

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding Absence without Leave (AWOL) among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base, the trends, effects and possible mitigating factors to minimise AWOL frequencies and to come up with recommendations.

This study was a case study using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The techniques used in collecting data were literature, documents survey, and focus group discussions while the questionnaire was the only instrument used. The qualitative data collected from the focus group discussions and questionnaires were gathered, sorted and categorised, while the quantitative data was analysed using excel to assess the AWOL frequency and discrepancies rate among male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base.

Various sources of literature were reviewed and the study was able to link the collected information from the empirical part obtained by means of documents survey, focus group discussions and the questionnaires. The sources of literature review consisted of books, journals, internet resources, relevant Acts and reports.

This study established five common types of AWOL which are: frequent AWOL, AWOL on selected days, half day AWOL, late arrival at work and prolonged AWOL. It also established various causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies, with the main ones being: difference in population size, NDF as an employment agency, gender discriminations/preferential treatment, alcohol and drug abuse, conceptions about

masculinity, poor leadership, lack of motivation, ignorance of the rules, absence of married quarters and poor financial management.

The study found the prevalence of AWOL to be higher in male soldiers than in female soldiers, with males making up 99% of the AWOL offenders, while females only contributed 0.1% of 391 AWOL cases reported. The study established that the behaviours of male soldiers are different from that of female soldiers. The study established that females showed higher job commitment and have more financial discipline, while male soldiers do not have the same level of commitment. Male soldiers have higher expectations for promotion, which when not met are turned into AWOL. This is not the case with female soldiers.

AWOL frequencies and discrepancies can cause negative effects such as: organizational ineffectiveness, termination of service, loss of income and shortages of manpower which can affect the unit strength in terms of mission readiness or operational preparedness. It also brings about a loss of skilled personnel that are costly to replace. The cost of fuel, daily and subsistence allowances used by the Military Police when searching for AWOLers cannot be excluded in the loss. If this phenomenon is allowed to continue unchallenged, it would have detrimental effects to the force's professional image, efficiency and fighting capabilities, because males who are the majority in the force are also the most affected by AWOL.

This study's participants suggested mitigating factors to minimise gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies which are of corrective nature and includes: equal treatment irrespective of gender, an adjustment in salary, behavioural change in male soldiers, provision of married quarters, and counselling. The researcher suggested that the NDF

should look into corrective approaches rather than concentrating on punitive ones, such as field punishment, fines, demotions and discharged from work. AWOL remains one of the leading offences in the force despite the existence of punitive approaches. Therefore, supervisors at different levels in the NDF and soldiers should put more efforts to tackle AWOL. AWOLers should also make a decision to change, in other words, restructuring of consciousness can only be realised through individual efforts.

The following recommendations were suggested: training of commanders at different levels on supervisory skills, improvement on effective communication to allow soldiers to discuss work related and personal problems with their commanders freely, equal treatment irrespective of gender, equal opportunities for promotion, improve working conditions, adjustment of salaries, equality in recruiting, training and posting and behavioural change. The study recommended areas for further research.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

MY HEAVENLY FATHER

My late father Jeremia Festus and my late mother Idda Magano for the lesson they taught me not to give up even in difficult moments.

My brothers Karel and Andrew my sisters Annasy and Hilma for their moral support.

And to:

My lovely husband Simeon Lucky Shiimi who took over my duties in my absence from home. Our children: Ndalikokule, Matheus, Ailly, Tangeni, Ndinelago, Nelago and Povanh; for being God's wonderful and precious gifts.

Glossary

Definitions of words that feature prominently in this study

Absenteeism: As described by Levy and Associates (2004:15) absenteeism is the incidence of frequent absence from work over and above normal leave provisions.

Arms of service: This refers to the three components of the Namibian Defence Force, namely: the Army, the Air Force and the Navy as spelt out in the Defence Act No.1 of 2002.

AWOL: As defined by Martocchio & Harrison, (1993: 263) “AWOL is an individual’s lack of physical presence at a given location and time when there is a social expectation for him or her to be there”.

AWOLer (s): In this study, AWOLer (s) refers to an individual (s) who was/were absent from the place of work without permission.

Commissioned Officers: In this study, commissioned officers refer to officers in the Namibian Defence Force officially commissioned under the Act of Commission by the commander-in-chief and hold officers ranks from Lieutenants up to Lieutenant- General.

Detached Duty: This refers to a special permission granted to a member of the NDF upon request to go and temporarily work at another duty station for duration of not more than six months.

Ex-combatants: Ex-combatants refer to members of the Namibian Defence Force who were members of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and members of the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF).

Formation: A formation includes any military command, corps, division, brigade or group bigger than a battalion under one command.

New Recruits: These refer to young soldiers who joined the NDF from 1996, who were not soldiers before independence.

Non-AWOLer (s): In this study non-AWOLers refer to individuals who have never absent from their place of work without permission.

Non-Commissioned Officer: In this study a non-commissioned-officer refers to a member of the NDF of a rank below a commissioned rank and include a warrant officer, but does not include a private.

Pass: This refers to a special permit given by the commander to a soldier to go out of the base for a limited time of not more than three hours.

Private: A private refers to a member of the NDF who is neither commissioned nor non-commissioned.

Regulations: These mean regulations made under the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002.

Rule: Rules mean rules made under the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002.

Unit: A unit is any regiment, battalion, military college, school or training institution, hospital, or Headquarters, which is established and designated as a unit.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC.....	Army Commander
AHQ.....	Army Head Quarters
AWOL.....	Absence without Leave
Bn.....	Battalion
CDF.....	Chief of the Defence Force
DHQ.....	Defence Headquarters
L/CPL.....	Lance Corporal
MDC.....	Military Disciplinary Code
MOD.....	Ministry of Defence
NCO.....	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDF.....	Namibian Defence Force
PLAN.....	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
Pte.....	Private
Recce.....	Reconnaissance
Regt.....	Regiment
Sgt.....	Sergeant.
SSgt.....	Staff Sergeant
SWATF.....	South West Africa Territorial Force
UN.....	United Nations

DECLARATION

I, Lerry Tegelela Kwedhi, student number 200970259, hereby declare that this thesis “Gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding absence without leave at Grootfontein Military Base” is my original work. I would also like to point out that all the sources which I have used have been clearly indicated by way of references. This work has not been submitted for any other degree (s) in Namibia or else-where.

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Lerry Tegelela kwedhi

Date

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This study aims at investigating and explaining the causes of gender-based absence without leave (AWOL) frequencies and discrepancies in the Namibian Defence Force, with special reference to the Grootfontein Military Base. This chapter gives an overview of the background information, the research problem, the research question, the aims and objectives, the significance and limitations of the study, the thesis outline.

Absence without leave (AWOL), or unlawful absence from the workplace is a problem confronting both public and private institutions, and the Namibian Defence Force is no exception, where AWOL or unlawful absence is the most prevalent of military offences. It is also found to be more prevalent among male soldiers, as compared to their female counterparts (NDF Monthly Reports 2011 and Shikufa, 2010: 63).

Many researchers have chronicled AWOL / unlawful absence as a problem with costly and pervasive implications for any organization (e.g. Van der Merwe and Miller (1988:3), Huczynski and Fitzpatrick (1989:1-9) and Mona Christa & Robert (1996:1-3). AWOL can be disruptive to mission accomplishments and therefore to the overall productivity of the organization. In a military organization like the NDF, this could mean the difference between mission accomplishment and mission failure, with implications for the ability of the organisation to achieve its operational role. Not only this, it may also negatively affect employees especially those who do not go on AWOL by placing an additional work load on their shoulders.

As stipulated in the Namibian Defence Policy (2011:2), the primary task of the Namibian Defence Force is 'to defend the territorial integrity of the Republic of Namibia which includes its people, their properties and national interests'. This is a demanding task which requires vigorous performance by all NDF members. Therefore, unlawful absence/ AWOL undermine the efforts toward a motivated force. If allowed unchallenged, AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers may undermine the mission's readiness especially at this moment when the world is faced with different types of unpredictable human security challenges such as floods, wild fire and political instabilities, just to mention a few because males make up the majority in the NDF and are experts in most of the fields. In other words, AWOL is a danger to the successful achievements of the NDF's mission that of defending the territorial integrity, provision of assistance to Civil Authority such as; evacuation of flood victims to highlands, fighting bush fire, locust, emergency relief supply of food. AWOL may also hamper the NDF's meaningful contributions to regional, continental and the world peace.

Johns (2006:212) revealed that AWOL/ unlawful absence among the military personnel is often caused by employees avoiding a painful and dissatisfying work situation. Spector (1997:30) alludes to the same sentiments, when he states that dissatisfied workers tend to show propensity for negative behaviours which include AWOL/ unlawful absence. Therefore, AWOL frequencies and discrepancies between male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base is an indication of a pathological organization. It is against this background that there was a great need for this study which aims at investigating and explaining the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies between male and female soldiers, the AWOL trends, effects and finally come up with recommendations that can mitigate the problem of AWOL differences between male and female soldiers. Soldiers are expected to be exemplary and role model, hence they need to be

highly disciplined and always exercise full control of their behaviour for their own sake and for the good of all.

1.2 Background of the Study

The Namibian Defence Force was established under Chapter 15, Article 115 of the Namibian Constitution, with the expressed purpose to protect the territorial integrity and national interest of the Republic of Namibia, its people and their properties as well as to assist Civil Authorities and Civil power if required (Namibian Constitution, 2010 edition). The NDF was formed by former adversaries from the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). Both male and female ex-combatants went through the induction process and became proud sons and daughters of the Namibian Defence Force. Despite the fact that it was not an easy task to unite the former adversaries, but through unwritten policy of national reconciliation, the NDF management under the command ship of the then commander – in-chief of the Namibian Defence Force Dr Sam Shafishuna Nujoma the founding president and father of the Namibian nation succeeded in uniting them.

A policy to recruit young Namibians, aged between 18 to 25 years, was adopted in order to bring in new recruits that will be able to take over as the former PLAN and SWATF members get older. The first intake of new recruits took place in 1996 and recruitment has been continuing all these past years including a call by cabinet to recruit children of the liberation struggle which started in 2009, hence the NDF comprised of ex-combatants and young blood (non-ex combatants).

The NDF's effective organizational capacity to achieve its constitutional and statutory mandates is based on the contributions made by male and female soldiers to the mission efforts. The

military roles are pursued in terms of missions both strategic and operational. As reported in the NDF Operation Reports (1993 - 2011), since its inception in 1990, the Namibian Defence Force has conducted various internal and external operations such as:

- The UN Peace Keeping Operations in Cambodia in 1993.
- The UN Peace Keeping Operations in Angola from 1994 – 1996
- The Military campaign in the Democratic Republic of Congo 1998
- The suppression of the Armed Secessionist Rebellion in Caprivi Region 1999
- The UN Peace Keeping Operations in Liberia from 2004 – 2007
- Sent Military observers to Chad, Sudan, Burundi, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Though the Namibian Defence Force has successfully carried out the above mentioned missions, there has always been evidence of a lack of discipline in the force, most of which was evident in absence without leave (Shikufa 2010:4, and Lambert 2010:29). This phenomenon should not be ignored as it has implications on the mission of the Namibian Defence Force's readiness, since males who are prone to AWOL comprise the majority of soldiers in the Force.

For the NDF to undertake any mission, be it nationally, regionally or internationally, it does not only require modernized equipments, but well trained, well motivated, disciplined soldiers and effective command and control over formations and units during both peace and wartime.

The Namibian Defence Force with a total strength of approximately 17300 soldiers, it is composed of three Arms of Service: the Namibian Army, the Namibian Air Force and the Namibian Navy each with its separate, but complimentary mission (Namibian Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002, sect 2).

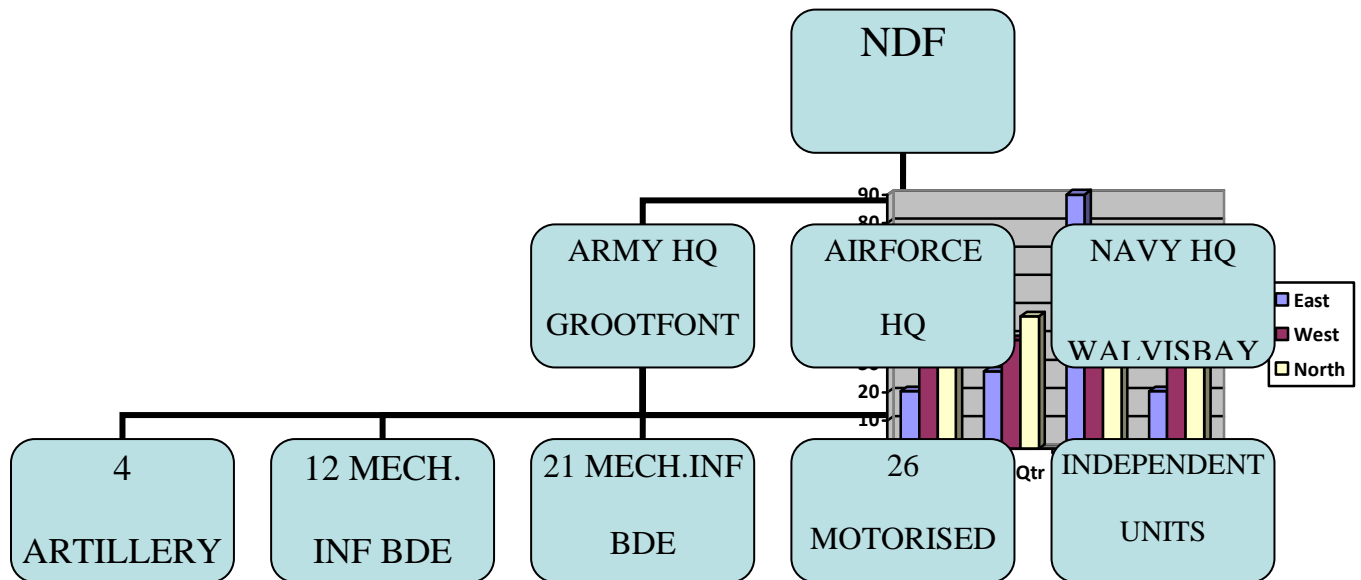


Figure 1: Organizational structure of the NDF

The Namibian Army is comprised of four Brigades; the 4th Artillery Brigade, the 12 Mechanised Infantry Brigade, the 21 Infantry Brigade, the 26 Motorised Infantry Brigade and independent formations and units, making it the most populated arm of service, accounting for (66%) of the force (Army Strength Report June 2011). Independent units include the Logistic Battalion, the Army Battle School, the Dolphin Battalion, Engineering Regiment, the Military Hospital and Reconnaissance Regiment. The Namibian Army's mission is not different from that of the larger NDF, that of defending the territorial integrity of the Republic of Namibia, its people, their properties and national interests.

As revealed in the NDF Military Court Statistics: Quarterly Reports (2009-2011), among the Services composing the NDF, the Namibian Army, the Air force and the Navy, AWOL

frequencies is more pronounced in the army as compared to other Services. The table 1.1 below indicates the AWOL incidences as per the services and Army has the highest AWOL incidences , followed by the Defence Headquarters, then the Air force and lastly the Namibian Navy. The Defence Headquarters is made up of personnel from the Army, the Air force and the Navy. The higher AWOL incidences as indicated in the table below has prompted the researcher to chose Grootfontein Military Base as the area to research, where more than six units are co-located.

