



Jimmy's Own

Official Newsletter of the Signals Association

Issue 39 - December 2025

25 YEARS



Message from the Chairman and Editor

It is indeed an honour for me as chairperson to be able to share a few words with our members on the 25th anniversary (Silver Jubilee) of the Signals Association. Although I am not a founder member of the Association, I have been a member of the Signals family since 1 April 1965.

My stint as Chairperson of the Association was a relatively painless, I took over from Robbie Roberts who was instrumental in the founding of the Association and served as chairperson till 2022. During his stint he and his founder team established a very sound base for those to follow. The progress we made and the knowledge we gained are built upon the achievements and discoveries of those who came before us. Our ability to “see further” (achieve more or understand more) is a direct result of the foundational work laid by Robbie and his founder members.

The association kicked off with 16 members and gradually grew annually from members who joined. Presently, the Association has 85 Members throughout the Country and abroad. Through its 25 years of existence, it grew steadily and made itself visible to the outside world, attracting interest from many former signallers or communicators, irrespective of whether they originate from the Army, Air force, Naval or Medical Services communications divisions.

The Association is further proud of its quarter of a century membership of the Council for Military Veterans Organisation (CMVO), particularly as it is the only registered and recognized military veteran organisation for signallers in the country.

As most of you are aware growth, resilience, and sustainability of especially Military Veter-

ans Organisations requires commitment, hard work and loyalty by its management teams and members and part of our celebrations is to honour those who over the years sacrificed their time and energy to establish, develop and support the Association to the level it is today. As we mark our 25th anniversary, we thank everyone who has contributed to our journey. Your passion and hard work have built a strong legacy of camaraderie and a culture of a caring signals family. “We Salute you all”

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to current members, volunteers, and partners for their time, effort, and support, your sustained participation in whatever manner, is sincerely appreciated. Without your loyalty and support, we would not be able to continuously look after the interests of our veteran members and their needs and actively develop the Association. Put simply, you make what we do possible, and I can assure you that you are appreciated and treasured by all.

But as we are now looking at the future, which I can assure you will have challenges of its own, not only for the Signals Association, but for military veteran organisations in general, I want to encourage all members to remain committed and engaged in achieving the shared future goals of our beloved Association.

As we are now nearing the Christmas season, may I wish all our Christian members and friends a blessed Christmas and may you experience the true spirit of the season. To our other members, may your holidays be merry and bright and wishing you peace, love, and joy this holiday season.

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Front Cover

The logo designed for the 25th Anniversary of the Signals Association.



Signals Association's 25th Birthday Reunion Luncheon

Summary by Geoff Laskey. Photos by Regine Lord.

On Saturday 29 November the Signals Association had its 25th Birthday Reunion Luncheon at the SA Legions Rosedale facility. 43 Members friends and families attended the occasion.

The chairperson welcomed all and stated that the Association cherish and appreciate their presence and support. He directed a special word of welcome to Brig Gen Ian Fordred and his wife Lynn whose relationship with the Signals family goes back many years that and the Association and is honoured to have them present.

He further stated that the Signals Association was established on 2 December 2000. The association kicked off with 16 members and gradually grew annually from members who joined. Presently, the Association has 85 Members throughout the Country and abroad. Through its 25 years of existence, it grew steadily and made itself visible to the outside world, attracting interest from many former signallers or communicators, irrespective of whether they originate from the Army, Air force, Naval or Medical Services communications divisions.

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"We Salute them all."

Today we are celebrating our past, our present, and looking forward to an exciting future ahead!"

He called on all present to relax and enjoy this 25th Celebration with the Signals family and expressed the desire that it be a blessed and memorable occasion for all.

After the lunch and speeches by The President Robbie Roberts and the guest speaker Brig Genl (Ret) Ian Fordred the proceedings continued with the Chairpersons awards ceremony.

The Management Committee de-



GUEST SPEAKER: Brigadier General (Ret) Ian Fordred was the guest speaker at the 25th Birthday Reunion Luncheon of the SA Signals Association.

cided the Chairperson should award members of the Association with a special token of appreciation for their longstanding membership and support and those who have selfishly served the Association in many ways.

He proceeded by firstly awarding the Founding members present and stated that those not present will also receive their awards at an appropriate occasion.

