

## PHYSICAL FITNESS, SPORT AND RECREATION IN THE BDF

*The September 1989 issue of Soldier's Magazine described what happened to 35,000 American soldiers: "They were headed and marched 200 miles from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell in central Luzan. Some 900 American soldiers perished, butchered where they fell. News of the Bataan death march raced through the island." Only the strongest, most enduring soldiers survived the ordeal.*

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*The costly lessons learnt by Task Force Smith in Korea are an important lesson today. During one grim episode of the Korean War, U.S soldiers who were exhausted during the infamous winter- time retreat decided to quit, sit alongside the road, and wait for the enemy to arrive and take them prisoner. Enemy soldiers did arrive- and they shot American after American in the back of the head. The U.S men were so tired and mentally whipped that they waited for the enemy to kill them.*

Enlisted Soldier's Guide, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
Revised by Frank Cox

*If we fail to prepare our soldiers for their physically demanding war- time tasks, we are guilty of paying lip service to the principle of "Train as you Fight."*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A responsible military is ethically bound to teach soldiers its experiences or experiences of other military forces. The above two scenarios show the consequences of relegating physical fitness in preparing the army for war. The crucial war machine in combat is not the rifle or the sophisticated aircraft, but the man behind them. In a nutshell, the man behind the sophisticated weaponry must be mentally, physically and emotionally fit to operate and manoeuvre them or with them. It is through a comprehensive physical fitness, sport and recreation program that these are achieved. These programs also play a very important role in promoting team spirit, cohesion, discipline, and combat survivability (the vital component of Botswana Defence Force).

1.2 Botswana Defence Force (BDF) takes seriously Physical Fitness, Sport, and Recreation programs because the readiness of the army begins with physical fitness of all soldiers, NCOs and officers. It is through these programs that the soldiers' quality of life, productivity, positive physical and mental changes are enhanced. It is also through these kinds of programs that BDF's public image is improved. Because of their fundamental importance, all members of the BDF are making magnificent effort to improve and sustain Physical Fitness, Sports and Recreation in the BDF.

1.3 The BDF's Fitness, Sports and Recreation extend to all units of the army and encompass all ages and ranks. It also extends to spouses and dependants of the members. The Botswana Defence Force attaches so much importance to these programs that it has devoted full time personnel to direct its athletic program.

## 2.0 AIM

2.1 The aim of this paper is to discuss the various physical fitness, sport and recreational programs available in the BDF, how they are run and compliment each other to attain Botswana's nation vision of "...an alert, well trained, disciplined BDF...." (Long Term Vision for Botswana).

## 3.0 PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

3.1 *General Douglas McArthur: "In no other profession are the penalties of employing untrained personnel so appalling or so irrevocable as in the military."* All unit commanders in the BDF have a responsibility to ensure that their soldiers, NCOs and officers are physically fit and ready for any assignment that places high demand on fitness. Combat is a true testing ground for the soldier's strength and stamina. Combat places severe physical demand on soldiers. The physical demands of war that a BDF soldier will experience include the ability to walk over long distances with heavy loads, the ability to crawl through uncomfortable terrain in order to avoid being detected by enemy as well as the ability to survive sleepless nights on an empty stomach. Like General Arthur Collins JR said in his book Common Sense Training, "...Fatigue, weakness of body spirit, lack of stamina, and poor morale are usually found together". Therefore it is the duty of BDF to eradicate by implementing a physical fitness program that will produce superbly conditioned troops.

3.2 To each of the individual soldiers in the BDF physical fitness is important, but it is apparent that each of them views it differently. It should also be clear that physical fitness is not the same for every soldier. It is a desirable quality that must be developed in numerous ways for a variety of reasons. There are levels of fitness, which every soldier should strive for, as well as certain expectations for certain soldiers depending on various factors.

3.3 In the BDF there are many physical fitness programs done by all soldiers. The BDF physical fitness program is in four folds:

3.3.1 **Initial Entry General Physical Fitness Program**-This program brings soldiers up to the level of physical fitness they need to be soldiers. The training emphasises progressive conditioning of the whole body. This program is done during basic training of recruits and includes; running, road marching, weight training, aquatic exercises, callisthenics just to mention a few.

3.3.2 **Advanced Unit Physical Fitness Proficiency Program** -There are many types of units in the BDF, and their mission often requires different levels of fitness. Combat units must emphasise attaining and maintaining the fitness level required for their mission. The unit's standard may exceed the army's minimum.