Table 1.1 Summary of NDF Military Court Incidences Regarding AWOL from 2009-2011

Year	MDC Sect. Days	Defence HQ	Namibia Army	Namibia Navy	Namibia Air Force	Total
	Absent					
2009	Sect. 14(a)	24	225	8	25	282
	Total days absent	293	3240	94	327	3954
	Average days absent	12.74	14.53	10.44	13.08	16.98
2010	Sect. 14(a)	38	344	21	7	410
	Total days absent	869	5621	372	134	6996
	Average days absent	18.89	33.86	16.17	11.17	20.02
2011	Sect. 14(a)	37	266	5	31	339
	Total days absent	1034	4760	88	936	6818
	Average days absent	16.95	13.93	3.83	21.77	14.12

Source: Army Headquarters Legal Office

Keys: MDC Sect- Military Disciplinary Code Section, Sect. 14 (a) - Section 14 (a) of the Military Disciplinary Code which is Absent without leave, Defence HQ-Defence Headquarters.

The units to be studied are the Army Headquarters itself, the Dolphin Battalion, the Military Hospital, the 26 Motorized Infantry Brigade Headquarters, the Logistic Battalion and the Reconnaissance Regiment respectively.

1.3 Statement of the problem

A number of NDF male soldiers have been discharged since 1990 due to AWOL, some of whom were experts in their fields including artillerists, logisticians, and regimental police. This problem has been confirmed by studies conducted by Titus (2010:82) in his study on Discipline Cases in the NDF and Lambert (2010:29) in his study on Criminal Justice in the NDF.

The NDF Crimes and Incidences Reports as well as Court Statistics of 2009-2011, confirmed AWOL to be prevalent among male soldiers compared to their female counterparts. The most recent official absentees' report consulted was that of September to November 2011, which indicated a total of 91 cases of AWOL offences that were heard (75 from the Army, 10 from the Air Force and six from the Defence Headquarters). Out of 91 cases heard two were females, while the rest were males. Other Reports consulted do not have female AWOLers. Between April and June 2011, nine members were discharged in a period of three months, due to AWOL all of them males, despite the rules and regulations intended to curb it.

The above mentioned researchers (Titus 2010:82 and Lambert 2010:29) listed AWOL as a dominant offence and being prevalent among male soldiers in the NDF. It is however, not clear, as to what causes gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among soldiers. Is there a discriminatory factor in the management of soldiers between males and females? Are the work ethics of male and female soldiers different? A lot of questions can be asked, but the challenge is to bring out the significance and the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers, because if left unchallenged, the prevalence of AWOL frequencies among male soldiers may undermine the efforts toward the attainment of organizational goals. Therefore this prompted the researcher to take this as a topic with the aim of filling the knowledge gap by

finding the underlying factors that can explain the gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base from 2009-2011.

1.4 Research Questions

This study is aimed at answering the following main question and sub questions:

1.4.1 The main question is what are the possible causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL at the Grootfontein Military Base?

1.4.2 The Sub questions include:

- What factors explain the differences in AWOL among male and female soldiers at Grootfontein Military Base?
- What recommendations can be made in order to mitigate the problem of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL at the Grootfontein Military Base?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Research

1.5.1 Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to explore and explain the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the Grootfontein Military Base, AWOL trends, and effects and to come up with recommendations on how to mitigate the problem of gender-based AWOL frequencies. In order to accomplish the aim, a number of objectives needed to be formulated for this study, these objectives were formulated as follows:

1.5.2 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research were:

- To assess possible causes of AWOL by focusing on frequencies and discrepancies between male and female soldiers at Grootfontein Military Base.
- To examine the tendency of higher AWOL frequencies among male than female soldiers at the Grootfontein Military Base from 2009 – 2011.
- To examine the effects of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies.
- To make recommendations on how to mitigate the problem of gender-based AWOL frequencies at the Grootfontein Military Base.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Since the establishment of the Namibian Defence Force in 1990, no study focusing on the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies has been conducted. Therefore the findings of this study are important in that they contribute to the body of knowledge some ideas on the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers. It will further assist policy-makers when analyzing policies on absenteeism in the Namibian Defence Force. According to Tickner (2008:264-267) women world wide are perceived to be weak, disadvantaged and underrepresented in powerful positions in the international policy and in militaries. Therefore, the results of this study should help change the attitudes of male soldiers toward female soldiers, as some perceive females to be weak and incapable, which may not be the case. This study is important to other stakeholders in the security sectors if not the entire Civil Service, as it creates

awareness as to the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female employees.

1.7 Limitations

The study experienced unavailability of literature, specifically on AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in the military as one of the limitations, although research on absenteeism including those with a gender perspective in private companies was available. It was not possible for me to visit neighbouring countries in the region to acquaint myself with AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in their defence forces.

Due to time limits this study focuses on army units that are located in Grootfontein Military Base only. Additionally, this study was done within a limited time frame. Since this was a case study it was confined to a sample of the population for the purpose of in-depth analysis. The researcher intended to have ten participants in each focus group at each unit, but due to reluctance of male soldiers to take part, some groups ended up with seven or eight instead of ten, while the Army Headquarters and Military Hospital did not have G1 focus group discussions due to the low AWOL frequency in the units causing imbalance, hence the study ended up with more female respondents than male although they are the majority.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter which presents the introduction and background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the aims and objectives and the significance of the study. Chapter two presents a summary of the literature search in other words literature review and links this with the research

topic. It explores the concepts of expectations, work group norms, leadership issues, job satisfaction, motivation and other work related elements such as job satisfaction, motivation, organisational commitments, role conflicts and role clarity to mention a few. Chapter three deals with the research methodology. The research methodology chosen and the reasons for opting for this approach and a justification for the use of this research approach are covered in this chapter. The target population, sampling methods, ethical considerations and the overall research process are also explained. Chapter four presents the data analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter five presents conclusions and recommendations as well as recommend areas for further research.

1.9 Summary

This chapter presented an introduction to the gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding absence without official leave in the Grootfontein Military Base which is the focus area of study, as well as in the Namibian Defence Force and the world. This chapter also presented the background information of the Namibian Defence Force with the aim to enable reader to have knowledge of the historical facts of the NDF and its participation in the maintenance of world peace. It presented information on the research problem, its aims and objectives as well as the research questions. It explains why the research is important, its limitations and finally a brief outlines of all chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Absence without leave (AWOL) or unlawful absence frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in the NDF in particular Grootfontein Military Base, cannot be regarded as an isolated concept, but must be seen as a global challenge, therefore other literature: nationally, regionally, continentally and internationally, are reviewed to present the context of the research by looking at what other researchers have done relating to the topic and what need to be done in order to fill the knowledge gap.

Information on the concept of AWOL, the concept of gender, the categories/types of absence, theories of absence and causes of absenteeism such as job satisfaction, leadership, role conflict, role clarity, AWOL in military, absenteeism and gender, effects of AWOL, control measures and NDF AWOL policies were all under review. The above-mentioned literature is relevant to this paper, as they assist the researcher, as well as readers, to understand the conceptual and theoretical context of the topic, identify the gaps and finally try to find ways on how to fill them. The literature review in this chapter provides significant information to support this study.

2.2 Conceptual Approach to AWOL/ Absenteeism

To put AWOL in perspective, the researcher borrowed definitions from different sources such as from the Namibian Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002), from Martocchio & Harrison 1993, Van der Merwe & Millers (1988) and Huczynski & Fitzpatrick (1989), with the aim to assist the researcher and readers in understanding the concept of absenteeism and AWOL as opposed to

absence and be able to distinguish when a person can be regarded as being on absence or on AWOL, because a person may be absent from work, but is not on AWOL if permission to be absent is granted. Desertion was also reviewed so that readers are able to draw a line between AWOL and desertion.

2.2.1 Absence Without Leave (AWOL)

The Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002, section 14 (a), (b) and (c) of the Military Disciplinary Code (MDC) defines absence without leave (AWOL) as:

any person who absents himself or herself without leave; or any person who fails to appear at a place of parade or duty or at any other place designated by such person's commanding officer, or leaves any such place without good or sufficient cause; or being required to attend any school or other educational institution, whether civilian or otherwise, fails to attend thereat or absents himself without leave.

Martocchio & Harrison (1998:263), defines absence without leave as “an individual's lack of physical presence at a given location and time when there is a social expectation for him or her to be there”. According to Van der Merwe & Miller (1988:3), absenteeism is “unplanned, disruptive incident, but more specifically, it can be seen as non- attendance when an employee is scheduled to work”. Levy and Associates (2004:15), describe absenteeism as the incidence of frequent absence from work over and above normal provisions. Absenteeism (unlawful absence) is mostly used in civilian institutions, while AWOL is used in military environments. In this study absenteeism and AWOL has been used exchangeable, reflecting similar meaning, that of not being at a place of work, school or any other place when expected to be there and no permission given for being absent.

2.2.2 Desertion

The Namibian Defence Force Act, Act 1 of 2002 schedule 1 of the Military Disciplinary Code MDC, describe desertion as:

Being absent without leave while on service from the unit or formation of such person with the intention of avoiding service; missing any form of transport, by which such person has been warned to travel, with the intention of not accompanying his/her unit or formation on service, failing to report for any service under the Act within seven days after having been called up for such service; absent without leave for a continuous period exceeding 90 days.

The difference between AWOL and desertion here seems to be that; desertion is when a soldier is absent from a combat situation, or when he or she is absent consecutively for 90 days and above ,or takes up employment with another employer without notification, while AWOL is failing to turn up at a place of work, school or training without permission. Leaving the place of work after clock in without permission, arriving late at work or knocking off early is regarded as AWOL/ absenteeism; being absent for 60 days and below is also defined as AWOL. It therefore seems that desertion is a more permanent absence than AWOL.

There is an indication that workers 'presence at work is fundamental for organizational effectiveness and efficiency to achieve its goals. Absence without leave is a disruptive factor, in the sense that, if the unit does not stand at a required strength, as a result of AWOL, then the security is hereby compromised as the unit then may not be able to carry out its mission effectively. AWOL is not only a challenge to the organizations, but to the employees as the workload of those who fail to turn up end up being placed on the shoulders of those who do turn up for work.

2.3 The Concept of Gender

It is necessary for one to understand what gender is, before proceeding to examine AWOL on a gender perspective. Tickner (2008:269), defined gender as “a set of socially and culturally constructed characteristics that vary across time and place”. Other studies such as that of Lorber (1992:748) and Reskin & Padavic (1994:5) refer to gender as socially given attributes, roles, responsibilities and needs connected to being men (masculine) and women (feminine) in a given society. These gender differences are those that society associates with a man or a woman and have no association to biological differences; hence these social roles can be changed because they are learnt through socialization. In the context of this study, however, gender will be identified biologically.

2.3.1 Gender in the NDF Context

Reflecting at gender in the Namibian context in general and the Namibian Defence Force in particular, the Namibian Constitution, Article 10 (2) states that “no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, creed or social or economic status”. In addition, Shaanika (2007:30-32) emphasized that the government of the Republic of Namibia has ratified Regional and International Declarations on the promotions and protection of gender, such as the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action (1996), the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Prevention of Eradication of Violence against Women and Children (1997).

This is a clear testimony that the government of Namibia of which the NDF is part does not discriminate against any gender category therefore both male and female soldiers deserve equal treatment and equal contributions towards the attainment of organizational goals. The Ministry of

Defence Code of Conduct (1993:3) states that the Ministry of Defence is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all members and potential recruits irrespective of a person's sex, marital status, colour, ethnic origin and religious beliefs. Despite the availability of non discriminatory policies in place AWOL continues to persist, being prevalent among male soldiers as compared to their female counterparts. Looking at the prevalence of male AWOL incidences one wonders if female soldiers in the NDF might be given different roles than their male counterparts.

2.4 Theories of Absenteeism / Absent Without Leave (AWOL)

Van der Merwe & Miller (1988: 3-6), conceptually identified some factors that may assist to theoretically explain absenteeism /AWOL. The factors are explained as follows:

2.4.1 Met Expectations

Porter & Steers (1973:152), as cited by Van der Merwe & Miller (1988:4), defined met expectations "as the discrepancy between what a person encounters on the job in the way of positive and negative experiences and what he or she expects to encounter." In other words, the more the expectations are met the greater the worker's satisfaction and the lower the rate of AWOL. Relating this factor to the hypothesis of this study, male soldiers' job satisfaction would then seem to be lower than that of female soldiers.

2.4.2 Personal Work Relationship

Van der Merwe & Miller (1988:5), borrowed Hill and Trist (1955)'s theory of withdrawal from work as a reflection of the person-work relation. Workers enter the job place or job market with distinctive characteristics, needs and aspirations which they may wish to satisfy at work. There is a great relationship between the person and the work; hence the relationship may differ depending to the job and the work environment. If the relationship is positive and satisfying, the employees may

settle and become useful productive and stable members, if the relationship is negative, members may withdraw from work in a variety of ways and one of such is AWOL. In the NDF context, it is then questionable if male soldiers have poor relationship with their working environment than their female counterparts.

2.4.3 Work Group Norms

Van der Merwe & Miller (1988:6) suggested that work-group norms occurred among workers, particularly those who remain in a place of employment for too long learn to adjust their absence behaviour to the stresses of staying in the job. This may explain the prevalence of AWOL among lower ranking male soldiers compared with higher ranks, but this is not necessarily the case with female soldiers.

Despite coming up with the above mentioned theoretical approaches to absenteeism, there is still a room to explore further, since this study is on a gender perspective, hence it may come up with different theoretical approach of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base.

2.5 Types of Absence

Van der Merwe and Miller (1988:9-12) and Huczynski & Fitzpatrick (1989:3) pointed out three forms of absence such as: sick absence, authorized absence and unexcused absence. They emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding the type of absence that has been taken or committed, before identifying the type of punishment to be given to the offender. Treating all absentees equal will be unjust as some may have convincing reasons of not being present at work, therefore understanding the different types of absence is important for this study, although this study is particularly focusing at the unexcused/ unlawful absence (AWOL). It is vital for all

members in the ranks and file of the Namibian Defence Force to know the different types of leave, so that they know when to take and how to utilize them in order to minimize unlawful absence.

2.5.1 “Authorized” Absence

This is where a legitimate excuse is obtained before an employee goes on authorized absence. Though there might be incidents where employee may leave without notifying the supervisor due to circumstances beyond their control, the reasons of leaving must be understandable, that any reasonable person in that situation could have left without notifying. The supervisor will then decide depending on reasons presented by an employee. Individual organizations work out the time allowed for each person to take authorized absence or leave. Authorized absence include: vacation leave, compassionate leave, study leave, sick leave, special leave to mention some. Authorized absence can be paid or unpaid (Public Service Act, Act 13 of 1995).

2.5.1.1 Vacation Leave

In the Namibian Defence Force context vacation leave consists of accumulative leave with full pay, non accumulative leave with full pay and vacation leave without pay. Members of the NDF are entitled to 25 days of accumulative vacation leave per annum. Additionally, a member of the NDF may be granted vacation leave with full pay for a period not exceeding 132 days in 18 months for a purpose of under going initial treatment for addiction to alcohol or drug with a view to rehabilitate. Finally, a member who has used up all his/her vacation leave may be granted unpaid vacation leave of not more than 132 days in a period of 12 months. Although the Chief of the Defence force may in exceptional cases grant more than 132 days of unpaid vacation leave within a period of 12 months (General Regulations, sect.79-80).

