve direct military-on-military confrontations with the strategic objective being to erode the enemy forces' will to fight, and thereby to produce decisive military victories that can force the defeated side to accept the victors' terms” (Long: 2008). This is war as it was traditionally known and the SA Army has been schooled in this approach to warfare until experiences in operations and occurrences in the global sphere necessitated the need to incorporate irregular or asymmetric approaches to battle in order to gain the advantage when facing rebels and insurgents during operations.
17. Asymmetric Warfare. Long (2008) defines asymmetrical warfare as “armed conflicts to achieve political objectives, and as the name implies, involves a disproportionate distribution of power.”
18. According to Long (2008) this type of warfare has “become a strategy of choice among dissident, extremist political groups and will be the most likely national and international security threat in the 21st century.”
19. This is already the case in the African battlespace where the SA Army operates and fights, in that small covert groups with no recognized sovereign territory or population to defend, engage in violent, lethal activities with far less risk of being totally overwhelmed by reprisals than what a nation-state or country might face were it to engage in the same.
20. Most entities like M23 and Seleka rebels employ these irregular tactics to advance their objectives.

## THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONFLICT AND HOW WE FIGHT

21. Conflict on the African continent seldom takes a conventional makeup but follows what we have come to refer to as asymmetric warfare that sees forces employing small scale high-impact missions targeting legitimate government forces in pursuance of the opposing non-state forces' objectives. These occurrences have been documented in the Democratic Republic of Congo where M23 rebel group terrorised the population and rendered parts of that vast country ungovernable until the SA Army members as part of the Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations in that country launched a concerted effort to help defeat them.
22. Our forces also neutralised Seleka rebels during the Battle of Bangui and that happened because the SA Army quickly embraced the changing nature of African conflict and devised means to engage it in a manner that safeguards our dominance and support continental peace and security. From March 22, 2013 until about March 24, 2013 two-hundred South African soldiers, majority of whom were SA Army members, fought a series of running battles outside Bangui in the Central African Republic against a whopping 3000 rebels (Heitman: 2013).

23. The Battle of Bangui is considered by many as one of the hardest fought battles that the SA Army has experienced in recent times and our soldiers acquitted themselves well.

24. Heitman (2013) spoke admirably about the fighting prowess of our men and women in uniform saying; "The soldiers fought well, even outstandingly. That is not only reflected in the fact that this small unit retained cohesion to the end of the action, but also in the casualties they inflicted on its opponents: such casualties that it was the Seleka rebels who proposed a cease-fire and disengagement."

25. Cummings (2015) posits that "2014 proved to be a tumultuous year for sub-Saharan Africa." This he states supported by the witnessed conflict and security flare-ups that took place around this time in the Sahel region, West Africa as well as Central Africa where he reasons that weaker states opened up a security vacuum that belligerents manipulated to steer intra-state conflicts with dire human consequences.

26. The SA Army as the custodian of force preparation of the landward arm of the SANDF, found itself with boots on the ground in the Central African Republic when one such ignition of asymmetric conflict took place. This put to the fore the reality of a changing nature of conflict on our forces and thanks to the implementation of lessons learnt in previous operations by the SA Army members on the continent, our men and women in uniform were able to respond with valour and stood their ground against spirited Seleka rebel elements that employed asymmetric and irregular means to pursue their political objectives. All these speak of instances where the SA Army members applied their training in battle to eradicate the new enemy that employs asymmetric means to fight, a true testament that our forces are able to fight asymmetrically as well as conventionally depending on the threat encountered.

27. It is said that since 2012 asymmetric "conflict in the Central African Republic between ethnically oriented armed groups cumulatively resulted in 15 000 fatalities and the displacement of close to 2 million others" (Cummings: 2015). Such is the changing nature of conflict and security challenges in sub-Saharan Africa that the SA Army has to contend with; a conflict that is slanted towards unconventional means that sees opposing forces employ tactics, techniques and procedures to hit hard at unsuspecting targets of opportunity using minimal hardware but wield the high impact firepower that has the devastating effect against well established forces like our own.

28. Our forces annihilated M23 and Seleka rebels because they were able to transform themselves into a powerful force that bravely appreciated the immediacy of the threat the enemy posed at the time and responded accordingly.

29. This shows that the SA Army understands what French Army General and military strategist, André Beaufre meant when he said: "In effect, the most difficult military problem to resolve is that of establishing a security system, as inexpensive as possible in time of peace, capable of transforming itself very rapidly into a powerful force in case of the danger of aggression."

30. This also shows that our Joint Warfare Publication 139 on the African Battlespace is on point when it says that "an understanding of the kind of war must include a clear understanding of the current and expected realities of the operational environment or battlespace."

31. The victories against M23 and Seleka are brilliant examples of how we fight and show that we take heed of the realities of our operational environment, a quality that is vital for battles to be won.

