

Naval base sewer pit investigation continues

SIBONGISENI MAPHUMULO

THE sewer pit at a Durban naval base, where three South African Defence Force (SANDF) members and three department of public works employees died on Friday from methane gas inhalation, remains a crime scene.

A further 24 SANDF members were taken to hospital.

“The scene of the accident remains a crime scene, no one was allowed to go in,” SANDF spokesperson Mafi Mgobozi said.

The SANDF members who died during the rescue mission to save the three public works employees have been identified as leading seaman Amrithlall Tothara Ramdin, 41, who was stationed at Naval Base Durban and lived on the



**Amrithlall
Tothara Ramdin**



**Francois
Mundell**

Bluff, able seaman Francois William Mundell, 26, from SAS Makhanda in George and seaman Henro Ter Borg, 21, from Maritime Reaction Squadron, living in Brackenfell, Cape Town.

The SANDF confirmed that Mundell and Ter Borg were on a tour of duty in Durban for the 2017 Armed Forces Day celebrations.

“Details of funeral arrangements for



**Henro
Ter Borg**

Economic development, tourism and environmental affairs MEC Sihle Zikalala said the government had lost dedicated public servants who met their untimely death while serving “our people”.

“Their families can recall their memories with love and pride. We also wish those hospitalised a speedy recovery,” Zikalala said.

our members who died have not been confirmed yet. We will wait for the family to let us know when they plan to bury their loved ones,” Mgobozi said.

Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant also extended her condolences to the workers who were repairing a pumped storage in a pit about 5m deep.

“The military police, with members of the SAPS, are continuing with their investigations to establish the circumstances that led to this painful episode.

“The chief of the SA Navy has also convened a board of inquiry to further investigate the matter and bring the families some form of closure,” SANDF chief Gen Solly Shoke said.

Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula and defence secretary Dr Sam Gulube also expressed their sorrow and extended their condolences.

sibongisenim@thenewage.co.za