2.5.1.2 Sick Leave

As the word implies, sick leave is when an employee is really ill and advises his/ her supervisor accordingly that he or she is ill, and will stay away from work. The ill person might return with a valid certificate from the doctor to justify the absence, depending on the duration of absence. It is very difficult for the supervisor to differentiate between a truly ill and a pretending to be ill employee, who obtained a doctor's certificate, especially if the illness was only for a short duration. Some organizations allow up to three days of sick absence without having to produce a doctor's certificate, while others demand the doctor's paper as prove of being in sick absence from day one.

Members of the NDF are entitled to 132 days of sick leave with full pay per cycle (which is three years) plus another 132 days half pay per cycle. Sick leave of more than 3 days must be supported by a medical certificate. In the event where a member has exhausted all his/her vacation leave, sick leave with full pay and sick leave with half pay, but due to illness is unable to resume work, he or she may be granted sick leave without pay for a period of not more than 260 days in a three year cycle (General Regulations relating to the NDF 2010, sect. 88-89).

2.5.1.3 Special Leave

Special leave may be granted to a member of the NDF who undertakes a journey to go and officiate at communion service in a civilian congregation or taking a journey to represent Namibia as a sport competitor, sporting coach or manager at international sporting events. Under special leave a compassionate leave of not more than 10 days per annum may be granted to a member to attend to a death in the family or to serious illness, provided a death certificate or a letter from a recognized church authority, headman or traditional leader is provided. Finally, a special leave for

studying purpose with full pay may be granted to a member of the NDF who under take to study. Every member is entitled to 12 days per annum and is accumulative (General Regulations sect. 98).

2.5.1.4 Maternity Leave

Female members of the Namibian Defence Force may apply for up to three months of unpaid maternity leave or utilize up to 132 days of paid vacation leave with a view to her confinement in the place of unpaid maternity leave. During this period of unpaid maternity leave, maternity benefits can be claimed from Social Security Commission (Social Security Act, Act 34 of 1994).

2.5.1.5. Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave with full pay for not more than 10 days per annum may be granted to members of the NDF for the following reasons:

- a. Death in the family; or
- b. Serious illness in the family.

Compassionate leave is not accumulated from one year to the other. If unutilized for a duration of one year it expires and another 10 days is allocated. It does not form part of normal vacation leave and a member of the NDF is entitled, upon termination of service, to have unutilized compassionate leave paid out to him/her (General Regulations, sect 100).

2.5.2 Unexcused Absence (AWOL)

All absences that do not fall in the categories above and where a reason to be absent is not given, or a reason is given, but is not valid, are regarded as unexcused absence. In the military this is what is called absence without official leave (AWOL). When this category of absence reaches a certain extent, it often starts a repetitive pattern and becomes problematic to an organization. Mona,

Christa and Robert (1996:1) emphasized that unauthorized or unexcused absence is problematic to any organization, because it brings about cost and put its unfair burden on the majority of employee who show up for work. Gwaltney (1994) as cited by Mona et al (1996:2) estimated that in America 400 million work days are lost per year due to unexcused absence, making up an average of approximately 5.1/days per employee.

2.6 AWOL in the Namibian Defence Force

AWOL in the NDF context is regarded as an offence or a misconduct which is punishable by Law. The Policies and Regulatory that seek to regulate absenteeism from the work place in the NDF were reviewed. These include: the Public Service Act, (Act 13 of 1995), the Namibian Defence Force Act (Act 1 of 2002), and the General Regulations relating to the NDF. This study closely examined the available policies, with the aim to identify possible loopholes in them and be able to come up with possible recommendations that may help decision makers, implementer and users in dealing with AWOL frequencies.

The following formal legislations apply in the Namibian Defence Force context regarding unauthorised absence:

2.6.1 The Public Service Act, Act 13 of 1995

The Public Service Act, (Act 13 of 1995) came in operation on the 1st November 1995. It is a public policy on its own right operating at a national sphere, because it is applicable to all those who are in the Service of the State of the Republic of Namibia. The Public Service Act, (Act 13 of 1995), section 24 (5) (a) stipulate that any staff member who, without permission of the Permanent Secretary of the Office, Ministry or Agency in which he or she is employed:

- (i) absent himself or herself from his or her office or official duties for any period exceeding 30 days or
- (ii) absent himself or herself from his or her office or official duties and assumes duties in any other employment make himself / herself guilty.

Section 25(o) states that any member shall be guilty of misconduct if he or she absents himself or herself from his or her office, or from official duty, without leave or valid cause. The above sections are an indication that unlawful absence/ AWOL is a prohibited and a punishable act in the Public Service of the Republic of Namibia.

2.6.2 The Defence Act, (Act 1 of 2002)

This Act was reviewed and amended from the Defence Act 44 of 1957, and gazetted on the 7th June 2002, in Government Notice No.87. The Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002 is divided into three sections, the Act itself, the military Disciplinary Code and the Rules relating to the Military Disciplinary Code. This Act is relevant to this study, because section 14 (a), (b) and (c) described what AWOL is, when should one be regarded as being on AWOL as well as procedures to be followed when one is absent without permission.

The Act is applicable to all members of the NDF, irrespective of gender. These rules clearly stipulate procedures to be followed. Where a member experiences an emergency that he or she has to attend to, an option to notify the supervisor through any means available is allowed. If the supervisor is not informed of the member's where-about or reasons for being absent, then this is when AWOL occurs.

The Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002, does not condone AWOL, and there are different punishments as stipulated in the Act, depending on the duration of AWOL. The punishment ranges from field punishments such as cutting grass, cutting trees, and digging, forfeiture of pay for the days absent, fines and eventual discharge.

Additionally, the General Regulations relating to the NDF spell out procedures to be followed before each category of leave is taken as well as the number of leave days to be taken per leave cycle. When a member of the NDF fails to follow the laid down procedures concerning leave of absence he or she would be regarded as having gone on AWOL from the work place, and available procedures are then applied for the AWOLer to be trailed and punished if found guilty.

Having perused the above-mentioned relevant existing policies, it is clear that the NDF has policies in place that explain how and when an employee can take leave of absence from work, and so to avoid being on AWOL. In the same vein, policies stipulate procedures to be followed when taking punitive measures against offenders who are guilty of AWOL, irrespective of gender. Members are either warned, summarily trailed or court martial, depending on the number of days absent. The punishment varies from forfeiture of pay for the days member was on AWOL, fines as a means of punishment, and discharge (General Regulations sect. 127).

2.7 Absence Without Leave in the Military

Literature on AWOL in the Military was reviewed with the aim of finding out circumstances that may influence soldiers to go on AWOL. Both peace-time and war-time situation were reviewed. AWOL in military is perceived to be occurring at different situations and circumstances. Various researchers observed it to be more prevalent during war-time than peace-time, as many soldiers may escape from their duty stations in fear of risks at the battle fields. As pointed out in the U.S

Department of Defence Report (2005:3) that the Iraq forces and security experienced high rate of AWOL and desertion during the counter insurgency operations.

The same situation was observed by Dedigama (2011:1-5), in Sri-Lanka during the period of 1996-2000, when the Sri-Lankan Army suffered many debacles and at the same time conducted most of the operations. Dedigama further noted that AWOL cases in the Sri Lankan Army were noticed among low ranks than in high ranks. Hazzard (1990) as cited by Mona et al (1996:3) alluded to the same sentiment when he pointed out that absenteeism in civilian organizations is a problem among blue collar workers compare to white collar workers. In the Namibian Defence Force context the researcher agree with the above statement on the commonness of AWOL among low ranks as compare to commissioned officers, that's why this study focused mainly on male and female non-commissioned officers and privates.

While political instability may be the cause of AWOL in some of the studied defence forces, the Namibian case is different in the sense that, Namibia has been politically stable and peaceful, but AWOL is still persisting. Therefore, the causes of AWOL frequencies in the Grootfontein Military Base are different from the above mentioned situations. Another difference is that, the study of Dedigama (2011) in Sri-lanka and that of the US Department of Defence Report (2005) looked at the main cause of AWOL in the armed forces generally, while this study looked at causes of AWOL on a gender perspective.

2.8 Absenteeism and Gender

Other scholarly works that investigated absenteeism in a gender perspective, are that of Benjamin, Gunderson and Craig Riddell (1998:1) and Ichino & Moreti (2006:4) who indicated that women are traditionally viewed as more likely to quit and to be absent from work than their

male counter- parts. The research further revealed that the differences in absenteeism are attributed to the biological differences between men and women. Menstrual cycle was found to be among the main cause of difference in absenteeism. This gender difference is widely used as an important explanation for the poorer performance of female employees in terms of absenteeism. While this phenomenon might be true in the institutions that were studied, these findings prove contrary to the phenomenon in the NDF, where male soldiers are more prone to AWOL than their female counterparts. The above-mentioned studies did not explained why male soldiers are likely to be delinquent than female soldiers in the Namibian Defence Force.

Mean-while Dunn and Youngblood (1986) as cited by Mona et al (1996:3) related females' absenteeism to their sensitivity to family needs. In the Namibian Defence Force context, despite the females' sensitivity and family commitments, they still follow laid-down procedures of leave, more so than their male counterparts.

2.9 Gender and the Military

Tickner (2008:262-264) pointed out that women world-wide have been previously undermined and their contribution never fully recognized. More over from early childhood especially in an African setting parents call boys to cut grass, wash cars or climb ladders to remove things, while the girls are given chores involving cooking, cleaning and so on. What are regarded as complex and difficult tasks are allocated to boys whereas girls are expected to handle the relatively easy and less dangerous tasks. This kind of thinking has led African society to view females as the weaker sex and consequently the African child goes with this stereotyped thinking (Arigbabu & Mji 2004:749). Therefore the world has now changed and the involvement of females in what was branded a "man's forte" is no longer so.

The negative perceptions of the past have made women of today putting more efforts to diminish these effects of the past (See chapter 4).

2.10 Causes of Absence Without Leave (AWOL) Frequencies

AWOL does not occur in a vacuum, there are several factors that caused it. Relevant literature such as that of Steyn & Van Niekerk (2002:162), Harriman (1985:1), Hacket & Gulon (1985:60), listed job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment, leadership, role conflict and role clarity as some of the possible causes of absenteeism. These then represent potential variables and themes relevant to this study.

2.10.1 Job Satisfaction

Steyn & Van Niekerk (2002:163) defined job satisfaction as “an emotional state that people experience when they have made a positive assessment of their job or work experience”. It is not a matter of whether one is satisfied or dissatisfied with the job, but of a collection of job related attitudes that can be classified into a variety of job aspects. Job satisfaction is concerned with expectations and outcomes (Harriman 1985:45). Employee satisfaction is an important variable that is able to give an opinion about the general emotion and thinking of employees about the job and workplace. Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction is an individual’s attitude towards his or her job (Moorhead & Griffin 2000:112).

Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction can be caused by various issues emanating from pay, opportunities for promotion, nature of the work itself, policies and procedures of the organisation including working conditions (Moorhead & Griffin, 2000:113). Employees who are more satisfied with their jobs absent less and are less likely to leave and they are likely to display organisational citizenship behaviour. Yee, Yeung & Cheng (2008:651-668), stated that employee satisfaction is

an important consideration for operation managers to boost service quality and customer satisfaction. This study showed that male soldiers at the Grootfontein Military Base show prominent signs of job dissatisfaction (chapter 4).

2.10.2 Motivation

Motivation is one of the psychological factors that lead people to behave in particular ways. There is a need to know what motivates the employees in order to enhance productivity and performance in the public sector. Herwing (2003: 6-7) argued that motivation is personal, and when people are exposed to the same condition they react in different ways. Some tend towards frustration, avoidance and absenteeism; others may become highly motivated when they are confronted by a particular challenge. The objective of assessing what employees want from their jobs is of valuable importance in order to draft policies regarding personnel in ensuring that the goals of the organization are kept in synchronisation with both internal and external environments. No organization will perform well if employees are not well motivated and the NDF is no exemption. One can then agree with sociologist Myra as cited by Reskin and Padavic (1994:149), who stated that women employee turned out to be highly motivated and easily satisfied than men even if they earn less. This issue was investigated in chapter 4.

2.10.3 Gender and Organisational Commitment

Stup (2006:20) defined organisational commitment as “the relative strength of an employee’s attachment or involvement with the organisation where he or she is employed. In a study conducted by Marsden, Kalleberg & Cook (1993:40) it was found that women displayed a higher organisational commitment than men. Women tend to exhibit a slightly greater organisational

commitment than men when the job attributes, career variables and family ties are simultaneously controlled.

Marsden et al (1993:41) pointed out that, women were found to be less frequently absent than men and the researcher here provides strong indications that gender difference in absenteeism is not due to women's problems in combining paid work with care for the children. This study was conducted to compare men and women with identical job titles and working conditions. According to the researcher the gender difference is larger for longer absences requiring certification by a physician than for short absences not requiring such certification, they suggest that gender difference in absenteeism is not primarily due to differences in work values. Absenteeism is more likely to reflect general health or personality difference between men and women. The present study tries to compare the above-mentioned issues to the NDF situation in order to determine if the AWOL differences among male and female soldiers at Grootfontein Military Base are as a result of higher organizational commitment by female soldiers as compared to male soldiers.

2.10.4 Leadership

According to Zampekatis & Moustakis (2011:77-102), the type of leadership style has a direct influence on lowered intention to leave or absent oneself. It is in the best interest of the organisation to have satisfied employees and individual job satisfaction has been linked to increased performance including higher organisational loyalty. The emotional intelligence of a leader has a bearing on job satisfaction and emotional intelligence.

2.10.5 Role Conflict

According to Rizzo, House & Lirtzman (1970:156) role conflict is defined in terms of the degree to which demands are made on the employee in the workplace. This occurs when an individual is

expected to engage in inconsistent behaviour as a result of receiving contradictory demands due to a lack of unitary command. Spector (1997:9) states that when two or more supervisors make demands that conflict with each other or when an employee has to do two or more simultaneously tasks but has time to do only one of them, role conflict results and performance is curtailed.

2.10.6 Role Clarity

This is the degree to which individuals receive and understand information needed to perform their jobs. According to Rizzo, House & Lirtzman (1970 pp. 155-163) role clarity is the extent to which an employee knows what is expected of him or her for adequate performance of the job responsibilities. When roles are clear, there is a sense of responsibility on the part of the worker and hence an increased in commitment (Gregersen & Black, 1996:209-229). In the military, leaders have to ensure those roles are clear to avoid misunderstanding and confusion as well as frustration.

2.10.7 Personal Factors

Hamilton, Lawrence, Tarence, James, Williams, (1971:60) allude to home sickness, marital status, and problems with parents as contributing factors to AWOL from individual point of view. They stated that personal factors such as length of service, marital status, education and health may have impact on the ability of an employee to attend work as planned.

The above-mentioned elements are some of the causes of AWOL frequencies, but the question is whether these are the cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the Grootfontein Military Base.

