



S61

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2022

Our friends and colleagues from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and Public Works have left us to custody of the SANAE IV base. The curtain rises like the sun to the dawn of S61, as we begin to further imprint South Africa's footprint in the South Pole. It is an honour and privilege to carry this responsibility.

The February 2022 issue of the Newsletter will introduce the S61 team along with some of the activities the team has partook in.

S61 team

First off we have the man with the VIKING beard and team leader JC.



“My name is JC Laubscher and it is my humble privilege to be the team leader and Doctor for this year’s expedition. I am from Cape Town and graduated from UCT in 2006. I’ve been involved with SANAP since 2014, having done take-over relief voyages to Gough and Marion Islands. I am extremely proud to be part of S61 and look forward to an amazing year with this amazing team.”

Up next is “Fez”, credit to him for the cool pictures you see here.



“My name is Mfezeko Rataza from Randburg and I am the Electronic engineer representing SANSA here in Antarctica. My duties include management of HF Radar and VLF instruments which we use for polar weather studies.

Thirdly we have the editor of this newsletter Maanda.



“My name is Maanda Mulaudzi, from Makwarela Venda in Limpopo. I am super psyched to be here in Antarctica praises to God for making my dream come true. While I am here I will be serving the DFFE as the Electro-Mechanical Technician for SANAE IV base, my duties include maintenance and repairs of all electrical and mechanical equipment. I studied mechanical engineering up to B-Tech (degree of bachelor of technology) level through Central University of Technology Free State and UNISA, and look forward to obtaining professional registration (ECSA) through this expedition.”

Up next is the man with all the experience “Mr John”.



“My name is John Manyatsa Skelete, from Mahikeng Northwest Province. I grew up in Pretoria. I am self-motivated, a quick learner, a smart worker and a focused person. My current role at SANAE IV base is Diesel Mechanic.”

The 5th member of the team is Eric our pool champion.



“Hello my name is Eric Randall. I am from Pietermaritzburg and I am serving at SANAE as the Snr Meteorological Technician. I studied at the University of Pretoria receiving my honours degree in Meteorology. I am young and keen to be exposed to the harsh weather in Antarctica. I am a team player and enthusiastic about learning new skills to equip and better myself for the future.”

Our deputy leader and technical team leader “Thulz” is up next, you should see this man walk.



“My name is Thulani (Innovation) Ngwaqa. I was born in Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape of South Africa; and completed high school at Zwelakhe Senior Secondary School in Ntabankulu in 2005. I studied Mechanical Engineering at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). I hold a degree of Bachelor of Technology in Mechanical Engineering (BTech) and also have National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. My plan is to study GCC and register with the Engineering Council of South Africa in the near future. I am working for DFFE, currently overwintering in Antarctica at SANAE IV as a Mechanical Engineer (Base Engineer) and I have also overwintered in 2020. I am responsible for the day-to-day maintenance, fault-finding on and repairs of the mechanical and civil services and equipment of our Antarctic Base.”

The 7th member of S61 is Innocent aka “Bafo”



“My name is Innocent Sicelo Mthethwa from Durban Kwa-Zulu Natal. I am a Diesel Mechanic for SANAE IV base.”

Aphiwe is up next his favourite word is “WOW”. Everything is WOW to this gentleman.



“My name is Aphiwe Dyum, I am the Communications Engineer. My job is mainly about servicing and maintaining all communication systems on the SANAE IV base. Communication systems include but not limited to satellite system, radio equipment, computer network public address system, telephone system. Also do general office work/admin. I enjoy playing games when relaxing”

The final and not least member of S61 is the very dapper Thobz.



“My name is Thobani Mabaso from Pietermaritzburg; I studied BSc in Electronic Engineering at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. I am the HF Radar and Space Weather Engineer where I operate and maintain the HF Radar, which is part of a global network called Super Darn (Super Dual Auroral Radar Network). I am also responsible for the operation and maintenance of VLF instruments and magnetometers.

I am a sports fanatic and that is probably the only thing I am going to miss about being in SA. Go Arsenal go!”

Editor: Maanda Mulaudzi

As the year moves on you will get the opportunity to learn more about each member of the S61 team, their duties, past times and aspirations and how our presence here brings value to South Africa. If you were not able to keep count the team has 9 members.

We play pool to pass the time after work; well SANAE IV base is so unpredictable the systems and equipment here require 24/7 attention. However when we do get time to relax we play pool. King of the hill rules apply here. Following is a table to present how the competition fares amongst each other:



KING OF THE HILL POOL CHALLENGE							
Names	Position	Win ratio%	Played	Challenges	Defenses	Win	losses
Eric	1	80	25	4	15	20	4
Thulz	2	79	29	5	18	23	6
Aphiwe	3	47	19	8	6	9	11
Inno	4	40	5	3	1	2	3
Fez	5	33	15	7	1	5	10
Jc	6	29	17	12	2	5	12
Thobz	7	25	16	10	2	4	12
Maanda	8	8	12	10	0	1	11
John	9	0	0	0	0	0	0



“The year is far from over look forward to seeing if Eric can stay on top, with Thulz right at his hill.”

Allow me share one fact about Antarctica before we part:

- Antarctica is the driest place on Earth and with so little humidity you easily build up static electricity. Touch a conducting material like metal or another person you can get quite a big shock.

Goodbye for now.