Founder members are members who were present at the founding meeting of the Association on 2 December 2000 and is still members of the Association today. The commitment and vision of founding members are the bedrock of any association's success their hard work and dedica-

tion in the early days of the Association do not go unnoticed. He thanked them for building the foundation for our success."

The following founder members present received their awards;

Robbie Roberts
Michael Forcioli
Johan Johnson
Piet Jordaan

Award for Exceptional Service

The following members of the Association received awards to express the Association's gratitude and by acknowledging their specific service and contributions and long-term commitment to the Signals Association .

Their commitment to addressing the needs of the Association with efficiency, professionalism, and a positive attitude is truly remarkable". Their efforts have made a significant difference and have not gone unnoticed."

William Roberts

He was the initiator and driver of the founding of the Association, served as Chairperson for 22 years and is still involved in supporting and guiding the Association. The Association want to thank him for his time , perseverance, and sacrifice over the years. He certainly deserves to be acknowledged for his selfless service.

Thank you for the initiative you took in establishing the Association and for your continued dedication. Your efforts in the early stages and the following years were crucial and are appreciated by all the members.

Over the years, your work on our constitution, administrative record keeping and many other aspects has been invaluable. Your leadership, diligence and positive attitude have set an incredible example for us all.

The success our Association has experienced would not have been possible without your contribution.

Johan Johnson

Johan also a founder member of the Association participated in establishing and guiding the Associations financial matters over the past 25 years. He served as accounting officer and

annually reviewed the association's financial statements to ensure they are consistent with its accounting records. A requirement for any registered NPO. Thank you for going above and beyond in your role.

Your skills and work ethic are unmatched and evident in our financial records. This role carries immense responsibility, and you have taken on the role with wisdom and integrity.

He certainly deserves to be acknowledged for his selfless service over and above managing his own accounting company as well. Your unwavering commitment and expertise in the financial field have had a lasting impact on our Association's financial matters.

Your continued loyalty and dedication do not go unnoticed and are greatly appreciated."

Matt Tennyson

Matt was also involved directly and indirectly with the Association since its inception. He served as editor of our Association's quarterly newsletter the Jimmy's Own, a publication we are proud of and is distributed widely Nationally and Inter-Nationally.

He also played a leading role in developing and managing the Association's Website. All the foregoing at no cost to the Association, He certainly deserves to be acknowledged for his selfless service.

The foregoing services we also received when Matt went through a chal-

RIGHT: David Holmes receives an award on behalf of the SA Legion Rosedale from Chairman Geoff Laskey.

lenging time with significant medical challenges but "Jimmy's Own" somehow appeared without failure.

Persons like you are the foundation of any association, and we could not imagine our journey without you.

Thank you for your continuous commitment to excellence.

SA Legion Rosedale

The management and staff of the SA Legion's Rosedale Facility support and serve the Association continuously. Whether with providing us boardroom facilities with our meetings and work sessions, Annual general meetings, or functions as we are having today. Without their support we will not be able to function effectively.

All the forgoing is done over and above their function of daily caring for the residents of Rosedale and welfare services for ex-service personnel and their families throughout the Cape Peninsula. We would like to thank them for their continued support and services, and they certainly deserve to be acknowledged for services to the Association.

Your commitment to our cause has been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals.

The event was concluded with the extinguishing of the flame by the Chairperson.



CHEERS: President of the SA Signal Association, Robbie Roberts, raises a glass to propose a toast to the Association on its 25th Anniversary.

Message by our President

Robbie Roberts

As President of our association I concur with our chairman when he says that it is an honour to be able to share a few words with our members on the 25th anniversary (Silver Jubilee) of the Signals Association.

I regard myself as fortunate to still be around as one of the remaining 9 Founder Members and in this regard I refer our readers to the article about our association's Founder Members elsewhere in this publication.

I served as our association's chairman from 2005 until 2012 and after a one year break, again from 2013 until I finally handed over to our current chairman, Geoff Laskey, in 2022.

As our current chairman quite rightly remarks in his message that growth, resilience, and sustainability requires commitment, hard work and loyalty by its management teams, specifically inasmuch as military veteran organisations is concerned, I fully concur with his sentiment.