2.11 Effects of Absence Without Leave Frequencies

Unauthorized or unscheduled absenteeism is a problem for every organization. It creates and puts an unfair burden on the majority of employees who do show up for work. At least 50% of all employee absenteeism is not caused by *bona fide* illness or other “acceptable” reasons (Mona, Christa and Robert, 1996:3). The same study found that single persons are typically absent more than married persons, a pattern that might reflect greater financial constraints for married persons to work. Absenteeism costs are difficult to quantify, but one can not deny the fact that, absenteeism is costly. Employers need to consider the costs of replacement of those who have been discharged, or those who are on long AWOL. For example, administration of recruitments, selections, orientation and training of new employees to replace critical posts that cannot be left unmanned (Huczynski & Fitzpatrick 1989:18-19).

Sections or departments that are experiencing shortage of manpower become less effective. This forces managers to deal with problems of morale, turnover intentions, production quality, additional administration and overheads. In private companies, this becomes a profit/loss problem. In the NDF, where some soldiers work shifts, a shortage of manpower as a result of AWOL frequencies, means less resting days to those who are at work or else prolonged working hours. Because of the “sensitivity” of the military work, a duty post may not be left unmanned, which then compels a soldier to remain on duty until relieved. These can affect the morale of soldiers who are committed to do their work.

Weidlich as cited by Shikufa (2010:25) reported that the Auditor General’s findings for 2008-2009 financial year indicated an outstanding fines of members of the NDF who were on AWOL to be standing at N\$ 2668 884. This amount is a cause of concern. On the other hand, the NDF through the service of the Military Police travel long distance by government vehicles to go and

arrest members who are on AWOL, therefore this travelling involve subsistence and travelling allowance as well as fuel.

2.12 Control of Absenteeism

Huczynski & Fitzpatrick (1989:156) suggested that, there is no one-size fit-all solutions to absenteeism problem; therefore it will be to the advantage of individual companies/ organizations to have their own Absenteeism Control Mechanisms. They further advice that appropriate strategy should be utilized to effectively deal with the problem of absenteeism such as: Firstly, the problem of absenteeism should be assessed. Secondly, the problem should be located. Thirdly, the causes of AWOL frequencies should be identified and prioritized. Fourthly, control mechanisms of AWOL frequencies among soldiers must be designed. Fifthly, the control programme must be implemented. Sixthly, the effectiveness of an AWOL control programme must be monitored. Additionally, Van der Merwe and Miller (1988:26) argued that the circumstances surrounding the effectiveness of reducing and controlling of absenteeism is to have a well defined organizational policy, which should be clearly communicated to all workers.

In the NDF context, there are policies in place to control and take punitive measures against offenders who are guilty of AWOL irrespective of their gender. There are employees' registers and roll call books that are available at various NDF units/formations which are marked and signed twice daily with the aim of finding out who is present and who is not. If an employee is absent without leave he /she is marked A, while if he or she is present is marked P and those who are absent with permission they are marked in accordance to their reasons of absence such as C = course, L= leave, H= hospital, DD = detached duty and M = mission.

If a member absents himself or herself without leave for seven consecutive days, his or her pay is immediately suspended. When the member reports back to work he or she is charged, tried and punished in accordance with the outcome of the court proceedings. If he or she fails to present reasonable ground in mitigation of his/her alleged transgression, then he or she may end up being discharged from the force if the days are beyond 30 or when a member has been tried several times for the same offence already (Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002). Despite having such a deterrent policy in place incidents of AWOL are apparently on the increase especially among male soldiers in the Namibian Defence Force as compared to their female counterparts. There is an indication that some soldiers especially males pose little knowledge on the existing Rules and Regulations that are in place, being it that of curbing AWOL and that explains their benefit such as the types of leaves when and how to utilize them.

2.13 Summary

This chapter presented literature on lawful and unlawful absence from the work place in both military and non military environment. Information in this chapter was obtained from secondary sources such as books, journals, reports, Acts and internet. Though there was no Namibian reference materials on gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL, other literature available were relevant and influential to build on. The available literature explores on the concept of absenteeism and desertion, the concept of gender, gender and absenteeism where some researchers revealed that females absence more than their male counterparts due to menstrual cycle which is contrary to the findings of this study. It presented theories of absenteeism, types of absence and absence in the military looking at both peace time and war time which saw war time recording higher AWOL frequencies. This chapter also presented legislations that are applies in the

NDF context regarding unauthorised absence such as the Public Service Act, Act 13 of 1995 and the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002.

Literature on the causes of unlawful absence was reviewed, which outlined job satisfaction, motivation, organisational commitment, role conflicts, role clarity and personal factors such as home sickness and family problems as some of the causes. This chapter also presented the effects of absence without official leave to the institutions, the co-workers, the families of the unlawful absentees and the absentees themselves. Finally it presents the control measures to curb or reduce unlawful absence from the work place.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Absence without leave is persistent in the Namibian Defence Force and seemingly more prevalent among male soldiers than female soldiers (Shikufa 2010:4). The information used in this study was obtained from secondary sources such as: books, journal, reports, Acts, internet as well as from primary sources such as: the soldiers affected directly or indirectly by AWOL frequencies and discrepancies. Multi-technique data collection, such as questionnaires, focus group discussions and documents survey were used. This chapter therefore, outlines the methodology used by the study in obtaining the necessary data.

3.2 Research Design

A combination of a quantitative and qualitative research design is used in exploring and explaining AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. This study, therefore, is a mixed- method research in the interpretive paradigm, using a case study approach. The advantage of the mixed methods is that both qualitative and quantitative information can be collected in the same research (Onweuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Another advantage of using the mixed methods is that the researcher tries to understand the participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviours on the topic in terms of its quantitative(saying things in percentage) and qualitative dimensions (people's perceptions). The data has been collected by means of questionnaires, focus group discussions as well as documentary survey.

3.3 Research Population

Best & Kahn (2006:13) defined population as “a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher”. The research population for this study were non-commissioned officers and privates of army units that are located in the Grootfontein Military Base. The units studied are the Army Headquarters (AHQ), the Military Hospital (Mil. Hosp), the Dolphin Battalion (Dol Bn), the Logistic Battalion (Log Bn), the 26 Motorised Infantry Brigade Headquarters (26 Bde HQ) and the Reconnaissance Regiment (Recce Regt) with a total of 1640 non-commissioned officers and privates, out of which 1145 are males, while 495 are females. Grootfontein Military Base was chosen, because the army emerged as one of the arms of services with a high number of AWOL frequencies reported as compared to air force and navy, and it is in Grootfontein where some independent army units are located.

Table 3.1 below, indicates the research population of the six units of study in the Grootfontein Military Base based as per ranks and gender. The Army Headquarters had 55 males and 30 females giving a total of 85. The Dolphin Battalion had 190 males and 80 females giving a total of 270. The Military Hospital had 60 males and 70 females giving a total of 130. The Logistic Battalion had 420 males and 190 females giving a total of 610. The 26 Brigade Headquarters had 160 males and 75 females giving a total of 235. Lastly, the Reconnaissance Regiment with 260 males and 50 females giving a total 310. The total research population for all the six units was 1640.

Table 3.1: Research Population of the Six Units in the Grootfontein Military Base as per Ranks and Gender

UNIT/Formation	RANK				Total
	Non-commissioned Officers		Privates		
	M	F	M	F	
AHQ	45	27	10	3	85
Dolp. Bn	90	30	100	50	270
Mil Hosp	45	55	15	15	130
Log Bn	180	90	240	100	610
26 Brig HQ	35	30	125	45	235
Recc Regt	75	30	185	20	310
Grand Total	470	262	675	233	1640

Keys: AHQ – Army Headquarters, Dolp – Dolphin Battalion, Mil Hosp – Military Hospital, Log Bn – Logistic Battalion, 26 Bde – 26 Brigade Headquarters, Recc – Reconnaissance.

3.4 Sampling

This study used a stratified non-probability sampling. There were six units (strata's) of study in the Grootfontein Military Base and from each unit respondents holding the ranks of privates (Ptes) to warrant officers (WOs) were taken. Participants were classified into two groups i.e. G1 and G2 at each unit. The participants for selection included male and female soldiers who go on AWOL (AWOLers) and male and female soldiers who do not go on AWOL (non-AWOLers). Female AWOLers, because of their anticipated scarcity were purposefully selected into the sample (Gupta 2007:111-112).

A sample size of 85 individuals; males and females; non-commissioned officers and privates; AWOLers and non-AWOLers, were selected from six units in the Grootfontein Military Base to answer the questionnaires. 63 were non-commissioned officers and 22 were privates. The number of non-commissioned seems higher, but it is not so, because non-commissioned includes five rank

groups which are: the Lance Corporal, the Corporal, the Sergeant, the Staff Sergeant and the Warrant Officer. Of the 85 respondents, 39 were males, of which 27 were AWOLers and 12 non AWOLers; while 46 were females, two of which were AWOLers and 44 non-AWOLers. Focus group discussions were held at each unit. A sample of 92 individuals participated in these discussions, 45 males and 47 females, table 4.4 refers.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher uses multiple techniques of data collection in this study which is also known as triangulation. The data was collected using partly structured questionnaires, focus group discussions and conducted a survey from official documents.

3.5.1 Official Documents

It was necessary for this study to conduct a survey from official documents from the Grootfontein Military Base Personnel Offices and the Legal Offices of all the six units of study as well as from the Military Police Special Investigation Branch and Army Headquarters Legal Office. Summarily trialled and court martial registers were also examined to find out the AWOL trends, frequencies and discrepancies.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions

The researcher deem focus group discussions as the appropriate tool to utilize in collecting data, because it gives room for respondents to interact and provide a discursive forum suited to the aims of this study. Focus group discussions were conducted to get a deeper understanding of the individual's perceptions and experience of the phenomenon, where a permissive, non-threatening environment existed (Krueger 1988:18). A total of 10 focus group discussions were held, two at each of the four units that have AWOLers and non-AWOLers and one at each of the two units that

do not have AWOLers. 92 participants took part in the focus group discussions, of which 32 were AWOLers (31 males plus 1 female), while 60 were non-AWOLers (46 females plus 14 males).

The focus group discussions were made up of various numbers of participants per unit as shown in table 4.3 and the researcher as the facilitator, who facilitated the group discussions. A number of preset questions were used to guide the discussions and the information collected during the focus group discussions from the six units on the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers, the trends, effects and factors to mitigate the problem of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies were analysed and grouped.

3.5.3 Questionnaires

The study uses questionnaires which comprised of open-ended and structured questions. The advantages of open-ended questions were that they allowed respondents to communicate their views freely, while the structured questions only allowed respondents to choose a specification. The questionnaire comprised of sections A - E. Section A was comprised of demographic data of the respondents that is gender, marital status, age, period in the service and rank (to test whether there is a correlation with AWOL). Section B looked at AWOL frequencies, causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies, mitigating factors to reduce AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers. Section C, rated the understanding of respondents on the existing rules and regulations that address AWOL. Section D seeks to unearth factors that may affect attendance at work, while Section E allowed for any other comments that have not been covered. Sections B - D fit allowed both open-ended and structured, while Section E is open-ended.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

After receiving my letter of introduction from the Department of Political and Administration Studies, University of Namibia, to go and collect data, I applied for permission to collect data from the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) which was granted, before proceeding to Grootfontein Military Base. The resultant sample questionnaires were administered for individuals, in-depth interviews were done with to frequent AWOLers from all the six units, two focus group discussions (one for AWOLers and the other one for non-AWOLers) were held at each unit for an in-depth discussion on the causes, effects and control measures of AWOL.

Information concerning the dates for the focus group discussions, documents survey and the responses to the questionnaires were communicated to the specific units in advance through the unit commanders. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to fill, in the presence of the researcher so that assistance can be availed where required. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were conducted at specific places as allocated by the unit commanders. The identity of the researcher, aim and purpose of the study was disclosed to the respondents prior to taking part in the study.

3.7 Data Analysis

After the completion of questionnaires, these were categorised into two groups namely G1 for AWOLers and G2 for non-AWOLers. The data collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions and documents survey were analysed with the use of transcription and were coded for thematic analysis. Tables were generated to clearly depict the findings and analysis thereof. Common themes across the responses were identified according to the conceptual factors of 'met

expectations,' 'personal work relationship', organisational factors and leadership factors. Other themes that came out during the data collection were also noted and explored for interpretation.

3.7 Research Ethics

Grinnel & Williams (1990:304) emphasized that ethics is a discipline dealing with what is good and bad, or right and wrong with moral duties and obligations. Since respondents are humans, they are thus entitled to respect, attention to their right and protection. Therefore, the following ethical issues were taken into consideration in the course of executing this study:

3.7.1 Informed Consent

The purpose of the study was first explained to the participants and only after their consent was given, were they allowed to participate in the study. They were informed how they were expected to take part in the study. Their consent was voluntary and without pressure of any kind put on them.

3.7.2 Maintaining confidentiality

The participants were informed that the information collected will be confidential and the individual respondents shall be anonymous during and after the study. Numbers were used on questionnaires rather than names and the questionnaires were destroyed after the study.

3.7.3. Possibility of causing harm

This study did not in any way cause harm to participants in the form of discomfort, anxiety, harassment and invasion of privacy.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

During the research, the requirements of validity and reliability, as discussed by Welman and Kruger (1999:100) were applied. These requirements involved the reliability of research instruments, as well as the consistency of the measurement of gender-based AWOL trends over a period of time. Hussey and Hussey (1997:20) refer to validity as to when the researcher honestly measures what he or she has set out to do. All efforts were made to ensure that the collected data was valid, while adhering to all the ethical considerations.

Care was taken in the formulation of research questions. The questionnaire and the focus group discussion questions were given to my research's supervisor to check for possible sensitivity issues and regular discussions were held between the researcher and the supervisor, whereby changes were made to the questionnaire before they were administered. Questions were formulated in such a way that the respondents would not feel intimidated.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discussed the methods used in collecting data which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches and their advantages thereof, as well as the techniques used such as the questionnaires, the focus group discussions and the documents survey. This chapter also outlines the targeted population of study, that of non-commissioned officers and private, male and female soldiers of the six units that are located in the Grootfontein Military Base.

It further explains the data collection procedures followed from the University of Namibia through the Chief of the Defence Force to the Grootfontein Military Base, how the data was analysed and lastly the ethical considerations during the research as well as the validity and reliability of information.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data, analysis and discussions of research findings as collected from the six units through documents survey, focus group discussions and questionnaires. Documents survey involved examining different forms of records, to determine the gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the Grootfontein Military Base. Each result presented is followed by a discussion and concluding remark aimed at presenting the data in a logical and understandable manner.

The information obtained from the documents survey were presented and discussed under roll call books, summarily trial registers and court martial registers. The information obtained from the questionnaires was presented and discussed in the sequence of the questions, but the causes and effects were combined with those indicated by the focus group discussions to avoid repetitions because they are similar. The presentation and discussion on the possible causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies was presented and discussed under four main themes: the organisational factors, the leadership factors, the personal factors and the psychological factors together with the mitigating factors and lastly, the effects of gender-based AWOL frequencies were presented and discussed.

The respondents were represented by non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and privates (Ptes); AWOLers and non-AWOLers; male and female soldiers at the Grootfontein Military Base.

At each unit of study the researcher, with the assistant of the unit's chief administration officer (an adjutant), compiled three name-lists generated from each unit's roll call books. List one was for male AWOLers consisting of ex-combatants and new recruits, non-commissioned officers and privates. They were distinguished by looking at their force identification numbers, because those whose force identification numbers starting at 170 up 1715 are ex-combatants, while those whose force identification numbers starting at 1720 to 1730 were new recruited from 1996. List two was for males non-AWOLers. List three was compiled out of females' non-AWOLers, both ex-combatants and new recruits by looking at their sex. Out of these lists, two final lists were compiled by selecting a name at a sequence of ten names. The female AWOLer were purposefully selected into the group due to their low frequency.

