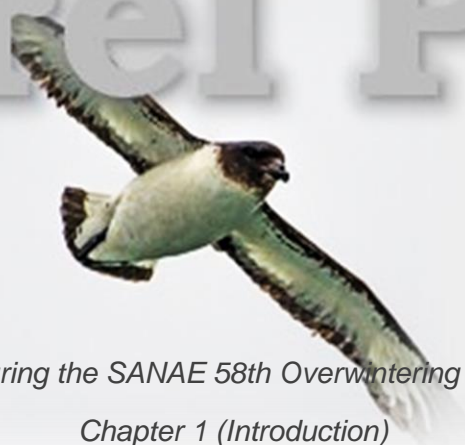


Petrel Post



Featuring the SANAE 58th Overwintering Team

Chapter 1 (Introduction)

9 Team members that takes care of everyday tasks and responsibilities around the base, let's meet them informally before proper introductions are done in the following publications, so you know who you're talking to

In this chapter, we are going to tell you a little bit about the Voyage here and the common denominator that got us all this far, so you can begin the journey exactly as we did, right in the

Beginning!!



"Lorenzen Piggen" Viewed from the SANAE IV Base (Zoomed), Antarctic Petrel in flight over the top of the mountain



SANAE 58

Jacques Robbertze – Team Leader and Diesel Mechanic



“Congratulations and welcome to the SANAP program, you have been chosen, with 8 other candidates to go to Antarctica to maintain our base and presence there – in short you will be the custodians for 14 months in one of the most isolated, inhospitable and extreme places in the world”. And so it began.....

Getting together at the beginning of October the reality was start setting in, all a bit of a blur really – reading as much as you can, training, shopping, fitting of all our extreme cold weather clothing the list is endless! At last the 6th of December after a short ceremony we were on our way. The voyage

itself was fun and exciting, meeting all the people that will be spending at least 3 months with us doing renovations and maintenance at SANAE, crossing the roaring 40's the ferocious 50's (our first sighting of an iceberg) and the Antarctic circle was all part of what I'm hope to be one of the best years of my life so far!

After getting to the RSA Bukta (ice shelf) some team members flew to base while some others were involved in the offloading of cargo and pumping of Polar Diesel from the ship, this will be our supplies for the year ahead. All of this will go with CAT trains to base, a distance of roughly 200km which takes up to 24hrs of nonstop driving at speeds of about 15km/h and towing cargo on sledges in excess of 50 tons per vehicle. We arrived on Christmas day at about 17h00 at base just in time for Christmas dinner! You can say we were the Santa's of the South Pole bringing some items of a personal nature to people that have been at base for at least 5 days already and was running out of certain luxury items and clothing.



Team responsible for bringing cargo through to SANAE IV base from RSA Bukta (Christmas Morning 00:02)

Take-over was longer than usual because the ship was chartered out for the Weddell Sea Expedition which saw us with 96 people on base. In a sense this was good if you take into account that we had longer training on all the systems and new protocols that have been installed during the last 4 years when major renovations have been done to the base by DPW and contractors Nolitha. It wasn't all just work we had some fun as well, a few memorable occasions sprang to mind like New Year's, a few karaoke nights, take over games, going to the wind scoop and a few birthday parties in between, mine included 😊

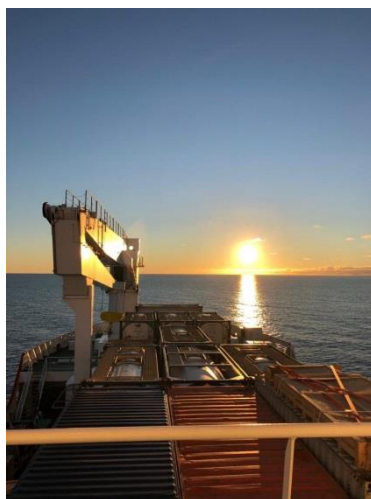
Mpati Boleme – Deputy Team Lead and SANSA Engineer



I am Mpati Boleme, the Space Weather Engineer working for the South African National Space Agency. I was born and raised in Lesotho. When the opportunity to join the Antarctic program came along I could not let it pass. For me, this chance came at a time that I needed it the most. At first it was just accepting a job opportunity, in time I then realized what this job actually means, I will be spending 14 months in isolation with 8 strangers, in Antarctica.