## **MODERN THREAT PATTERNS AND HOW WE FIGHT**

32. According to Kotia (2012) dominant security threats on the continent today emanates from international and internal terrorism, natural and man-made disasters, organised crime, protest movements and rebellions, cyber crime and cyber security threats, ethnic as well as religious

disputes. All these pervasive threat patterns manifest themselves in one way or another in the continent leading to instability and social strife that calls for the SA Army to lead intervention missions on behalf of the South African government in collaboration with fellow African countries to help restore stability and curb the loss of lives resulting from these types of conflicts.

33. It is important to note that as allude to earlier, these threats presents a different challenge to the SA Army as they call for the application of asymmetric as well as conventional approach to mitigate, a requirement that have seen the SA Army having to capacitate itself to be able to fight irregular battles while also at times employing tried and tested conventional means to deal with the battle challenges today's opposing forces presents. The nature of the threat patterns we face compelled the SA Army to adjust its doctrine and strategy to suit the circumstances of the new African battlespace and enemy. What cannot be denied is that there has been a drastic change in the manner the SA Army fights and this is as a result of the characteristics of the dynamic African battlespace that we find ourselves in. We fight and employ the best of both asymmetric and conventional approaches to annihilate the enemy and bring our forces closer to their objective.

34. According to Williams (2016) the SA Army traditionally trained in a conventional battle approach but the evolving threat patterns and lessons learnt during operations necessitated the move towards other forms of training that encompassed the dominant threats that the African battle space presents.

35. He adds that three battalions' leader group elements from the SA Army embarked on Desert Warfare training in the Sahara desert in Tunisia prior to the Sudan mission to prepare them for the challenges ahead. This tells us that the SA Army is geared to fight the threats it encounters regardless whether they are conventional or unconventional. More and more of our soldiers are employed in Peace Support Operations, Peace Keeping Operations and Peace Enforcement Operations on the continent as well as humanitarian missions and Military Operations Other Than War. This is the way the SA Army fights and adapts its doctrine to be able to efficiently deal with the rising new threat patterns.

36. Beaufre (1974) once quipped that "throughout the entire course of history, warfare is always changing," and there can never be a time as ripe as this one to confirm this French military strategist's statement. As we enter into the third decade of our democracy, the realisation of warfare as dynamic and forever changing has already been embraced and we now had to adjust the type of training we provide to our soldiers to successfully operate in the asymmetric warfare that dominates modern conflict. The SA Army is now in theatres engaging belligerents that are using irregular measures like Improvised Explosive Devices and employing guerrilla tactics, techniques and procedures. This is the nature of fighting that the SA Army finds itself engaged in today.

### **SA ARMY FORCE PREPARATION INTERVENTIONS FOCUSED ON THE NEW ENEMY**

37. The advent of evolving threat patterns that calls for new approaches on the African battlespace necessitated a mind shift in the army that would see various training interventions implemented to prepare soldiers to be able to efficiently respond to operational challenges on the continent. These training interventions directed the manner in which we wage battles in the continent and on the domestic front as a manner of adapting to the circumstances of conflict we face on a regular basis. The battles we fight are more and more irregular or asymmetric and it has become imperative that our soldiers were trained to excel on that front while also not neglecting their conventional expertise to wage battles.

38. The Infantry School's Special Techniques Training Wing has since established specialised training programmes that aim to empower the SA Army soldier to meet new challenges that the modern threat poses. The programmes include: Desert Warfare, Jungle Warfare and Mountain Warfare both of which have scenarios that interrogate the soldiers' adaptability to hostile environments similar to areas they would be deployed to deal with new threat patterns that hinders continental peace and security in Africa.

39. These interventions are over and above, the traditional force preparation and mission readiness exercises that the SA Army is engaged in to produce a soldier able to fight both formats of battle in preparation for scenarios in mission areas. The traditional exercises are Exercise Young Eagle and Exercise Seboka which are service specific interventions aimed at ensuring that our soldiers have the tools necessary to negotiate battle challenges regardless of the approach of strategy the opposing forces employ. There are other Joint Operations exercises that the army is involved in where all elements of the SANDF are taken through their paces to prepare for missions that call for joint firepower in the continent.

40. These programmes prepare our soldiers for battle by teaching them the tactics, techniques and procedures of battle in desert, jungle and mountainous terrains to ensure they are ready to engage the new enemy within any environment. What should be considered going forward is introducing this new regime of training even to entry level training programmes like basic military training and corps training to prepare even recruits for the changing battlespace in Africa and how the army of the future engages the new enemy.

41. As we negotiate and execute our mandate of preparing combat ready landward forces to be employed in joint operations by the SANDF and by extension our principals in government, it is becoming clear that this is after all the nature of modern battle and how we actually fight. We now employ composite units who are competent in fighting in all terrains using principles of both asymmetric, irregular warfare and the foundational conventional warfare training that has always been the bulwark sustaining our military strategy.

42. For the SA Army to achieve victory in battle, it is crucial that it correctly appreciates the threat that it is faced with before applying itself. As Prussian military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, once intimated; "the first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaken it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."