The study divided respondents into two categories i.e. Group one (G1) for AWOLers and Group two (G2) for non-AWOLers at each unit. These groups were selected for focus group discussions. Questionnaires were completed by NCOs and privates, males and females, AWOLers and non-AWOLers. Some respondents who took part in the focus group discussions again took part in the questionnaires, while some were new respondents.

Non-Commissioned Officers included ranks such as; warrant officers, staff sergeants, sergeants, corporals and lance corporals, while privates are soldiers with no ranks. They expressed their views on the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers, the trends, the effects and mitigating factors to minimize AWOL.

4.2 Findings and Discussions of the Documents Survey

The documents survey was carried out to determine the AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base, the trends and the number of

AWOL offenders' trial from 2009 - 2011. This was done by going through the roll call books, the AWOL registers, the summarily and court martial registers at the six units of study in the Grootfontein Military Base.

4.2.1 Findings and Discussion from the Roll call Books

The roll call books of the six units in the Grootfontein Military Base recorded a total of 391 AWOL incidences from 2009 to 2011 as per table 4.1 below. The Army Headquarters recorded two AWOL incidences in 2009, zero in 2010 and zero in 2011. The Dolphin Battalion recorded 35 AWOL incidences in 2009, 30 in 2010 and 25 in 2011. The Military Hospital recorded zeros in three years. Logistic Battalion recorded 50 AWOL incidences in 2009, 60 in 2010 and 80 in 2011. 26 Brigade Headquarters recorded 20 AWOL incidences in 2009, 18 in 2010 and 25 in 2011. Reconnaissance Regiment recorded 20 AWOL incidences in 2009, 16 in 2010 and 10 in 2011. Logistic Battalion recorded the highest AWOL incidences as compared to other studied units, followed by Dolphin Battalion in second position, then 26 Brigade in third position, Reconnaissance in fourth position and lastly Army Headquarters.

In all the six units a total of 391 AWOL incidences were committed by 150 offenders. 76 of them were tried, 39 were warned and given light punishments to clean and cut grass (manual work) and 35 no action taken, as they either arrived late at work, left the work place earlier than expected or had reasonable excuses upon arrival back at work. Out of 150 offenders 50 were ex-combatants while 100 were new recruits (147 males and 3 females).

Table 4.1 AWOL Frequencies and Discrepancies as per Roll Call Books from 2009-2011

Unit/Formation	YEAR						Total
	2009		2010		2011		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
AHQ	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dolphin Bn	35	0	30	0	23	2	90
Mil Hosp	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Log Bn	50	0	60	0	80	0	190
26 Brig HQ	20	0	18	0	25	0	63
Recce Regt	20	0	16	0	10	0	46
Grand Total	127	0	124		140	0	391

Keys: AHQ – Army Headquarters, Dolphin Bn – Dolphin Battalion, Mil Hosp – Military Hospital, Log Bn – Logistic Battalion, 26 Brig HQ – 26 Brigade Headquarters, Recce Regt – Reconnaissance Regiment.

The roll call books revealed five common types of AWOL. These are:

- Frequent AWOL; where the same person appears or absent frequently.
- AWOL on selected days; such as at month ends where most AWOLs were recorded.
- Half-day AWOL, where a person reports for work in the morning and leave before the afternoon roll call.
- Late reporting, where a person may be absent at the place of parade, but will be present at work.
- Prolonged AWOL, where a person goes on AWOL for more than 10 days.

4.2.2 Roll Call Procedure

The roll calls are conducted twice per day, at 7:30 am and at 14:00 pm, where names are called and marked accordingly. If a person is present at the roll call parade, he or she is marked P, if the person is on leave he or she is marked L, if the person is not at the parade and permission to be absent was not granted, then that person is on AWOL and is marked A. Frequent AWOL, AWOL on selected days and prolonged AWOL are acted upon, while late arrival and leaving the work place earlier are mostly ignored.

It became evident through the research findings that male soldiers are more frequently on AWOL at the Grootfontein Military Base than their female counterparts which is contrary to Benjamin, Gunderson and Craig Riddell (1998:30)'s study on absenteeism in a gender perspective which found absenteeism to be higher among females than among male employees.

The roll call books revealed that there is hardly a week without two or more of the common types of AWOL reported; that is the frequent AWOL, AWOL on selected days, half-day AWOL, late arrivals and prolonged AWOL. The most popular AWOL types committed were, AWOL on selected days and late arrival at work or leaving earlier, which occurred on month ends/ beginning of the month when soldiers are paid.

In some instances, late arrivals and knocking off earlier went unnoticed and, where noticed there are often no action taken, apart from a verbal warning which are in most cases not recorded. So far there are no records of soldiers tried for late arrivals or early departure in the units studied, apart from verbal warnings which were recorded at two units, the AHQ and the Reconnaissance Regiment. In other units, such as Dolphin battalion, Logistic battalion and 26 Brigade Headquarters, AWOLers were sometimes verbally warned, but there are no proper records of this.

The study revealed that most male soldiers take advantage of the loopholes regarding the recording of late arrivals or leaving the work place earlier. Here the 35 offenders who were warned were all males. The majority of commanders do not act on late arrival and leaving earlier types of AWOL, and the few who take action are often “lenient”.

4.2.3 Findings and Discussion from the Summarily Trials Registers

Summary trials of non-commissioned officers and privates are conducted in the units under the jurisdiction of a commanding officer or a formation commander. The data collected from the summary trial registers of the six units of study indicated a total of 65 AWOL incidences summarily trials from 2009 - 2011. Of 65 AWOL incidences summarily trials, 63 were males, while two were females both from the Dolphin Battalion. The number of days lost due to AWOL amount to 460 and the fine given were N\$ 29800. Since this study was focusing only at non-commissioned officers and privates, officers who went on AWOL at the units of study were not included in these figures. The Army Headquarters and the Military Hospital do not have AWOL summarily trial statistics, since there are no AWOLers at their units, though the Army Headquarters recorded two AWOL in the roll call books, these were for late arrivals and were warned instead of being tried.

Table 4.2 below reveals the data that was collected from the summary trial registers of the six units in the Grootfontein Military Base over a period of three years.

Table 4.2 Incidences of Summarily Trials for the Six Units from 2009 - 2011

Unit	2009		2010		2011		Days lost	Fine
	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Army Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dolphin Battalion	3	0	2	0	5	2	121	N\$ 6250.00
Logistic Battalion	7	0	5	0	4	0	41	N\$ 3200.00
Military Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 Bde HQ	11	0	10	0	6	0	225	N\$ 15000.00
Recce Regt	1	0	1	0	8	0	73	N\$ 5350.00
Total	22	0	18	0	23	2	460	N\$ 29800.00

Keys: M- Males, F-Females, 26 Bde HQ-26 Brigade Headquarters, Recce Regt- Reconnaissance Regiment

4.2.4 Findings and Discussion from the Court Martial Registers

The data collected from the Court Martial registers of the six units of study revealed that in three years period a total of 11 cases were court martial. Table 4.3 below indicate the court martial statistics of the six units per gender, the days lost, fines and the sentences passed.

Table 4.3 Incidences of Court Martial for the Six Units of Study 2009 – 2011

Unit	2009		2010		2011		Days lost	Fines	Sentence
	F	M	F	M	F	M			
Army HQ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dolphin Bn	0	0	0	0	0	1	47	0	1xDischarged
Logistic Bn	0	3	0	2	1	0	310	N\$3000.00	4xDischarged, 1xDemoted and, 1xFined
Military Hosp.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 Brig HQ	0	2	0	1	0	1	170	N\$4600.00	1xDischarged and 3xFined
Recce. Regt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	5	0	3	1	2	527	N\$7600.00	6xDischarged, 1 x Demotion and 4 Fined

Keys: Army HQ- Army Headquarters, Dolphin Bn- Dolphin Battalion, Logistic Bn- Logistic Battalion, Military Hosp- Military Hospital, 26 Brig HQ- 26 Brigade Headquarters and Recce. Regt- Reconnaissance Regiment.

A total of 11 cases were court martialled due to frequent and prolonged AWOL, 10 were males, while one was a female from Logistic Battalion. Five males and one female were discharged, one demoted and four fined an amount of N\$7600.00. A total of 527days were lost due to AWOL.

Court Martial is one type of military court that prosecute offenders with many days or who have committed other offences such as theft, assault, insubordination, insulting a superior officer and ill-treating a subordinate to mentioned a few. Normally, Court Martial imposes heavy sentences such as heavy fines, demotions and discharged from work as compared to summary trials. The discharged of AWOL offenders, has made some AWOLers to changed their AWOL trends and only go for few days and come back to work. Court Martial could also impose imprisonment, but the NDF do not have detention barracks at the moment.

4.3 Findings and Discussion from the Focus Groups

Two categories of focus group discussions were held at each unit of study i.e. Group one (G1) for AWOLers and Group 2 (G2) for non-AWOLers. Each group consisted of non-commissioned officers and privates, males and females where possible. Due to the unavailability of category G1 for AWOLers at the Army Headquarters and Military Hospital, only G2 focus group discussions were held. The scarcity of female AWOLers was experienced; as a result only one female AWOLer participated in the G1 focus group discussions.

The focus group participants from the Group 1s and Group 2s pointed out the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military

Base as caused by a set of problems which were presented and discussed under four themes; the organisational factors which includes: low salaries, lack of motivation, difference in population and distance from home. The leadership factors which include: favouritism, tribalism, lack of communication, failure to act, preferential treatment. The personal factors include; alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, illness, masculinity, peer pressure, cash loan addicts and financial mismanagement. Psychological factor include; lack of counselling.

Table 4.4 Sample of G1 and G2 Focus Group Discussions as per the Six Units

Unit/Formation	FGD-G1		FGD-G2		Total
	M	F	M	F	
AHQ	0	0	3	7	10
Dolphin Bn	7	1	0	10	18
Log Bn	10	0	2	8	20
Mil Hosp.	0	0	3	7	10
Recce Regt	7	0	3	7	17
26Bde HQ	7	0	3	7	17
Grand Total	31	1	14	46	92

Keys: FGD–G1 Focus group discussions G1 – Group one for AWOLers, FGD-G2 – Focus group discussions Group 2 for non- AWOLers, M – males, F – females. Unit: AHQ - Army Headquarters, Dolphin Bn - Dolphin Battalion, Log Bn - Logistic Battalion, Mil Hosp - Military Hospital, Recce Regt – Reconnaissance Regiment and 26 Bde HQ – 26 Brigade Headquarters.

4.3.1 Causes of Gender-Based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding AWOL as Indicated by Group One (G1) AWOLers and Group Two (G2) Non-AWOLers

A closer examination of the four focus group discussions with AWOLers that was held at Dolphin battalion, Logistic battalion, Reconnaissance Regiment and 26 Brigade Headquarters and the six focus group discussions that was held with non-AWOLers at Army Headquarters, Dolphin battalion, Logistic battalion, Military Hospital, 26 brigade Headquarters and Reconnaissance

regiment was done to establish the relationship amongst the groups on the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. They brought out different causes of AWOL frequencies that was presented and discussed under four themes organisational factors, leadership factors, personal factors and psychological factors as follows:

4.3.1.1 Organisational Factors

The participants pointed out numerous organisational factors that are believed to be the cause of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base that are presented and discussed as follows:

4.3.1.1.1 Difference in Population Size

The participants in the focus group discussions from Group 1 (AWOLers) argues that, because there are more male soldiers than females, AWOL frequencies is also more among males. The group claimed that in the Namibian Defence Force as a whole, male soldiers make up approximately 80%, while the females are approximately 20%. They remarked, AWOL among male soldiers is visible, “because we are many, but this does not mean that females do not go on AWOL”.

The researcher was able to get the strength of the Namibian Army where by the real figure indicated a total of 12065 soldiers (9889 males and 2176 females), males make up 81.97 % and females make up 18.03 % (Army Monthly Strength Report November 2011). It is a known fact that male soldiers make up the highest percentages in the Army, but the number does not justify their unlawful absenteeism.

4.3.1.1.2 Lack of Motivation

Participants revealed that lack of motivation among male soldiers was also one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL. One male soldier remarked, “There are a lot of things that de-motivate us, such as; lack of promotion, postings, low salaries and poor supervisory skills”. Other male participants agreed and indicated that “commanders do sometimes recommend lazy and undisciplined soldiers for promotion, simply because they have befriended them, or because of favouritism and tribalism, leaving out the hard working soldiers”. Some remarked: “female soldiers stand a better chance for promotion as compared to their male counterparts, because they are few and are often posted at promotable posts; therefore they are not so easily demotivated as compared to male soldiers”. One AWOLer remarked, “I joined SWAPO in 1974, and I was in the same platoon with the current Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) and the current Army commander (AC). Look where I am today, just a corporal. This is demoralizing”. Another new blood remarked and was supported by others; “some of us are just stagnant, no promotion here in the NDF despite our qualifications, while our colleagues at other institutions are excelling”.

Deducing from the comments made by male AWOLers both ex-combatants and new recruits, this study can conclude that some male soldiers are dissatisfied; they expected to be promoted as a token of appreciation for their contributions in the liberation struggle which did not happen. Some of them were commanders during the liberation struggle, but now they are not what they expected to be in an independent Namibia, therefore, these frustrated them and they ended up going on AWOL. Additionally, the young ones (new recruits) join the NDF for employment purpose; hence they lack interest in the Force.

Promotion in the NDF is not a right, but a privilege, nor does it serve as a compensation for long standing and faithful service, but only occurs to a member who is staffed in a promotional post (NDF Human Resources Policy 2010:8). Therefore both ex-combatants and new recruits should be educated that promotion in the NDF is not automatic, but depend on where the person is posted, because each and every unit or formation has its structures. The ex-combatants should be informed that the contribution made during the liberation struggle is appreciated, but the NDF is not the right Ministry to compensate them hence, they should approach the Ministry of War Veteran that cater for the needs of war veterans.

Generally female soldiers seem more motivated as compared to male soldiers at the Grootfontein Military Base, therefore this thesis agrees with sociologist Myra as cited by Reskin & Padavic 1994:149, who said that women turned to be motivated and committed when they are employed.

4.3.1.1.3 Distance from Work to Home and Vice-visa

Distance was raised as one of the causes of AWOL differences. The participants remarked: “some of us are deployed far from our families, and when we travel home sometimes it takes us two to three days to reach home/work”. One AWOLer remarked, “I had been deployed at Mpacha for the past 21 years while my home village is at Ruacana. I moved to Grootfontein this year (2011), because of illness. Since I got married in 1993, I had never stayed with my wife for more than a month, and cannot stay with my family here, because I cannot afford two houses one here and another one at the village.”

In the employment form that is completed most soldiers indicated that they can be deployed any where in the Republic of Namibia or even abroad wherever the service is required. What is needed therefore is for the soldiers to plan when taking leaves putting distance into considerations. In the

mean time, the NDF should also consider welfare when deploying married soldiers as well as widowers and widows.