I spent a few months in Hermanus, SANSA offices, for training where I met my co-SANSA engineer Travis, and from the get go we got along well. We then moved to Waterfront to meet the rest of the team. I have to admit; the days leading up to meeting them I was very anxious. It was obviously awkward at first, but even though we are all from different backgrounds we get along fine. Living on the ship for a month was really exciting, we had the beautiful view of Table Mountain, and life was pretty amazing, then the voyage began.

Everyone was very apprehensive about any changes in terms of getting sick and day before we left Cape Town. The first for me, but I soon got used to the experience any sea sickness, not even many wonderful people on the ship; the experience. For me, the highlight of the the sky at midnight. It was such breath-to get to the ice shelf; the journey was 14 months was starting to become a the base on a helicopter, which took the base from a distance for the first been oblivious to the reality of living on I would be in the middle of nowhere and I



Taken from the SA Agulhas II, 7th deck

the voyage, I did not want to take so I took sea sickness tablets a on the water a little uncomfortable movement and luckily did not the roaring 40's got to me. I met trip was such a wonderful trip was witnessing the sun up in taking moment. It took us 2 weeks finally over living in Antarctica for reality. We flew from the ship to about an hour. I remember seeing time, until that very moment, I had ice for a year. It finally hit me that got a mini panic attack. We have

been on SANAE IV base for almost three months now and it feels like a dream.

I am looking forward to being here for the next 11 months, it will be exciting, challenging and very scary but I am positive that my fellow team mates and I will be just fine.

Dr. Salomé Odendaal – Overwintering Team Doctor



I missed the boat completely, literally. Therefore, I had to be flown in. My first flight was in an ILYUSHIN IL-76 TD cargo and passenger aircraft. Noisy and uncomfortable but exciting. I landed at Novolazarevskaya Russian airbase and had to overnight due to weather and was given a 2 sleeper container to make myself comfortable in.

The food was nice but the outside path to the bathroom quite cold...for obvious reasons. The next morning early, the next plane, modified Douglas DC 3, was loaded and we were off to



ILYUSHIN IL-76 TD



Basler Plane

SANAE. This time a slightly more comfortable and shorter flight.

At SANAE I got out of the aircraft and was greeted by multiple warmly-dressed red or blue “Martians” with only snow goggles and buffs or beanies visible, speaking to me from all directions and in different voices....my very friendly and helpful team members and Dr. Will, who will be handing over to me.

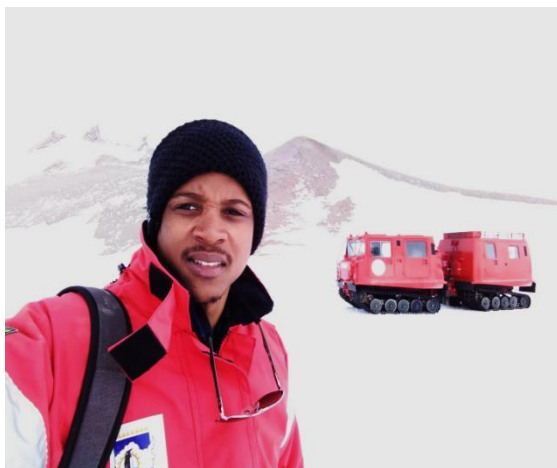
My handover had to be rushed due to the limited time to our availability. A volume and information overload but with all the needed pointers and support to figure it out and hopefully enough to make a success of it.

It was five days of chaos, people everywhere, greeting friendly faces, helpful personalities and all making me feel right at home from the start. The hustle and bustle did not last long for me before I was sent off on my first CAT train. We said goodbye to the last of the summer team members and watched the SA Agulhas II sail away, as a new chapter in my life begins...



CAT Train between RSA Bukta (RSA Bay) and SANAE IV Station

Bongisipho Kuali – Mechanical Engineer



My name is **Bongisipho Kuali**, I'm 33 years old and I am the Base Engineer for the SANAE 58 expedition. I am from Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu Natal and I'm currently in one of my dream careers which is mechanical engineering.

When a relative of mine told me about such a job with the Department of Environmental affairs, it was my first time hearing about a South African research base in Antarctica.

When I was told to come for an interview, I began saying goodbye to my family and getting my affairs in order because I knew I would get the job.