## **CONCLUSION**

### **SUMMARY**

43. In this paper we sought to interrogate the interrelated military concepts of military doctrine, military strategy, conventional warfare and asymmetric warfare in relation to the manner in which the SA Army fights. We then went on to speak about the changing nature of battle and how that has necessitated our landward forces to adapt, prepare for those scenarios and be able to fight battles as the contemporary theatre in Africa calls for.

44. We touched on modern threat patterns that the security agencies and militaries on the African continent have to contend with in order to be one step ahead of the new enemy before speaking on a few force preparation interventions that the SA Army has employed to empower its forces to fight this new enemy and defeat it. The paper highlighted recent excellently executed battles that the SA Army waged in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic where a combination of irregular and conventional skills stood our soldiers in good stead, ensuring that the opposing forces were defeated by a well-prepared army which has evidently incorporated lessons learnt in previous battles and skirmishes into its new approach to battle moving forward. This is in actual fact an aspect that clearly characterises how we wage battles.

45. Lastly, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made, based on the new threat patterns we have seen, the changing nature of tactics the new enemy employs, as well as the new regime of force preparation interventions that ensures that our soldiers are not left behind when it comes to new approaches to fighting in the contemporary battlespace.

46. The paper found that the employment of conventional tactics, techniques and procedures in today's battle is slowly diminishing with a combined approach currently dominating the way battles are waged in Africa where non-states role-players, rebels and insurgents are the dominating

opposing forces that we deal with, thus calling for a new approach that encompasses the best practices of conventional warfare buttressed by an understanding of irregular approaches and how the new enemy fights. We found that the SA Army's approach has reasonably evolved to match the threat posed by potential conflict and other security challenges on the continent as it strives to unite with its fellow African counterparts in pursuance of peace and security on the continent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

47. It is recommended that the SA fast-tracks the introduction of new ways to fight in its force preparation interventions to ensure that we reinforce our motto that says; "We train as we fight."
48. Lessons learnt in operations on the continent must continue to be the driver of the strategy and approach we use when engaged in peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, peace support and other Military Operations Other Than War on the continent.
49. Ideally, the SA Army must look at the creation of an Opposing Forces Unit that would be used to simulate the various capabilities and threats that the new enemy on the African battlespace presents when engaging us. This Opposing Forces Unit will be our target during force preparation exercises staged in the country but will mirror all intends and purposes of the new enemy in order to prepare our soldiers realistically during exercises, using the actual manoeuvres and asymmetric tactics that our opponents in operations across Africa employ.
50. It is recommended that resources be committed to ensure that force preparation interventions that match our battle challenges are sustained and our soldiers are trained to fight in line with the threat patterns that we interrogated in this paper.
51. Importantly, it is also recommended that the corps specific doctrines must regularly be visited to align them with the evolving threat patterns in the contemporary battlespace so as to ensure that even at the level of formations, the force preparation interventions are aligned to what our soldiers will face in operations.



**(LT E.M. MACHETE)**

**SO3 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION SA ARMY CORP COM: CAPT**

20/09/2016

EMM/EMM

APPENDIX A  
TO 98537061MC/R/001  
DD 20 SEPT 2016

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Cummings, R. (2015). *What security challenges face sub-Saharan Africa in 2015?* IPI Global Observatory [O]  
<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/01/security-challenges-sub-saharan-africa-2015/>  
[Accessed 20 August, 2016].
2. Fuller, J.F.C. (1926) *The Foundations of the Science of War*.
3. Heitman, R. (2013). *How the deadly CAR battle unfolded* [O]  
<http://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/how-deadly-car-battle-unfolded-1493841>  
[Accessed 3 August, 2016].
4. Beaufre, A & Stanford Research Institute. Strategic Studies Center. (1974), *Strategy for tomorrow*, Crane, Russak, New York.
5. Kotia, E. (2012). *Emerging threats to National Security and Development in Africa*. Kennesaw State University. United States of America.
6. Long, D.E. (2008). *Countering Asymmetrical Warfare in the 21st Century: A Grand Strategic Vision*. Centre for Contemporary Conflict.
7. Lykke, A.F. (1989). *Defining Military Strategy*, in *Military Review*, (69:5) May 1989, p.3.
8. Qiao, L & Wang, X. (2002) *Unrestricted warfare: China's Master Plan to destroy America*. Pan American Publishing Company, Panama City, Panama, Page 25.
9. South Africa. (1996). Constitution Act 108 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
10. South Africa. Department of Defence and Military Veterans. (2015). Defence Review Report. Pretoria: Government Printer.
11. South Africa. Department of Defence. (2007). Joint Warfare Publication 139 African battlespace. Pretoria: Government Printer.
12. South Africa. Department of Defence. (2009). Joint Warfare Publication 137 Defence Doctrine. Pretoria: Government Printer.
13. Von Clausewitz, C, (1976) (Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Eds.) *On War*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1976. P88.
14. Williams, J, (2016) Senior Staff Officer Doctrine, Policy Development and Maintenance, Chief Directorate SA Army Force Preparation. Personal interview. [Transcript]. 10 August, Pretoria.