3.3.3 **Special Program**-The day-to-day unit PT program for most soldiers may not be appropriate for all unit members. Some of them may not be able to exercise at the intensity or duration best suited for their needs. At least those groups of soldiers may need special PT programs. These are soldiers who fail the Physical Proficiency Test, those who are over weight and those who have either a temporary or permanent medical profiles.

**3.3.4 Train the Trainer Program**-There is a three month Physical Fitness Instructors Course that at the end should produce graduates able to perform the following tasks:

- a. Analyse their unit's mission related tasks and develop sound fitness training programs to support these tasks
- b. Train other trainers to conduct sound, safe physical training

**3.4** All members of the BDF are afforded the opportunity to take part in fitness activity. For example every Tuesday and Thursday is compulsory sport and fitness day for two hours and everyday at 0530hrs all soldiers do physical training for 30 minutes. The program is left at the discretion of the commanding officers.

#### **4.0 SPORT PROGRAMS**

Sport has become a dominant influence in the BDF community. No single aspect of our career apart from pure military activities receives more attention than sport. The highest spectator or attendance each year is typically associated with such activities like the inter-unit football, volleyball, track and field and rugby competitions. Sport in the BDF is regarded as a competitive activity that adds variety to a unit's physical fitness program. Sport supplements the physical fitness of the BDF. It will never replace physical training and conditioning program. It merely exists to give soldiers a chance for healthy competition. Sports competition can enhance a soldier's combat readiness by promoting the development of co-ordination, agility, balance and speed. Competitive sport activities can also help develop assets that are vital to combat effectiveness. These include team spirit, the will to win, confidence, toughness, aggressiveness and teamwork.

**4.1** The BDF's aim is to give every soldier an opportunity to participate in a sport of their choice. A unit level intramural program and BDF extramural program can help achieve this important goal. Organisation of various unit level intramural programs is left to the discretion of unit commanders. Intramural programs are individual, dual, and team sport organised for voluntary participation of officers and men. The intramural program is designed to achieve the following:

- a. For soldiers and officers to enjoy competition as a recreation.
- b. To promote better health through physical exercise.
- c. Social belonging to a group.
- d. To improve skill in a favourable sport activity.

**4.2** Annex 3 and Annex 3 appendix 1 shows active BDF sport codes affiliated to various national associations

**4.3** The primary aim of the extramural program of the BDF is to provide opportunities for highly competitive and talented BDF athletes who excel at intramural level to compete with peers at national and international level. This is a very important program in fostering competitive attitude in soldiers. All the teams in this extramural programme have renowned national reputation. Time and again BDF members are called for *national duty* either as athletes or as officials. *Annex 2* is a listing of *January - June 2000* of members of the BDF called for national duty. *Annex 1* shows the number of BDF members involved in national sport associations. BDF clubs in the extramural programme constantly perform very well. *Annex 4* shows the *BDF sports clubs performance in 1999*.

## **5.0 AWARDS PROGRAM**

5.1 BDF stimulates soldiers and units to participate in sport competition by giving awards and prizes to those who meet certain stipulated standards, this reflects the unit standing and the overall intramural sports programme. The recognition helps make units and individuals participate throughout the year.

### **5.1.1 Point System**

- A point system is developed for each competition in the intramural program, which when added at the end of the year gives the overall winner of all the sports. The winning unit is awarded the Commanders Commission Trophy, cash prizes and also become bearers of the BDF and Botswana colours for the year. The colours are handed over to the next winning unit.

### **5.1.2 Records**

- The Directorate of Sport keeps records on file. Individual performance is also very important for comparison and serves as an incentive for others to try to break the record.

## **6.0 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

6.1 Adequate facilities and equipment must be availed. At present the BDF has a limited number of sports and recreational facilities. Facilities ranging from out door courts, aerobics studios, football grounds, weight rooms are available.

## **7.0 FUNDS AND BUDGETING**

7.1 Adequate funds are essential to organise and operate a sports programme. To justify requests for funds a budget is prepared. It must include special equipment, awards, supplies, pay, and other items and services. Where do we get our money? There are four sources of our funding:

- a. Government funding, which adds up to 46.4%, of the total funding.
- b. Contributions from all BDF members, which adds up to 53.6% of the total funding.
- c. Sponsors
- d. Prize money won by various teams.