Fast forward two months, on the 6th of December 2018 I was sailing in the mighty Agulhas II headed south towards the coldest, driest, most isolated place in the world. Being on the ship was an amazing experience on its own; it's like being on a floating 5-Star hotel. For the longest time I woke-up in a panic asking myself where am I and where am I going?

As a South African citizen I truly believe I have one of the best and coolest jobs our government could offer. I will be responsible for looking after SANAE IV base utilities, such as the Generators, HVAC systems, Waste water plant and many other facilities which keep the base and the people inside alive and happy.

It's a beautiful base and one of the biggest and best in Antarctica. For the past four years the base has undergone a 'state of the art' upgrade. Just to give you an idea, I can control most of the bases facilities on my tablet from anywhere in the base. I will be telling you more about the super cool equipment on the base in the upcoming newsletters.

So far the best part of this expedition has been witnessing the sheer beauty and size of this continent but above all it's the lifetime of friendships I have developed with my team mates. For me, the greatest thing I will take away from this expedition is not the grandeur of my role with SANAE 58 but rather the friends I will keep.

Travis Duck – SANSA Engineer



The mad rush of getting everything packed and ready to go started in June, when I was hired, it's been a wild ride of training, packing, shopping, planning and meeting my new team mates for so long I don't know how we got through it all.

But it's done, we are finished and finally the base is ours, it was the longest take over ever, and this is not an expression or exaggeration.

Seeing my first Ice berg was one of the biggest excitements that I have experienced in a long time, then being surrounded by a sea of ice in a little red ship made it just so much more amazing. That amazing red ship has some serious ice breaking abilities, I could sit and watch it for ages, if it wasn't so darn cold!

The work we did on the Radar and other systems during take over was rather difficult, having a few late nights and many, many, stressful situations.

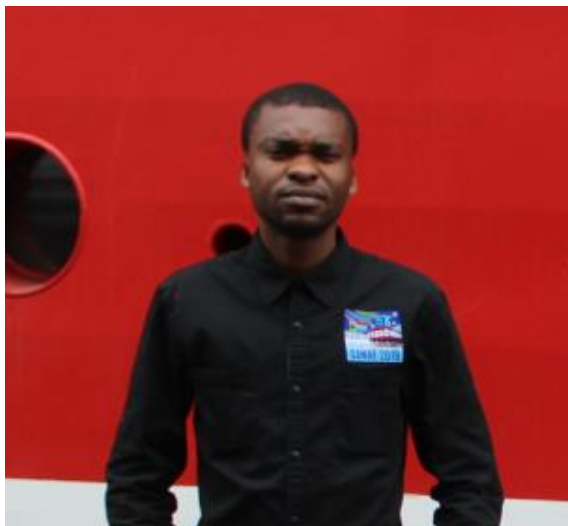
But it's all done now and the Radar is working well, all for science 😊

We came down here with a group of random people, did a lot of random work and turns out we all like each other, it's been the longest take over ever and as such we have still got so much to do to get ready for winter, but we are progressing and working on it.

Even in the coldest of environments and conditions. Work needs to be done and we are here for a reason.

I'm looking forward to a great year and a real adventure.

Marvin Rankudu – Senior SAWS (South African Weather Services) Representative



As a first time overwintering expedition member, I was excited to begin the voyage to Antarctica and experience all the interesting stories I'd heard about the world's iciest continent. Everything about the South African National Antarctic Expedition (SANAE) program is extra ordinary – from mentally preparing yourself for a years' worth of isolation from family and friends, multiple plane rides to and from home, to purchasing a year's supply of toiletries, favorite drinks and entertainment – it is hectic. The voyage to the SANAE base comprises a two-week long journey by the South African Agulhas II followed by a 45-minute helicopter ride from the ice shelf to the base. Luckily the seas were calmer than usual, I'd heard, and upon arrival to the base we were met by several days of good weather. Good weather in Antarctica is defined

as such, "no wind today".

So far, the team and I have generally adapted to the Antarctic environment well. The team-building orientation at base did a great job at ensuring that we all settle in well to our new roles and new home. The base has a variety of convenient built in features, notably under floor heating in every room, a games room, movie theatre lounge room, sauna and plenty more. With the addition of personal projects, work and fun activities with the team there should be enough business in the base to get us through a whole year in the ice.