4.3.1.1.4 Harsh Orders

The G1 participants pointed out that the current garrison orders in the military base are too strict. They remarked: “our wives and girlfriends are not allowed to come and visit. Therefore, we are forced to AWOL and then may be late for work. This issue affects male soldiers more, because we are different by nature as compared to our female counterparts and cannot stay without wives or girlfriends for too long”.

Respondents most of whom were AWOLers alluded that the Grootfontein Garrison Standing Orders are too strict that they are not allowed to be visited; hence they end up bored and are forced to go out of the base to meet their friends. The Namibian Defence Force has leave policies in place as stipulated in the (General Regulations relating to the Namibian Defence Force section 65-110). The soldiers should utilize their leave days. Soldiers are also given some hours “pass” when requested, whereby one can go and relax when the “need arise”. As a known fact for security reasons Military Bases are shut off from the general public unless otherwise with permission. Therefore, this study may not recommend for male soldiers to be visited by their girlfriends in the Military Bases but, provisions should be made for married couples to be visited by their partners over weekends where accommodation allows.

4.3.1.1.5 Poor Working Conditions

Participants pointed out poor working conditions as a possible cause of AWOL frequencies. One soldier remarked: “at the inception of the Namibian Defence Force things were better, but these days buildings are dilapidated, no recreational facilities, barracks are congested, office spaces are

overcrowded, messes do not have enough chairs, tables, utensils and even the supply of uniforms and beddings is worrisome. This current situation is frustrating and can make us go on AWOL.”

The poor working condition can have a negative effects to the employees, as it causes organisational turnover, where employees resign to look for better services else where, while those who cannot resign may be forced to stay though unhappy and this can stress them and they can end up going on AWOL. on the other hand poor service condition such as overcrowded barracks can be a health hazard as soldiers may easily contract contagious diseases such as tuberculosis. While this may contribute to unfriendly working environment, for the past few years to date, the NDF has been committed on structural development to improve the working conditions.

4.3.1.1.6 Lack of Married Quarters

The respondents pointed out the lack of married quarters in the NDF as one of the main causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL. They remarked: “the NDF should build married quarters because some of us are married but our spouses are staying far away from us”. “This forces us to travel from time to time and with our low salaries sometimes we use up all the money and have to wait for month end to get paid in order to travel back to work”. Others remarked: “Houses are very expensive to buy; hence we do not qualify to buy them”.

Namibia is a vast country and families are all over. The lack of married quarters in the NDF may contribute to problems in the families and may contribute to AWOL as some soldiers may travel long distances to visit and attend to family needs.

4.3.1.1.7 NDF as an Employment Agency

The participants pointed out that the current situation of recruitment in the Namibian Defence Force is also contributing to gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL. The

recruitment of “children of the liberation struggle” and “vulnerable kids” is compromising the NDF’s entry requirements in terms of health, education and criminal records. One respondent remarked, “These new recruits are not interested to work in the NDF, but only interested in making money”.

Deducing from the remarks made by the respondents, this thesis agrees that the procedure of providing employment to “children of the liberation struggle” and “vulnerable kids” should be revised, because the current situation is compromising the NDF’s entry requirements. Some kids are not patriotic and not dedicated to national duties, but rather interested in money only, hence some of them end up going on AWOL.

4.3.1.1.8 Low Salaries

The Group 1 respondents blamed their AWOL on the organisation for paying them low salaries. They remarked: “our salaries are too low that when we visit our families sometimes we are forced to wait for month end, because there is no money to pay for a return transport.

While this may be true that some male soldiers overstay on leave to wait for month end due to lack of transport money to return to work, these should not be blamed on low salaries, but rather on poor financial mismanagement, poor planning and males’ unwillingness to borrow. If a female soldier finds herself in the same situation she would borrow money to pay for transport and return to work.

It is every soldier’s responsibility to ensure that he /she budgets before planning to take a leave except in special circumstances where the leave was not planned. While the researcher agrees that the salaries of NDF members especially the lower ranks should be revised, this does not guarantee that some male soldiers will not go on AWOL. Therefore, there is a need for financial management

skills to be taught among the ranks and file of the NDF to sensitise some male soldiers, because even if the NDF revised the salaries, some male soldiers may still end up mismanaging their money.

4.3.1.2 Leadership Factors

Some respondents claimed that gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies are caused by poor leadership. They pointed out that some commanders do not possess supervisory skills and they treat male and female soldiers unequal. They also claimed that females are given preferential treatment, as a result males ends up dissatisfied and go on AWOL. As opined by Zampekatis & Moustakis (2011: 77- 102) that emotional intelligence of a leader has a bearing on job satisfaction, therefore a number of causes were identified as presented and discussed below:

4.3.1.2.1 Gender Discrimination/ Preferential Treatment

The participants stated that gender discrimination is also one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. One respondent remarked, “Female soldiers are often given preferential treatment as compared to male soldiers. “If a male soldier requested half day off to take his child for immunization, he may be refused, but if a female soldier requested half day off for the same reason, permission is granted without any delay or question”. “Female soldiers are mostly posted in the offices as clerks, while males are posted to infantry companies as riflemen where promotion is rare”. Another one remarked: “I had never seen a lady deployed at Mangetti farm, yet they are fighting for gender equality”.

Mangetti farm is the Namibian Defence Force farm situated in the mangetti area and is manned by NDF members on a rotational basis; therefore male AWOLers pointed out that the female soldiers

are not sent to the said farm. The population size indicated that females make up 18.97% in the Army; therefore it may not be possible for the females to be everywhere, where males are deployed.

Preferential treatment may be practised by some commanders which, may be caused by social, cultural norms and values historically enshrined in religious, ethical, customary and politically beliefs. It was generally believed that women are weak and were expected to handle relatively easy and less dangerous tasks. While men were regarded as bread winners and were expected to handle complex and difficult tasks. This belief has remained strong in the minds of some people and may cause inequalities in the treatment of male and female soldiers. On the other hand, this perception of women as weaker sex that cannot handle some situations need to be researched well to avoid false perceptions, because the issue of who is weak or strong would always be dictated by a situation and to an individual person regardless of gender. This belief is seriously challenged by the women's desire to be empowered to control their lives as well as being allowed to increase self-reliance and self-confidence, hence avoiding AWOL.

Currently, Namibia is a signatory to the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (1997) which is aimed at 50/50 representation by 2015, to be implemented by all offices, ministries and agencies. The current pace at which the NDF is recruiting, training and posting females is an indication that this protocol will not be achieved, because women are still not being accorded the opportunity they deserve. Therefore, those who are applying preferential treatment should realize that they are depriving those they think they are protecting their rights.

4.3.1.2.2 Favouritism

The participants further observed that favouritism was a cause of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers. They remarked that: “Female soldiers are often more favoured by commanders as compared to male soldiers”. For example, one male AWOLer remarked and was supported by his fellows, “if a female soldier phoned her commander requesting for the extension of her leave, because she encountered a personal problem while at home, she will be granted the leave, but if a male soldier does the same, he is told to report back to the unit, that is why one may just decide to stay and solve the problem, before coming back to work”.

Some of what may appear to be favour or discriminatory practices may actually be as a result of female soldiers being seen as more responsible than their male counterparts. The very fact that more male soldiers go AWOL than females may create an impression in the minds of the commanders that female soldiers are more reliable and dependable than males. In this case the commanders may become more positively responsive to female soldiers’ personal issues than males, as a reward for being more compliant to organisational rules and the commanders’ demand.

4.3.1.2.3 Poor Supervision

Participants in the Group one (G1) pointed out poor supervision at different levels of command to be one of the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies. They emphasized that poor supervision starts at section commanders’ level, who are the immediate commanders and upwards. They remarked:” some commanders are one sided, they are tribalistic and they do not act when we tell them our problems”.

Poor supervision may be occurring in some sections as some immediate commanders may be too reluctant to attend to their subordinates problems, which may results in demotivation, frustrations

and AWOL therefore, supervisory skills workshops should be organised in order to give commanders at different levels the supervisory skills needed to run their sections effectively.

4.3.1.2.4 Tribalism

Tribalism was pointed out as a further cause of AWOL frequencies. One participant remarked: “the Namibian Defence Force is being run like a kingdom by some of those who are at higher level of management. Some of us who are from the minority tribes are suffering: no promotion no matter how hard you work. If I go on AWOL with my colleague, he or she is marked present. Missions abroad are only for friends and a few lucky ones. One may find that a person, who is medically unfit, may go on a mission even though he or she does not meet the requirements; just because he or she knows some one at the top, this person will not be disqualified. This is frustrating and can make us to go on AWOL”.

This study was not able to prove this allegation of tribalism, though reminding that Namibia is a multi ethnic society therefore, Namibians ought to fight the tribal domain for the benefit of nation building. On the other hand soldiers should know that in Namibia there are tribes which consists of more people than others for example the Ovambo people make up plus minus 50% of the country’s population, followed by the Kavango and then Hereroes. Therefore, the larger the tribe the more that particular tribe dominate in all sectors of employment in the republic of which the NDF is one of the sectors.

If tribalism is finding its way through the ranks and files of the NDF, commanders have to be cautioned, because tribalism has negative impact on nation building as it separate people thereby, posing a threat to national unity as well as raising political instability. An example of countries

who witness the negative impact of tribalism are Rwanda and Burundi in Africa and former Yugoslavia in Europe Balkans just to mention few.

4.3.1.2.5 Failure to Act

The Group 1 respondents observed commanders' failure to act as one of the causes of AWOL frequencies among soldiers. One respondent remarked and was supported by others; "My house was destroyed by flood last year 2011, then I decided to apply for a "detached duty" on humanitarian ground to Oshakati for three months in August 2011, so that during weekends I can travel home to build huts, because travelling from Grootfontein to Ombalantu every weekend is costly I cannot afford it. Up to now January 2012 I have not heard if my application was disapproved or not and the rain has started. My family is looking at me as a man to provide shelter and this may force me to go on AWOL.

This is an indication of a loss of confidence by some soldiers in their commanders. Provision of feedback is an important tool in leadership to clear doubts; it can be positive or negative. Therefore, commanders should try their best way to provide feedback where required.

4.3.1.2.6 Lack of Confidentiality

Some respondents from both categories AWOLers and non AWOLers in focus groups and questionnaires pointed out that lack of confidentiality is also a possible cause of AWOL frequencies. One respondent in the focus group remarked and was supported by others; "we are not free to discuss our personal problems with our commanders, because some of them do not keep secrets, therefore we do not discuss our problems anymore and when the problem keep persisting, this causes us to go AWOL.

If this exists as indicated by respondents, it is an indication of poor leadership qualities on the side of the commanders, as well as loss of confidence from the soldiers' side. Soldiers look at their commanders as their leaders entrusted to take care of their problems both personal and work related. In order to enhance the commander / soldier relation, commanders have to be professional when dealing with their soldiers' problems.

4.3.1.3 Personal Factors

Both groups of respondents the AWOLers and the non-AWOLers pointed out some types of personal problems that are believed to cause gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. These personal problems are believed to be the most troubled and the most difficult to overcome. They are presented and discussed as follows:

4.3.1.3.1 Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The respondents, most especially the non-AWOLers, pointed out alcohol and drug abuse as one of the main causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base, because more male soldiers abuse alcohol and drugs as compared to female soldiers and this make them late for work, or not to turn up at all. They remarked that "more male soldiers consume and abuse alcohol as compared to their female counterparts". When males consume excessive alcohol or drugs, they become intoxicated and weak, hence unable to wake up in the morning to go and attend roll calls, resulting in AWOL.

This is said to be frequently occurring on pay days and days after pay. Some male soldiers' behaviours are unethical, and reflect poorly on their integrity, work ethics and honesty. It must be each and every soldier's responsibility to ensure that he or she informs his/her commander of

his/her where-about and reasons for his/her absence must be produced upon arrival at work. On the other hand, male soldiers who are addicted to alcohol and drugs, gambling, cash loans and financial mismanagements can only be helped if they themselves are ready to do restructuring of consciousness. They tend to gamble, abuse alcohol and drugs, are undisciplined and have many sexual partners, which may expose them to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea and syphilis. Commanders can motivate, encourage or inspire, but then male soldiers must decide to change, because change can only be realised through individual efforts.

The Military Disciplinary Code section 35 is clear on drugs and alcohol abuse, it prohibit drunkenness and other offences relating to intoxicating liquor during and after working hours. This section further prohibit soldiers from making themselves unfit for the proper performance of their duties due to excessive use of alcohol. Despite the availability of this section, soldiers still drink and fail to report or report to work under the influence of alcohol. Alberty & McCann (1993:32-34) pointed out that people who consume excessive alcohol are people with anger, frustration, bored and depression caused by many things such as family problems, work related problem, co-workers just to mention some.

The researcher agrees with respondents that excessive drinking of alcohol in the Grootfontein Military Base is real. For example; the research programme was interrupted on month ends due to the unavailability of some respondents who did not turn up at work on days after pay as a result of AWOL. Hence, it is real that alcohol and drug abuse is one of the causes of unlawful absence in the Grootfontein Military base. The Directorate of Health in the Ministry of Defence should take this as a challenge to take up a campaign on the impacts of alcohol and drugs in all services. There is also a great need of unit commanders through the low level commanders to identify frequent

AWOLers and referred them to social workers and counsellors who will further refer them to rehabilitation centres rather than being trial without any change until discharged.

4.3.1.3.2 Illness

Participants raised illness as a cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies, claiming that the health status of male soldiers cannot be compared to that of female soldiers. Male soldiers in the units are suffering more frequently from tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and high blood pressure, as compared to female soldiers and this can cause AWOL frequencies and discrepancies. Due to illness some male soldiers are not able to attend parades where roll calls are conducted, hence they end up being marked AWOL while sleeping in the barracks.

While the point of most male soldiers being ill as compared to their female counterparts may be true, this point cannot be justified as a cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies, because firstly, Grootfontein Military base has an equipped military hospital where ill soldiers can be hospitalised until fit for work.

Secondly, each and every NDF soldier is entitled to 132 days sick leave with full pay in a period of three years and another 132 days sick leave with half pay for another three years. In the event where a member has exhausted all his/her sick leave, but due to illness is still unable to resume work, may be granted sick leave without pay for a period not exceeding 260 days in three years (General Regulations sect 89-95).

The soldiers who claimed that they are marked AWOL while in the barracks, are those with short term illness of 1 to 3 days and it is their obligations to inform their commander regarding their illness. The issue of members marked AWOL while sick in the barracks, is also an indication of absence of effective interpersonal communication among soldiers, because some of them are

accommodated in the barracks, where if a person is ill, the barrack mates ought to report him at the parade or to his or her commanders to avoid being marked AWOL. Therefore communication between first level commanders and their subordinates should be strengthened to avoid members being marked AWOL while sick in the barracks.

4.3.1.3.3 Ignorance of the Law

The Group 2 participants (G2) non-AWOLers pointed out ignorance of the law by the AWOLers to be one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL. They emphasized that some male soldiers have a “don’t care” attitude that has made them ignorant as compared to female soldiers, hence they end up breaking the laid down rules and regulations in the units.

Ignorance of the law is a sign of indiscipline and lack of commitment to the job. Stuart (1993:130) cited a man who wrote that: “An ignorant man is regarded as not the unlearned, but he who does not know himself, while the so-called learned man is stupid when he relies on books and authority to give him understanding”. True understanding comes through self-knowledge, which is an awareness of ones’ total psychological process. Therefore this study assumes that, those who are ignorant will never know the laid down regulations, unless they undergo a process of self reconstruction.