I this regard, I and my predecessors, are indeed fortunate to have had the support of hard working management teams, such as the current Manco team under the able leadership of Geoff Laskey, is so ably delivering to our members and beyond.

Thank you to all members of management who, over the years, have sacrificed their time and energy to support



and develop the Association to the level it is today.

I also wish to thank our members, volunteers, and partners for their time, effort, and support of association events and functions. Without member participation it will be worthless for management to remain committed to their dedication.

As President, I fully support our chairman in encouraging members to remain committed and engage in activities to achieve shared future goals.

As we are now nearing the end of another year, I also wish all our Christian members and friends a blessed Christmas and festive season. May you experience the true spirit of the occasion, accompanied with good health.

To our other members, may your activities be merry and festive and may you experience peace, joy and good health this holiday season.

Certa Cito blessings!

Points to ponder

At one Army base, the annual trip to the rifle range had been cancelled for the second year in a row, but the semi-annual physical fitness test was still on as planned.

One soldier mused: "Does it bother anyone else that the Army doesn't seem to care how well we can shoot, but they are extremely interested in how fast we can run?"

A famous Admiral and an equally famous General were fishing together when a sudden storm hit. When it died down both renowned warriors were struggling helplessly in the water.

The Admiral floundered his way back to the boat and pulled himself painfully in. Then he fished out the General, using an oar. Catching his breath, he puffed: "Please don't say a word about this to anyone. If the Navy found out I can't swim I'd be disgraced."

"Don't worry," the general said. "Your secret is safe. I'd hate to have my men find out I can't walk on water."

After a soldier returned from his second camp at Lohathla, his colleges remarked how good his complexion looked.

"What do you use on your face to keep it so smooth?" they asked.

"Nothing," he said. "I've been sandblasted."

I learnt that during my father's military career he wasn't promoted to a Field Marshall and knighted for his part in the stock market. He was in fact court martialled and indicted for his part in the black market. I also learnt that his DCM didn't stand for Distinguished Conduct Medal, but rather for 'Don't Come Monday.'

WHY WHAT AND WHEN ?

- Why did the teddy bear decline birthday cake? - Because it was already stuffed.
- It was an emotional birthday - even the cake was in tiers.
- What does cake and baseball have in common? - They both need a batter.
- What is the best way to remember your partner's birthday? - Forget it once.
- Why did the birthday candle go to school? - It was hoping to get a little brighter.
- How do different military branches use stars? - The Army sleeps under the stars. The Navy navigates by the stars. The Air Force chooses hotels by the stars.
- When is the only time a plane has too much fuel? - When it's on fire.

Calling back the past

Inspired by past radio programmes such as 'Forces Favourites', Springbok Rendezvous' and 'Stand at ease, Matt Tennyson and Jeff Marcus are bringing back memories to many veterans.

Many readers will remember the radio shows that were aimed at troops serving in the old South African Defence Force.

Patt Kerr did 'Forces Favourites' on the SABC English Service. Esmé Euvrard presented 'Springbok Rendezvous' on Springbok Radio, and Marie van Zyl 'Stand at ease/Op die plek rus' on Radio Five.

All of these shows had one thing in common - they were aimed at people serving in the SADF. Members serving in uniform could send a letter through to one of these shows with a dedication (usually to their sweetheart) and a request for a song to be played.

Likewise, parents or girlfriends could send a letter sending a dedication through to their boyfriend/husband/son/brother.

They would often go something like, "To my boyfriend Rifleman Joe Bloggs serving somewhere on the border. I love you and hope you come back soon."

Unfortunately these shows, like the SADF, are now but a distant memory. Yet many still remember them with fondness. It was this that got Matt Tennyson to thinking.

Matt has been involved with radio, on and off, for many years and has

worked for a number of radio stations. Earlier this year he began hosting the mid-morning show "Living Our Best Years" on Radio Today.

Radio Today is South Africa's oldest community radio station and was started by the late Peter Lotis, a name which many readers will remember. Like many modern radio stations, it was only accessible via the Internet.

Matt approached station owner and manager Mike De Bruyn and asked about the possibility of doing a show aimed at military veterans - something along the lines of the old shows on the English Service, Springbok Radio and Radio Five.