At base, my responsibility will be to continue quality meteorological observations and reporting on behalf of the South African Weather Services. My role involves ensuring all quality control measures are adhered to when reporting current weather, accurate retrieval of weather data and general upkeep of the various sensors and components used to keep the Meteorological Office running. All data collected is used to continue accurate weather forecasting for the SANAE base region and is used in the research of the Antarctic weather by SAWS and related organizations.

Here's to a year of continuous discovery, fun and adventure!

Tshimangadzo Munyai – Electrical Technician



Hi I am Tshimangadzo Jufter Munyai and I am team member for S58 and I am going to be the electrician for the over wintering team at SANAE VI so all problem regarding electricity will be my responsibility. The journey down to Antarctica for me started the day I received a call informing me that I have been selected to go to Antarctica, preparation got underway the moment I hang up the phone, before sailing down to Antarctica I spent 2 and a half months down in cape town doing training and bonding with part of the technical team that will be overwintering with me. We sailed on the 6th of December leaving waterfront on the red taxi called the SA AGULHAS II

The journey down south took us about 2 weeks and that 2 weeks was full of joy and happiness as we heading into the unknown, on the 19th we were at the ice shelf and we took a flight to SANAE VI base were we reach and met S57 members although most of them where not around



SA Agulhas II, docked at East Pier in Cape Town Harbor (Waterfront)

as they were on a cat train. I settled in the base and got to familiarize myself with the surrounding areas and the rules that all SANAE VI

resident adhere to and the rest was history, I will have to leave it here as there is a lot to write regarding my journey down to the south, I am looking forward on spending 15 months in this hostile environment. Look out for the next edition of our newsletter were I will go deep on myself and life at 70° below

Ewald Ferreira – Communications Engineer



To me, SANAE is probably the most exciting thing I have ever done and will ever do in my lifetime and I love it. My memories of the Antarctic are all woven into my fabric from 2002 already and I believe there might even be more expeditions like this, if I have anything at all to say about it

We have all (SANAE 58) started to slowly but surely get together from October already and I was delighted to meet the full complement eventually, as we progressed through the training and team building events, till where we are now.

Grave anticipation was in the air all the way till the last leg of take-over, trying to figure out what it would be like to share a house with this lot and here we are, it's gonna be a blast!

Our Voyage to Antarctica was of course epic, as it is always and the vast landscape of Antarctica started surfacing just after 50 degrees' latitude, after which it slowly expanded to a more solid landscape toward an eventual ice desert. There is always anticipation around the first flights out, and the results on inspections around the shelf and the base, as this is very decisive as to where and when cargo operations will begin

Myself of course, I am here to establish communications and follow flights, monitor field teams and facilitate search & rescue missions in and around Antarctica, meaning take-over could get really busy for me sometimes, and the relaxed atmosphere of the SA Agulhas II would probably be duly missed once the wheel starts rolling. Anxiety is not one of the emotions I suffer from when it comes to take-over periods, but really the expedition and team members sharing the base with me, would be what I look forward to once the riffraff is gone and the dust settles.

So I am Ewald (S42, 56 and now 58) and through the course of the overwintering period, we will be getting to know each other a little better. This here above photo frame is me onboard the SA Agulhas II and I am very pleased to meet you



SA Agulhas II, on route to Antarctica



From SANAE IV Base on Vesles Karvet facing Lorenzen Piggen

Sanele Action Mkhize – Diesel Mechanic



My name is Sanele Action Mkhize from Kwa-Zulu Natal Durban (Kwelikabhanana). My work here in Antarctica SANAE is a Diesel Mechanic; I will be responsible for the maintenance of all mechanical equipment in and around the base. I really enjoyed the journey coming here to SANAE IV and I am looking forward to spending the remainder of this year here. I am really appreciative to be part of this programme and I know that it will open a lot of opportunities for me.

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Origin Coffee.

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Coffee beans to keep us going in the dark winter months.



Flippen Lekka spices.

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Amazing spices that blow our socks off every time we used them, favourites are the original and the Worcester.



Ultimate Heli

<http://www.ultimateheli.com>

A dartboard and charcoal for the year as ours was "forgotten" back home.

Thanks guys, you made every braai day this year happen for us.



NOLITHA

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They upgraded the base, then gave us more than we could imagine in presents and courtesy



We would like to thank each of our sponsors for making our year that much more durable and comfortable.