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South African Air Force sergeants Sibusiso Mkhize, Junead Jacobs and Itumeleng Motloung.



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SA commemorates WARSAW FLIGHTS

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The 82nd anniversary of the Warsaw Flights was commemorated at the Katyn Memorial in James and Ethel Gray Park on September 5, honouring the courage of those involved in the 1944 missions.

The national anthems of South Africa and Poland were played in remembrance, while the South African Air Force deployed a guard of honour before opening remarks were delivered by Martin Urry, chairperson of the Warsaw Flights committee.

Pastor Robin Petersen led a religious service while reflecting on the air drop missions. "I've stood at this memorial for 20 years and told the story of the brave men who were part of the Warsaw Flights. This year though, I find myself dwelling less on the mission and more on those who carried it on both sides, because, when I look again at the record, I am struck every time about how young they all were."

Petersen added that his personal connection to the commemoration was through his late father-in-law, Bryan Jones, who conducted the services independently for many years.

Piotr Kruze, deputy head of mission of

the Republic of Poland to South Africa, said being at the memorial held great significance for the Polish people. "The fact that the Warsaw Flights anniversary takes place annually here in South Africa reaffirms the strong friendship between the Polish and South African nations established long ago. This event is organised to pay tribute to the brave members of the South African Air Force who provided aid to fighting Warsaw." Kruze added that in August 1944, the home army, the largest Polish resistance movement, began the fight against German troops to liberate the Polish capital in a fierce declaration that Poland and its people would be free.

Commander Ulf Stefan Balzer, the German Defence Attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany, lays a wreath.

Veteran assistance dog waits its turn to pay tribute.

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