Mike gave the go-ahead and the show was scheduled for Sundays between 12.00 and 14.00. It would not be on Radio Today, but rather on their other station, Rocking Today.

Matt approached Jeff Marcus, explained the concept of the show, and asked if Jeff would like to co-host the show with him.

Matt and Jeff decided that the show would feature music from 1968 to 1992 - the years during which National Service existed in South Africa. People would not only be able to listen to the show, they would also be able to send in dedications and requests. The



ON AIR: Jeff Marcus (left) and Matt Tennyson (right), interview guests during their live show. They were doing their show from the SA Legion Rosedale during the SA Signals Association 25th Birthday Reunion Luncheon.

show would be called "Fall in/Tree Aan".

The listenership during the first two Sunday shows was so high that Mike De Bruyn said that he wanted to move the show from a Sunday to a Saturday. And it would also now be broadcast on Radio Today, as opposed to on Rocking Today.

The main benefit of being on Radio Today is that not only is the show available via the Internet, it can also be accessed via DsTV.

Matt and Jeff have already done two outside-broadcasts. The first was on Poppy Day. Matt was in Cape Town while Jeff was in Franschhoek. The second was from the 25th Birthday Reunion Luncheon.

"The show is doing really well," says Jeff. "Not only have we had requests from all over South Africa, we've also had requests from England, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, St Helena, the United States, and Saudi Arabia."

You can listen to Fall In/Tree Aan every Saturday from 12.00 to 14.00 by visiting www.rt1585.com or via DsTV Channel 869.

There is also a possibility of the show being presented on a Wednesday night from 19.00 to 22.00.

You can also send dedications and request a song by sending a WhatsApp to 076 292 3871.

The Founders of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

Article by Robbie Roberts (President) and Geoff Laskey, (Chairperson) of the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION

The following 16 members were the Founders of our associated:



DE VILLIERS
Johannes Hendrik
(Johan)



DE VILLIERS
Martinhus Christian
(Chris)



DU PLOOY
Abraham Izak
(Braam)



JORDAAN
Petrus Johannes
(Piet)



KRUGER
Johan Daniel
(J.D.)



LONGBOTTOM
Peter



ROBERTS
William Alexander
(Robbie)



ROSSOUW
Pieter Jacobus



SAMUELS
Edon
(Sammy)



FORCIOLI
Michael George



FOURIE
Pierre Johan



JOHNSON
Johannes Jacobus
(Johan)



SOLOMON
Jerome Leslie



STANDER
Barend Nicolaas
Daniel
(Nico)



TIMONEY
James



VAN STAADEN
Hendrik Petrus
(H.P.)

Of these 16 members, the undermentioned 7 have sadly passed on:

De Villiers, Chris (3 Sig Sqn);
Fourie, Pierre (71 Sig Unit);
Krüger, JD (71 Sig Unit);
Rossouw, Pieter (3rd Bde Sig Coy);
Samuels, Sammy (71 Sig Unit);
Stander, Nico (71 Sig Unit);
Timoney, James (3rd Bde Sig Coy)

That leaves the following 9 members still serving:

De Villiers, Johan (3 Sig Sqn);
De Plooy, Braam (71 Sig Unit);
Forcioli, Michael (71 Sig Unit);
Johnson, Johan (71 Sig Unit);
Jordaan, Piet (71 Sig Unit);
Longbottom, Peter (71 Sig Unit);
Roberts, Robbie (3 Sig Sqn / 71 Sig Unit);
Solomon, Jerome (71 Sig Unit);
Van Staden HP Snr (71 Sig Unit)

The following messages were received from the respective Founder Members:

Du Plooy, Braam

It is a profound honour to be a founding member of the Signals Association, especially on this momentous 25th anniversary.

I distinctly recall the early days and the critical need for a professional body to unite our industry, a vision that was singularly brought to life by Robbie Roberts, whose extraordinary courage, vision, and sheer persistence made it all possible.

Looking back, I feel immense pride in how the association has flourished, growing our membership significantly and consistently delivering valuable activities, both past and present.

Though I now live in the USA, I have always witnessed the vibrant life of our South African association from afar. Seeing the continuous engagement and the impact of the Signals Association still fills me with a deep and cherished sense of belonging.

