

SOLDIERS WERE HEROES!

By **THABISILE KHOMO**

THE three South African Navy soldiers who died trying to save three contract workers during a deadly gas leak at a Durban naval base have been hailed as heroes.

The tragic incident happened on Friday at Salisbury Island Naval Base in Durban.

The three contract employees worked for the department of public works.

SA Navy spokeswoman Rachel Dulamo said the contract workers were working five metres underground in a sewer pit when a methane leaked occurred.

“The soldiers were alerted by witnesses and quickly ran to assist. Unfortunately, they suffocated and died along

with the contract workers.

“A further 24 soldiers ran to the scene and retrieved the bodies from the pit.

“Although they were affected by the gas, they are recovering well,” she said.

The names of the dead soldiers are Amrithlall Ramdin (41), Francois Mundell (26) and Henro Borg (21).

The contract workers’ names have not been released yet.

Security remained tight as investigations to determine

the cause of the gas leak continued over the weekend.

Dulamo said military personnel and cops are investigating the circumstances that led to the incident.

Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said she was sad such a tragedy happened a few days before the commemoration of Armed Forces Day.

President Jacob Zuma also extended his condolences to the families who lost their loved ones.

The office of Public Works Minister Mildred Oliphant said the department’s inspectors were looking into the matter.

KZN police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Thulani Zwane referred all the enquiries regarding the cases opened to South African National Defence Force spokesman Brigadier-General Mafi Mgobhozi. Mgobhozi confirmed that there were cases investigated but said he did not have all the details.



Three soldiers died at Salisbury Naval Base while they were trying to save a group of contract workers who were working underground.