4.3.1.3.4 Discipline and Indiscipline

The group 2 participants, both males and females, pointed out that the higher level of discipline displayed by female soldiers as compared to male soldiers can cause gender-based differences in absenteeism. Female soldiers try to follow the laid down procedures to avoid breaching the rules, though there are very few who violate the laid down rules. They remarked, “we have been

undermined in the past therefore we are trying our level best to show not only the organisation, but the world that we are committed and capable and can be good commanders. It is shameful for a female to be seen drunk or gambling or appearing in a court because of AWOL”.

On the other hand, the Group 2 participants indicated that indiscipline is a cause of AWOL differences among male and female soldiers. Participants remarked: “Some male soldiers do not listen or do what their superiors are telling them to do; they disobey lawful command and engaged themselves in unseemingly behaviours toward their superiors or their fellow soldiers as compared to female soldiers”. The Military Disciplinary Code (MDC) is clear on the behaviour of a soldier in respective of gender, but AWOLers choose to ignore the rules by displaying “don’t care” attitudes (insubordinations) towards their commanders as well as co-workers. Some ex-combatants, because of the contributions they made during the liberation struggle shows insubordinations to those who didn’t fight with them or to their young commanders, while the young blood shows insubordination, because they are unpatriotic and are not yet familiar with the military environment. There is a great need of intensive training to let both group understand, tolerate and respect each other as well as create group ties and encourage stable groups with satisfying person-work relationships.

4.3.1.3.5 Gambling

Participants indicated that gambling is one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL, because more male soldiers like gambling, as compared to female soldiers. Therefore they end up “playing out” the money they earned. This frustrates them once the money is finished. One female soldier remarked, “On month end some male soldiers sleep in the bars gambling and drinking, spending all the money they earned. By the tenth or fifteenth of the month some of them don’t have even a blue cent”.

Gambling happens mostly on month end when soldiers get paid. Some male soldiers have become gambling addicts, therefore they need to be identified by their commanders and referred to the counsellors and social workers for proper diagnostic and referral to Rehabilitation Centres where possible. Those who have not yet become addicts should be helped through awareness campaigns on the impacts of gambling.

4.3.1.3.6 Personal Work Relation

Group 2 participants pointed out lack of job commitments and responsibilities on the side of male soldiers to be the cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among soldiers. One female participant remarked that: “female soldiers are fulfilling their tasks as required unlike some male soldiers”. One female remarked and was supported by others: “we are working hard to take care of ourselves and our families with the little we earn, but some males do not support their families, they spend their money on drug, alcohol and deductions as a punishment when they are found guilty, of AWOL. Some male soldiers are not committed.”

Van der Merwe & Miller (1988:5) identified personal work relations as a cause of absenteeism. They said that workers enter the job place with different needs and aspirations which they may wish to satisfy, therefore the work relation may differ from person to person depending on whether it is positive and satisfying or it is negative. The withdrawal of male soldiers through AWOL is an indication of dissatisfaction with work relation, lack of commitment and lack of responsibilities. In this circumstance female soldiers often display high responsibilities and a sense of satisfactory work relation.

4.3.1.3.7 Peer Pressure

Participants indicated that peer pressure is a cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies. They argued that some male soldiers do go on AWOL, because of peer group pressure. Males like to imitate others; they often end up going on AWOL, just because a friend is doing it. One male remarked, “A soldier in our platoon went on AWOL for consecutive 20 days, his salary was then suspended. When he reported back, he was summarily trial; his salary took too long to be reinstated. After almost 5 months of non-payment, his salary was reinstated and he received more money for the months that he didn’t receive salary. When some male soldiers saw this, some of them started going AWOL with the aim of getting more money at once”.

Male soldiers are humans, there are those who may be influenced by others and there are those who may not be influenced. What is lacking in those who allowed themselves to be influenced is sensitisation among soldiers on the impact of peer group pressure.

4.3.1.3.8 Cash Loans

Cash loans were pointed out by the Group 2 participants as one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. One female soldier remarked, “Some male soldiers have become cash loans addicts as compared their female counterparts. Some male soldiers, because of that feeling of “being men” always tried to show off. Some times they compete with high ranking officers over girlfriends; by trying to show that they have money to entertain them, while they often do not. This leads them to borrow money. They have become addicted to cash loan in that sense.

4.3.1.3.9 Sensitivity

Participants further said that higher “sensitivity” by female soldiers caused less AWOL among them, because that feeling of femininity in females made them behave more responsibly. Females are sensitive and more careful “by nature”; therefore they are less often involved in risk taking acts. This research agrees with the point of females’ sensitivity which is natural and at times can place them at the safer site.

4.3.1.3.10 Poor Financial Management

The Group 2 (G2) participants indicated that poor financial management did cause differences in absenteeism among male and female soldiers. They emphasized that some male soldiers do not know how to manage their money properly as compared to their female counterparts. One female remarked, “Some male soldiers are spending their money unnecessary by spending on alcohol and drugs, gambling and multiple sexual partners.”

4.3.1.3.11 Masculinity

Participants stated that some male soldiers often indulge in risky behaviours “just because they are men”. They have the feelings of being strong and masculine as compared to females; therefore they are not afraid to take risks such as drinking heavily, having multiple sexual partners, borrowing huge amounts of money to entertain themselves. They are not even afraid of being discharged from work”.

4.3.1.4 Psychological factors

Most respondents from both groups indicated that some soldiers may be going on AWOL, because of psychological problem. Males are by nature quiet and do not cry easily, therefore they may opt to remain silent with their problems which would later develop into psychological problems.

Troubles such as work related, families and personal such as illness, gambling, alcohol and drug abuse may cause psychological disorders that may force someone to AWOL.

4.3.1.4.1 Lack of Counselling

Both group participants pointed out lack of counselling in the units as a contributing factor to gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. An ex- SWATF soldiers remarked: “I was recruited in the SWATF in a compulsory term, in accordance with the constitution of South Africa that time, despite the fact that I had been a SWAPO member and this has affected me, because I do not feel comfortable among my peers, being it at the village or here at work. Sometimes I used to suffer from fear, anxiety, sadness and depression”. One female soldier remarked; “some male soldiers shows some signs of psychological disorders and in the absence of counsellors in the units some soldiers keep on going AWOL until discharged instead of being counselled.

The issue of post war trauma such as stress, anger, frustration, as well as unresolved grief can be real among NDF soldiers especially the ex-combatants. Some feels that the sacrifices they made during the liberation struggle have not been appreciated. The slow pace of the resettlement process to allocate land to the ex-combatant, low salaries, non-affordability of houses in urban areas just to mention a few are some of the causes of post-war trauma.

In recent years the NDF recruited chaplains, social workers and trained counsellors to take care of spiritual and psychosocial counselling among soldiers, but majority of them are not aware of their existence and necessities, therefore an awareness campaign to sensitize soldiers should be conducted unit by unit.

The General Regulations relating to the Namibian Defence Force (2010), section 85, makes provisions for a member of the NDF to be granted 132 days in 18 months in order for such member to undergo initial treatment for addiction to alcohol and drugs with a view to rehabilitate. Provided that such member must have a certificate issued by the Head of Defence Force Medical Services indicating that continued treatment is necessary. This section is not known therefore, the Medical Services should intervene to ensure that commanders at all level as well as soldiers are aware in order to make use of it by helping their soldiers who have become slaves of alcohol and drugs.

The following table indicates a summary of probable causes for gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in order of prominence as indicated by the two groups:

Table 4.5 Causes of Gender-Based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding AWOL as Indicated by G1 & G2

G1 AWOLers	G2 Non-AWOLers
➤ Difference in Population	➤ Ignorance of the law
➤ Alcohol abuse	➤ Indiscipline
➤ Favoritism	➤ Masculinity
➤ Gender discrimination	➤ Alcohol abuse
➤ Lack of motivation	➤ Discipline
➤ Illness	➤ Gambling
➤ Strict orders	➤ Lack of job commitment
➤ Poor supervision	➤ Peer pressure
➤ Tribalism	➤ Cash loan
➤ Low Salary	➤ Sensitivity
➤ Failure to act	➤ Laziness
➤ Poor working Condition	➤ Lack of responsibility
➤ Refusal of leave	➤ Poor financial management
	➤ NDF as employment agency

4.4 Findings and Discussion of the Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used as one of the tool to collect data. After completion, questionnaires were analysed item by item. Two groups were identified, One group for those who said that they have gone on AWOL in their course of service which were 29 in total; and another group for those who indicated that they have never gone on AWOL which were 56 in total, giving a total sample of questionnaire respondents to be 85. The questionnaire had 27 questions, questions 1-9, 13-21 and 27 were for both categories AWOLers and non-AWOLers, while questions 10-12, 25 and 26 were for AWOLers only.

Table 4.6 Sample of Questionnaires Respondents as per Units and Gender

Units	AWOLers		Non- AWOLers		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
AHQ	0	0	5	5	10
Dolphin Bn	5	2	0	8	15
Mil Hosp	0	0	5	5	10
Log Bn	8	0	2	10	20
26 Bde	7	0	0	8	15
Recce Regt	7	0	0	8	15
Grand Total	27	2	12	44	85

Keys:

The questionnaires were analysed item by item and the responses were presented in a sequence as they appear in the questionnaire as follows:

4.4.1 Gender of Respondents

This question wanted to establish the gender of respondents to the questionnaires, which indicated that, of 85 respondents 46 (54.1%) were females, while 39 (45.9%) were males. The numbers of female respondents were slightly higher than that of male respondents, despite the fact that males are the majority. This was as a result of the males' reluctance to partake in the research.

Table 4.7 Gender of Respondents

Response	Females	Males	Total
Frequency	46	39	85
Percentage	54.1	45.9	100%

4.4.2 Respondents' Marital Status

This question wanted to establish the respondents' marital status with the aim to determine the marital status that frequently goes on AWOL. Here, of 85 respondents, 3 did not respond, 45 were married, 34 were single and 3 were widowers.

Table 4.8 Respondents' Marital Status

Response	No response	Married	Not married	Widower	Total
Frequency	3	45	34	3	85
AWOL	0	10	17	2	29
Percentage	0	34.5	58.6	6.9	100%

Out of 45 married 10 of them have been on AWOL, out of 34 singles 17 have been on AWOL and out of 3 widowers 2 have gone on AWOL. This is an indication that unmarried goes on AWOL more frequently as compared to the married ones.

4.4.3 Parental Status of Respondents

This question aimed to determine the relationship between parental status and AWOL frequencies. Out of 85 respondents, 16 said they do not have children and 5 of them have gone on AWOL, while 69 said they have children and 24 of them have gone on AWOL. The majority of respondents were parents and dominant in AWOL frequencies.

Table 4.9 Parental Status

Response	No children	Have children	Total
Frequency	16	69	85
AWOL	5	24	29
Percentage	17	83	100%

4.4.4 Age of Respondents

This question wanted to establish the age ranges of respondents with the aim to determine the maturity of respondents. This was indicated as follow:

- a. 14 respondents were between 18-25 years.
- b. 11 respondents were between 26-30 years
- c. 39 respondents were between 31-40 years and
- d. 21 respondents were 41 years and above.

Most respondents who participated in this study were in the age group of 31-40, followed by those 41 years and above. Participants were therefore clearly all mature enough to understand the consequences of their actions; hence they were expected to behave responsibly.

Table 4.10 Respondents' age Group

Age	18 -25	26 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 60	Total
Frequency	14	11	39	21	85
Percentage	16.5	12.9	45.9	24.7	100%

4.4.5 Period Served with the NDF

This question wanted to establish the period served by respondents in the NDF in relation to knowledge on procedures of applying for leave of absence. 14 (16.4%) respondents indicated that they have been in the force for 1-5 years, 12 (14.1%) indicated that they have been in the force for 6-10 years, 38 (44.7%) have been in the force for 11-15 years and 21(24.7%) have been in the force for 16-21 years. Most respondents have been employed for 11 years and above and ought to have an understanding of procedures followed when applying for leave of absence from work to avoid AWOL.

Table 4.11 Respondents' Duration of Service

Years	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-21	Total
Frequency	14	11	39	21	85
Percentage	16.4	12.9	45.8	24.7	100%

4.4.6 Respondents' Rank Group

This question wanted to determine the rank group which is most affected by AWOL frequencies. Out of the 85 respondents, 22 (25.8%) were privates, while 63 (74.1%) were non-commissioned officers.

Table 4.12 Rank Group

Rank	Privates	Non-Commissioned off.	Total
Frequency	22	63	85
AWOL	9	20	29
Percentage	31	69	100%

4.4.7&8 Awareness of distinction between AWOL and desertion

Out of 85 respondents only 19 (22.35%) were able to differentiate AWOL from desertion; the remaining 66 (77.6%) could not. This is an indication that soldiers are not familiar with the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002. Therefore policies formulated should be made known to each and every member to ensure success.

Table 4.13 Distinction

Response	Differentiate	Not differentiate	Total
Frequency	19	66	85
Percentage	22.35	77.64	100%

4.4.9 AWOL Status of Respondents

Of 85 respondents, 56 indicated that they never went on AWOL in the course of service. 56 who said so, 12 were males, while 44 were females. Of 29 who said they have gone on AWOL, the 2 were females while 27 were males. This is a further indication of the low frequency of female AWOLers in the Grootfontein Military Base.

Table 4.14 Respondents' AWOL Status

Response	Non-AWOLers		AWOLers		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Frequency	12	44	27	2	85
Percentage	14.11	52	32	2.35	100%

4.4.10 Length of AWOL

This question was a follow up of question 4.4.9. It wanted to establish the duration of AWOL by those who said they went on AWOL at some stage. Two (6%) of these indicated a period of less

than a day, nine (31%) indicated a period of two to five days, 13 (44.8%) indicated a period of six to eight days and five (17.3%) indicated a period of nine days and above. The majority of AWOLers did not fall in the prolonged AWOL category, but rather in a period of 1-8 days.

Table 4.15 Duration on AWOL

Days	Less than a day	2 - 5	6 - 8	9 and above	Total
Frequency	2	9	13	5	85
Percentage	6.9	31	44.8	17.3	100%

4.4.11 Reasons for Absence from Work Without Permission

This question was specifically intended for AWOLers, to give reasons as to what made them go AWOL. The following table is a summary of the reasons for being absent from work without permission, which are the same as causes, presented and discussed under 4.3.1. They listed them as follows:

Table 4.16 Reasons for AWOL as Listed by AWOLers

Factors	Reason
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low salaries • Lack of motivation • Distance • Lack of family Quarters • Poor living condition
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor supervisions • Discrimination • Favouritism • Tribalism
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and drug abuse • Illness • Gambling • Family matters
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of counselling

4.4.12 Disciplinary Action Taken on Return

This question was specifically addressed to those who have been on AWOL before. Of 29 who said that they have been caught out being absent from work without permission, 27 indicated that they were tried by a military court and only two were warned. They thought this was because they were absent for less than a day.

Table 4.17 Action taken

Action	Warned	Trialled	Total
Frequency	2	27	29
Percentage	6.89	93.1	100%

4.4.13 Gender-based AWOL Frequencies in the Units

This question was intended to determine the gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base. Of 85 respondents, 20 (23%) respondents from AHQ and the Military Hospital did not need to answer this question, because there were no AWOLers at these units. From the other four units, 20 (23%) strongly agreed, 38 (44%) agreed, seven disagreed that male soldiers go on AWOL more frequently than female soldiers. This is an indication that male soldiers absent more frequently than their female counterparts.