May the next 25 years be filled with even greater innovation, growth, and strengthened connections for everyone involved!

Forcioli, Michael

The history with the signals starts with my uncle Joffe Alcide Forcioli with signals who passed away in 1944 while on active service when leading a convoy.

I did my basics in 1 Signal Training Regiment in 1968.

My Grandfather Charles Paul Francois born in Paris, served in Algeria with the French Militaries.

His father served in Marocco, Martinique, La Reunion and in New Caledonia, Knight of the L of H, Knighted in the field by the prince of Joinville (the French King son).

I wish to register my thanks to have serve my country and all those have served before us.

Johnson, Johan

Time flies faster than a “Vlamgat” (*). In twenty-five years, many changes occurred. But one aspect of the lifetime of a volunteer military association, in this case, the Signals Association, is the building of bridges between generations.

We have seen and experienced beautiful memories of days of joy and celebration, of friendships and camaraderie. At the same time, we also experience days of mourning for those who were called to Higher Service. In my years of service and member of the Signals Association, I had the privilege to officiate during joyful days as well as in times of mourning.

I have seen the Association growing in membership and witnessed the expansion of support to fellow Signal veterans, in caring for one another as well as financial support. Not only to members, but also the broader veteran environment as the only Signal Association registered with the CMVO.

It is my wish and prayer that the Signals Association shall continue to grow and be of mutual support to fellow members as well as those who send out “mayday” distress calls or blinking S O S light blips in the darkest night.

* “Vlamgat” is the nickname of a Mirage Fighter jet, for our younger generation members who may not have seen or heard them in response to radio communication calls for air support.

Longbottom, Peter

I was serving at 71 Signals when Lt Col Roberts proposed we start a Signals Association.

We all agreed and gave our input.

I was proud and honoured to be a member.

Roberts, Robbie

I, as officer commanding of 71 Signal Unit was asked to chair the founding meeting on 2 December

2000 up to the point on the agenda for the election of office bearers.

At opening the meeting, I said “considering that close on 350 invitations had been posted to ex-signallers of 71 Signal Unit, the 3rd Brigade Signal Squadron, the SSS Radar Group, former regular force signallers, etc., it was a great pity and a disappointment that so few people had turned up for the meeting”. I thanked those present for having responded to the invitation.

Those 16 members present decided to continue with the meeting and, clause-for-clause, went through the draft Constitution and Domestic Rules, debated each one, and finally approved of the founding documents, where after the following office bearers were unanimously elected to the respective positions:

Chairperson : Mr Johan J de Villiers

Vice Chairperson : Mr James Timoney

Secretary : Lt Col W.A. (Robbie) Roberts

Treasurer : Position Vacant for the time being (at the time)

Committee Member 1 : Mr M. Chris de Villiers

Committee Member 2 : Mr Michael Forcioli

Committee Member 3 : Position Vacant for the time being (at the time)

Despite us 16 members being enthusiastically excited at the prospect of our newly created body, little did we realise that 9 of us will still be around when our organisation celebrated its 25th anniversary.

I agree that it is indeed a profound honour to be a founding member of our beloved association, especially on its Silver jubilee.

We have had our ups and downs, but never have we fallen foul of the provisions of our own constitution, like what happened with the original and subsequent S.A.C.S. associations.

We have always operated strictly in terms of the provisions of our constitution and have managed to win the respect of our umbrella organisation, the CMVO (Council for Military Veteran Organisations), and other fellow veteran bodies operating within the military veteran environment in South Africa.

As the person at whose initiative the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION was established, I want to pay tribute to each and every one of my 15 fellow comrades in arms for believing in the foresight of myself and the leader group of 71 Signal Unit at the time and for joining hands in establishing our organisation.

A huge thank you to all of you for not only supporting me as OC at the time, but also for your continued dedicated service to all subsequent chairmen and enlarged membership which, indirectly, led to the enhancement of all signaller veterans in our country.

May the SIGNALS ASSOCIATION go from strength to strength towards its half a century Gold jubilee!

Solomon, Jerome

In response to your request in the email, yes it's an honour being one of the founder members of the Signal Association.