## **8.0 RECREATIONAL PROGRAM**

8.1 One important attempt by the Directorate of Sport is to provide a recreational program of activities that helps in the socialization of the individual. Since we are living in an age of great social conflict, it is highly important that BDF use all means necessary to instil social and cultural habits in all the soldiers. BDF recreational program of activities offers unlimited opportunities for developing broad social and cultural understandings.

8.2 Many of the simple forms of recreation available to all are most satisfying, and of the greatest help in maintaining physical, mental and emotional health. One facet of common social and cultural interest of BDF members is shown by the attendance, publicity given to activities like borankana (traditional dance), kwasa-kwasa, choir competition, and Mr BDF pageant. In these recreational activities, especially Mr BDF, there is partial sponsorship from the corporate world. The Directorate of Sports is trying to make soldiers aware of the vital place that wholesome recreation can play in the full enjoyment of military life.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The BOTSWANA DEFENCE FORCE views fitness, sports and recreation as playing a very fundamental role in keeping a physically and mentally prepared stable work force. Optimum fitness is our most prized possession, which the mission statement sums it up as the most dynamic and worldly recognised.

### MISSION STATEMENT

**“ Sports practiced in all the armed forces of the world, as well as the gathering of all military sport- in the same way as the civilian- will be fully integrated in the process connected with the harmonious development of the individual and the construction of the world peace.**

**Finally my message to us all is basically to encourage and urge all to be the spirit and the representative of the sports within all the armed forces of the world.**

**I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for giving me the time and availing yourselves to attend the CISM International Scientific Symposium 2000.**

**ANNEX 1**

**BDF MEMBERS CURRENTLY SERVING IN NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AS EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

<b>SER</b>	<b>SPORTS CODE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
1	Boxing	7
2	Softball	6
3	Volleyball	4
4	Karate	11
5	Football	4
6	Athletics	6
7	Darts	2
8	Tennis	2
9	Basketball	5
10	Chess	2
11	Netball	1
12	Karate	1
13	Boxing	1
14	CISM	1
	Total	53

ANNEX 2

**BDF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING (Players; Officials) IN NATIONAL TEAMS  
JAN – JUNE 2000**

<i>SER</i>	<i>SPORTS CODE</i>	<i>NUMBER</i>
1	Boxing	9
2	Softball	9
3	Karate	10
4	Football	13
5	Darts	4
6	Basketball	8
7	Tennis	4
8	Athletics	14
	<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>

ANNEX 3

ACTIVE BDF SPORTS CODES AFFILIATED TO NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

<i>SER</i>	<i>SPORT CODE</i>	<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>NUMBER OF CLUBS</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Athletics</i>	<i>Affiliated to Nat'l Ass.</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Boxing</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>Basketball</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>Darts</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>Football</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Karate</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>Softball</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>Tennis</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>Volleyball</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>10</i>	<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>Badminton</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>12</i>	<i>Pool</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>1</i>
	<i>Total</i>		<i>42</i>



**ANNEX 3**  
**APPENDIX 1**

**INTRAMURAL SPORTS NOT AFFILIATED TO SPORTS BODIES**

<b><i>SER</i></b>	<b><i>SPORT CODE</i></b>	<b><i>COMPETITION LEVEL</i></b>
1	Shooting	Inter-unit intramural
2	Power lifting	Inter-area intramural
3	Swimming	Inter-unit intramural
4	Gymnastics	Inter-area intramural
5	Rugby	Inter-area intramural
6	Iron man	Inter-unit intramural

**ANNEX 4**

**BDF SPORTS CLUBS RESULTS 1999**

<b>SER</b>	<b>SPORT CODE</b>	<b>TOURNAMENT/LEAGUE</b>	<b>POSITION</b>
1	Athletics	Guardian Relay	2,4, & 5
2	"	Mmakgodumo 2000 Cross Country	1
3	Karate	Kofukan Club Championship	1&2
4	"	BOKA Club Championship	1
5	Volleyball	BP Cup	2
6	"	Debswana Tournament	2
7	"	Schweppes Tournament	2
8	"	CISM Tournament	1
9	Football	Mini League	1&2
10	"	Botswana Life Insurance Cup	2
11	"	Coca Cola	1
12	"	World Group Cup	1&2
13	Darts	League	1&2
14	Basketball	League	2&4
15	Boxing	2 Military World Games	Bronze