In my opinion there are members that have been more dedicated and deserving to say something on behalf of the Association. I actually feel guilty not having been an active participating member over the years even if it was a lack due to work commitments. I'm also honoured to even be considered to say something.

Colonel Robbie for example has done an exceptional job with the vision and dedication he had starting with the idea of an association for ALL communicators through all arms of service in the SANDF, and seeing it through with the support of 16 members at the time.

On Saturday the 2nd December 2000 in the unit tea room/conference room the MANCO was elected. After 25 years all praise should go to Colonel Robbie, the Manco and all members past and present who served and those who still serve nationally with dedication, commitment and sacrifice. What a great bunch of Guys and Gals.

To the members that I have had the pleasure to meet over the years whether at unit formals, funerals of serving members or in the bar at the unit informal gatherings.....I salute you for your dedication and commitment for continuing to serve the Signals Association.

The above inputs were received on request to all the Founder members not all chose to submit memoirs of their experiences of being fellow Founder Members of the Association.

Thank you to all those Founder Members who have taken the time and effort to respond with their memories of our Silver Jubilee.

Parades and Functions

Kelvin Grove Military Dinner

The annual Military Kelvin Grove dinner took place on 30 October 2025 in attendance from the Signals Association was the President Robbie Roberts, Chairperson Geoff Laskey, Deputy Chairperson Ian Robertson, Manco Members Jeff Marcus, Piet Jordaan and member Johan Johnson.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Jeff Marcus, Geoff Laskey, Ian Robertson, Johan Johnson, Robbie Roberts and Piet Jordaan. union Luncheon.



City of Cape Town Remembrance Day 9 November 2025:

The 2025 Remembrance Day parade in Cape Town took place on Sunday, November 9, 2025, at the Cenotaph in Adderley Street. The annual service honoured those who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War I and World War II.

The Signals Association was represented by Manco Member Piet Jordaan, Jeff Marcus who laid a wreath on behalf of the Association and Alderman Clive Justus also an Association member.

From left to right: Piet Jordaan, Jeff Marcus and Alderman Clive Justus.

El Alamein memorial service and parade 26th of October 2025

Manco member Piet Jordaan attended the memorial service and parade on 26th of October 2025 and laid a wreath on behalf of the Association. The event commemorates the Battle of El Alamein and is held in remembrance of those who served.



Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Remembrance Day 7 November 2025

The Signals Association attended the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital Remembrance Day event on 7 November 2025. In attendance and representing the Association was Ian Robertson Deputy Chairperson, Maurice Espin Secretary General who laid a wreath and Jeff Marcus Manco Member



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Jeff Marcus, Maurice Espin and Ian Robertson

Ten Pin Bowling 17 November 2025

On Monday 17 November 9 members of the Association had a social 10 Pin bowling evening, a good time was had by all.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: front Tim Reilly, Jeff Marcus, Maurice Espin, Andre Aukamp, Back Matt Thennyson, Karin Tennyson, Adi Fourie, Rodney Pritchard and Piet Jordaan.

Remembrance Day 7 November 2025, Port Elizabeth

The St John's College community gathered in the Memorial Chapel this week for the annual Remembrance Day Mass, welcoming back Old Johannian families alongside students and staff for this sacred occasion.

Ivor Markman a friend of the Association laid a wreath at the event.



Did you know?

To celebrate the festive season, here is some trivia about Christmas.

■ An artificial spider and web are often included in the decorations on most Ukrainian Christmas trees. A spider web found on Christmas morning is believed to bring good luck?

■ Charles Dickens' initial choice for Scrooge's statement "Bah Humbug" was "Bah Christmas."?

■ After *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens wrote several other Christmas stories, one each year, but none was as successful as the original?

■ Before settling on the name of Tiny Tim for his character in *A Christmas Carol*, three other alternative names were considered by Charles Dickens? They were Little Larry, Puny Pete, and Small Sam.

■ Christmas trees are edible. Many parts of pines, spruces, and firs can be eaten? The needles are a good source of vitamin C. Pine nuts, or pine cones, are also a good source of nutrition.

■ In 1647, the English parliament passed a law that made Christmas illegal. Festivities were banned by Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell, who considered feasting and revelry, on what was supposed to be a holy day, to be immoral. The ban was lifted only when the Puritans lost power in 1660.

■ In 1937, the first postage stamp to commemorate Christmas was issued in Austria.?

■ In France, Christmas is called Noel. This is derived from the French phrase "*les bonnes nouvelles*," which means literally "the good news" and refers to the gospel.

■ In Medieval England, Nicholas was just another saint - he had not yet been referred to as Santa Claus and he had nothing to do with Christmas.

■ In Syria, Christmas gifts are distributed by one of the Wise Men's camels. The gift-giving camel is said to have been the smallest one in the Wise Men's caravan.

■ In the British armed forces it is traditional that officers wait on the men and serve them their Christmas dinner. This dates back to a custom from the Middle Ages. This also became a tradition in the old South African Defence Force (SADF), especially for troops serving on the border.

■ It is estimated that 400,000 people become sick each year from eating tainted Christmas leftovers.

■ On Christmas Day, 1989, Eastern Europe was permitted to celebrate Christmas freely and openly for the first time in decades. Church masses were broadcast live for the first time in history.

■ Santa's Reindeers are named Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

■ The first Christmas card was created in

England on December 9, 1842.

■ The four ghosts in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* were the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, Christmas Yet to Come, and the ghost of Jacob Marley.

■ The popular Christmas song *Jingle Bells* was composed in 1857 by James Pierpont, and was originally called *One-Horse Open Sleigh*.

■ There are twelve courses in the Ukrainian Christmas Eve supper. According to the Christian tradition, each course is dedicated to one of Christ's apostles.

■ The custom of singing Christmas carols is very old - the earliest English collection was published in 1521.

■ The Christmas turkey first appeared on English tables in the 16th century, but didn't immediately replace the traditional fare of goose, beef or boar's head in the rich households.

■ Mistletoe, a traditional Christmas symbol, was once revered by the early Britons. It was so sacred that it had to be cut with a golden sickle.

■ It is a British Christmas tradition that a wish made while mixing the Christmas pudding will come true only if the ingredients are stirred in a clockwise direction.

■ Hallmark introduced its first Christmas cards in 1915, five years after the founding of the company.

■ More diamonds are purchased at Christmas time (31%) than during any other holiday or occasion during the year.

■ American president, Theodore

Roosevelt, a staunch conservationist, banned Christmas trees in his home, even when he lived in the White House. His children, however, smuggled them into their bedrooms.

■ Christmas wasn't always on December 25. Although Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, it doesn't actually mention December 25 anywhere in the bible. In fact, some historians think Jesus was born in the spring, not the winter at all! Christmas on December 25th wasn't celebrated until about 336 AD.

■ Gifts have both Christian and Pagan origins. For Christians, gift giving at Christmas mimics the presents the Wise Men gave to Jesus and the charitable giving of the ancient St. Nicholas (the forerunner to Santa!). However, winter gift giving also has its roots in Saturnalia, a pagan holiday where they gave offerings to the gods.

■ Coca-Cola played a part in Santa's image. Santa wasn't always the jolly man in red. Older depictions of Santa from the early 1900s depicted him more sternly, and there wasn't a standardized "look" for his appearance. The classic image of a happy and plump Santa that we all know today came in part from Coca-Cola ads, drawn in 1931 by illustrator Haddon Sundblom.

To all our Christian readers, a Happy Christmas, and to all of you - a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year.

Happy Birthday!

The Signals Association's President, Chairperson and Manco members wish all the members below on their birthdays in the next quarter.

We wish you a very special birthday and a wonderful year ahead! We hope your birthday is full of sunshine, rainbows, love, and laughter!

The Association sends you many good wishes on your special day.

December 2025

Desmond de Beer	1st
Hendrik van Staden(Snr)	4th
Louw Cornelissen	5th
Dirk Hagendoorn	5th
Johan Johnson	11th
Ian Robertson	20th

January 2025

Antonio De Pentieiros	3rd
Trevor Moller	17th
Rodney Pritchard	24th
Geoffrey Laskey	24th
Margaret du Toit	29th

February 2025

Ray Svensson	2nd
Lindsay Steyn	3rd
Ian Fordred	12th
William Roberts	16th