Table 4.18 Gender-based AWOL Frequencies

Response	No AWOL	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Total
Frequency	20	20	38	7	85
Percentage	23.5	23.5	45	8	100%

4.4.14 Causes of Gender-Based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding AWOL among Soldiers

This question was asked to determine the perceptions of respondents regarding the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in their units and they listed the causes without expanding any further, because the question did not give that provision, but these causes were explained in detail in the focus group discussions. They were listed as follow in the table below:

Table 4.4.19 Causes of Gender-based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding AWOL as Indicated by Respondents

AWOLers	Non-AWOLers
✓ Preferential treatment	✓ Ignorance of the law
✓ Population difference	✓ Indiscipline
✓ Favouritism	✓ Gambling
✓ Lack of motivation	✓ Alcohol and drug abuse
✓ Illness	✓ Masculinity
✓ Tribalism	✓ Sensitivity
✓ Low salaries	✓ Poor financial management
✓ Strict orders	✓ Cash loans
✓ Distance	✓ Peer pressure
	✓ Lack of responsibility

4.4.15 Effects of Gender-Based AWOL Frequencies and discrepancies

Respondents listed some of the effects of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies, to the AWOLers, the co-workers and the NDF at large as follows:

Table 4.4.20 Effects of Gender-based AWOL Frequencies as Indicated by Respondents

AWOLers	Non-AWOLers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Loss of income ✓ Rejection by co-workers and d families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lack of experts in fields such as artillerists, boat driver, electrician and engineers ✓ Work loads ✓ Work left undone ✓ Few resting days to shift workers ✓ Mission failures ✓ Rejection of leaves due to manpow er shortages

4.4.16 Possible Measures to Minimise the Problem of Gender-based AWOL Frequencies

The AWOLers and non-AWOLers were asked to give suggestions on what should be done to reduce AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in their units and they suggested the following individual solutions:

- There should be equal treatment irrespective of gender.
- High penalties must be enforced.
- Commanders should be trained in supervisory skills.
- Soldiers' performances should be taken into consideration before promotion.
- Male soldiers should be sensitized on the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse.
- Recruits should be informed of what to expect in the NDF.

- The salaries of the lower ranks in the NDF should be revised.
- The NDF should build married quarters so that married couples can live with their families.
- Male soldiers should change their behaviour.
- Provide counselling to frequent AWOLers, as they may be faced with psychological problems.
- The NDF should set up recreational facilities in the base.
- There must be an improvement in the working conditions.
- Soldiers must be motivated and encouraged.
- In-service training on the existing rules and regulations to address AWOL should be conducted so that soldiers understand the procedures of applying for leave of absence and the effects of AWOL thereof.

4.4.17 Rating of the Understanding of Existing Rules and Regulations

Out of 85 respondents, 60 (70.6%) said they were well informed on the existing rules and regulations, while 25 (29.4) said they were not well informed. The majority of the respondents who said that they were not well informed have gone on AWOL on occasion. Despite the majority indicating that they are well informed, at 4.4.7 & 8, 77.6% could not differentiate AWOL from desertion which is a bit contradictory.

Table 4.21 Rating on Respondents' Knowledge of the Existing Regulations

Response	Well Informed	Not Well Informed	Total
Frequency	60	25	85
Percentage	70.6	29.4	100%

4.4.18 Reasons as to why not well informed

This was a follow-up of question 4.4.17. Here the researcher wanted to find out the reasons as to why the respondents were not well-informed on the existing rules and regulations. Of the 25 respondents who said that they were not well informed, 2 blamed poor education, 3 blamed absenteeism and 20 raised the issue of rules and regulations not being properly explained to them in their units, apart from some explanations given during the Basic Training they received during their induction. This is an indication of weak in-service training in the units to “solidify” the soldiers’ knowledge on the existing policies.

Table 4.22 Reasons for not being well informed

Reasons	Illiterate	Absenteeism	Not Explained	Total
Frequency	2	3	20	25
Percentage	8	12	80	100%

4.4.19 Effectiveness of Existing Regulations

Of 85 respondents, 55 said that the regulations were effective, 10 said they were fairly effective and 20 said that the regulations were not effective. Of the 20 who said that the regulations were not effective they have all indicated that they have gone on AWOL before, a clear indication that AWOLers are not familiar with the existing rules.

Table 4.23 Effectiveness of Existing Regulations

Response	Effective	Fairly Effective	Not Effective	Total
Frequency	55	10	20	85
Percentage	64.7	8.5	23.5	100%

4.4.20 Gender Discrimination in the NDF

Of 85 respondents, 40 (47%) indicated that according to them there is gender discrimination in the NDF, while the remaining 45 (53%) indicated that there is no gender discrimination in the NDF. This is an indication that both groups indicated a presence of gender discrimination in the NDF.

Table 4.24 Gender Discrimination in the NDF

Response	TRUE	FALSE	Total
Frequency	40	45	85
Percentage	47	53	100%

4.4.21 Substantiation of arguments

This was a follow up question of question 4.4.20. It is presented here and discussed under gender discrimination and preferential treatment 4.3.1.2.1. Those who agreed that there is gender discrimination in the NDF substantiated their arguments as follows:

- a. Female soldiers are given preferential treatment by the commanders; therefore their problems are taken into consideration, unlike those of male soldiers. “If a male and a female soldier both apply for a “detached duty” citing the same reason, the female’s “detach duty” will be approved, while that of the male is disapproved”.
- b. The majority of female soldiers are not posted in infantry sections, but are given clerical job, nursing and bar ladies.

- c. Some female soldiers said male soldiers are often favoured more than females, because they are often occupying better positions in the force and when it comes to training, males are often sent to attend courses abroad.
- d. Females said they feel discriminated against, because when it comes to employment in positions such as artillery, land mine laying and truck drivers, they are not trained in those fields.

Those who reckoned that there was no gender discrimination substantiated this by saying:

- a. All soldiers are treated equal, irrespective of gender. “We received the same training and posting. It is just that women are fewer; hence their activities are “invisible”.

Here both male and female soldiers claimed to be discriminated, but fortunate enough despite females crying out to be discriminated, this has not forced them to go on AWOL.

4.4.22 Evaluation of gender equality

This question provided the same results as indicated in question 4.4.20 whereby 45 respondents still indicated a feeling of equal treatment, while 40 thought that there was unequal treatment.

Table 4.25 Evaluation of gender equality

Response	Equal	Unequal	Total
Frequency	45	40	85
Percentage	53	47	100%

4.4.23 Ease of Approach to Commanders

Of 85 respondents, 47 respondents indicated that they found it relatively easy to approach their commanders when they had personal or work related problems. While 38 respondents indicated that they did not find it easy to discuss their problems with their commanders.

Table 4.26 Ease of Approach

Response	Easy	Uneasy	Total
Frequency	47	38	85
Percentage	55.3	44.7	100%

4.4.24 Reasons Given for Difficult in Approaching Commanders

This was a follow up of section 4.4.23, asking those who indicated that they did not feel free to discuss their problems with their superiors to give reasons. They raised the following as obstacles that prevented them from discussing their problems with their commanders:

Table 4.27 Obstacles to ease of approach

Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality breaks down • Unwillingness to listen (commanders) • Tribalism • Favouritism • Failure to act (commanders)

4.4.25 Factors Affect AWOLers' Non-attendance at Work

Of the 29 AWOLers, 20 (69%) of respondents indicated family matters, drinking, gambling, social recreation, no transport money to return to work after leave, low salaries, stress, and poor leadership as factors that affected their non-attendance. 9 (31%) of respondents indicated lack of

motivation, personal problems, over strict orders and poor working conditions as factors that affected non-attendance.

Table 4.28 Influence on AWOLers

Frequency	69%	31%
Response	Family Matters	Lack of motivation
	Drinking	Personal problems
	Gambling	Strict Orders
	No transport money	Poor working conditions
	Low salaries	
	No recreational facilities	
	Distance	
	Poor leadership	

4.4.26 AWOL Frequency

Out of 29 AWOLers, 20 respondents indicated that they go on AWOL once a month and this is probably on month end when they get paid, because this is the time as indicated in the roll call books which recorded most AWOLs. 5 respondents indicated that they went on AWOL once a week and 4 respondents indicated that they went on AWOL anytime they felt like. This is an indication of AWOL on selected days which occur mostly on month ends and beginning of the month.

Table 4.29 AWOL Frequency

Response	Once a Month	Once a Week	Anytime	Total
Frequency	20	5	4	29
Percentage	68.96	17.24	13.8	100%

4.4.27 Other Comments

Most of the points raised here were not much different from the points raised at question 4.4.16, in exception of two who said more women should be inducted into the NDF and should be trained in all the fields as their male counter parts, because their behaviour is better of than that of male soldiers.

4.5 Presentation and Discussion of Effects of Gender-based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding AWOL According to G1, G2 and Questionnaires

Both groups AWOLers and non-AWOLers in focus group discussions and in questionnaires listed the following consequences suffered by individuals, co-workers, families and the organisation as a result of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base and the NDF at large. They are presented and discussed as follows:

The Group 1 respondents were reluctant to point out the effects of gender-based AWOL frequencies, but later they pointed out loss of income due to suspension of salaries as an effect. They remarked: “when we go on AWOL our salaries used to be suspended after seven days of continued AWOL, but it takes time to be reinstated, as a result one can go even for three months without any income”. “This affects us badly, because there is no income during that period until the salary is reinstated”.

Another effect of AWOL indicated by Group 1 respondents is rejection by families and friends. The participants pointed out that, when they go on AWOL, upon returning back to work some of their friends are no longer happy with them, and when they have no money as a result of the suspension of their salary, friends, family members and co-workers reject them.

Male soldiers who are frequent AWOLers reflect badly on their work ethics and honesty, hence it may reduce confidence and trust by fellow soldiers, families and friends hence creating unhealthy relation.

The Group 2 participants had point out a couple of effects unlike Group 1 respondents who seem not to be aware of the consequences caused by their action when they go on AWOL. They pointed out shortages of manpower as one of the effects of gender-based AWOL frequencies. They remarked: We are affected by AWOL such that; some sections are left with shortages of manpower and as a result the work becomes too many, because we have to do our work and that of those who are absent”. Shortages of manpower caused heavier work load on our shoulders, therefore this can become stressful and may again force us to go on AWOL, as a result of too much work.

As pointed out by Huczynski & Fitzpatrick (1988:18), the work load could cause a decrease in morale, which in turn could lead to higher rates of staff turnover, more grievances and increase late coming. Employees who are committed to their work find unlawful absence soul destroying.

Another effect observed by Group 2 and non AWOLers on questionnaires is “refusal of leave”. Participants indicated that they used to be refused leave by their supervisors. They remarked: “refusal of leave affects us, because one may have even a wedding in the family or a significant event and by missing an important event as a result of other peoples mistake is frustrating and can force a person to go on AWOL”.

This is another interpersonal impact suffered by those who are committed, but they have to bear in mind that, there are certain percentages of soldiers that are required to remain in the units at all times. If the commanders see that the unit strength is low, it is their prerogative to disapprove or suspend the leaves. This may affects some disciplined and committed soldiers and may force them

to go on AWOL at times, if they are not trained to understand that NDF is a professional unit whose personnel had to be patriotic and dedicated to national duties.

The respondents further indicated that the few resting days to those who work shifts is also an effect of gender-based AWOL frequencies. They stated that when-ever there are members on AWOL, their resting days become less, and this is affecting them negatively.

Another effect indicated was the possibility of total mission failure. This affects the unit's operational capability which is a danger not only to that unit's readiness, but also to the people who were going to be served, for example flood victims. Absence without leave can lead to a cancellation of a mission, for example if there is a bush fire on one of the farms and soldiers are summoned to help extinguish it; the absence of a fire extinguisher truck driver could cause total mission failure. Another example given is that of a land mine expert that once went on AWOL and labourers cutting trees in the base come across a strange object suspected to be a land mine. An arrangement has to be made for an engineer from another unit to come, because only a specialized trained person could do the demining.

The loss of income due to discharge was pointed out as an effect caused by AWOL. The Group 2 participants pointed out that, those members who go on prolonged AWOL or those who absent frequent from work without permission end up being discharged from the force after trial and found guilty. Once discharged they are no longer having an income. Some of these members were the sole bread winners in their families therefore; this does not only affect the individual member but the family at large.

The court martial registers from the six units of study in the Grootfontein Military Base indicated that six soldiers were discharged due to AWOL five males and one female resulting in job loss.

These job losses affect the AWOLers and their families more especially if the person was a sole bread winner. It also affects the co-workers and the NDF at large. Male soldiers who are frequent AWOLers reflect badly on their work ethics and honesty, therefore it reduces confidence and trust by fellow co-workers, families and friends. AWOL may also affect the AWOLers' ability to perform at a high rank, in other words their future appointments and promotions.

Lastly, the Group 2 participants observed that the Namibian Defence Force is losing money to train experts to replace those who have been discharged as a result of AWOL. It is costly to train an artillerist, land mine expert or even a platoon sergeant. They also indicated that the NDF is losing money to pay for the subsistence and travelling allowance and fuel cost of trial officers who travel from one unit to another to trial AWOLers due to shortages of trial officers. The cost of Military Police who have to travel to areas where there are no military bases to arrest AWOL offenders can not be excluded as a cost.

On the other hand, the NDF lost potential members as result of AWOL frequencies, which may have effects on the unit's operational effectiveness and combat readiness, as most of the fields are best known by male soldiers as compared to female counterparts. Fields such as engineering, pilots, artillerists, land mine experts, electricians are some of the areas best known by male soldiers.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the data and discuss the findings that this study manages to collect from the six units of study in the Grootfontein Military Base. The data was collected by means of questionnaires, documents survey and focus group discussions, where similar findings were

grouped together such as the information obtained from the roll call books, the summary trial registers and the court martial registers.

This chapter presented the causes of gender-base frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL, the trends and the effects as indicated by the non-AWOLers and AWOLers in the questionnaires and in the focus group discussions. The discussion on the causes of AWOL frequencies was grouped in thematic such as organisational factors, leadership factors, personal factors and psychological factors. In this chapter the study found that there are those who commit an offence of AWOL due to lack of knowledge on available procedures, there are those who commit it because of various frustrations causes by different factors. The effects of AWOL can be detrimental to the individual AWOLers, their families, co-workers, the force's image, efficiency and fighting capabilities therefore the NDF management has to take AWOL as a serious challenge. The researcher also discovered that spiritual and psychosocial counselling is a requirement among soldiers because some of them took part in the war of the liberation struggle, operation Atlantic in the Democratic Republic of Congo and operation Mandume along the Angola/Namibia borders hence, some might have been suffering from post-war traumatic stress, anger, frustration as well as unresolved grief. The results of the study led to the conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations as emanating from the research findings based on the factors that were pointed out as possible causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. The AWOL trends as collected from the records, the effects and mitigating measures to minimise AWOL as well as the recommendations. Topics for further research were also suggested.

5.2 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among male and female soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base, the trends, the effects and the mitigating factors to curb gender-based AWOL frequencies. The issue of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the military has not been studied adequately before, although absenteeism in general has been researched, especially in the private and public sectors. That is why this research was important in order to cover the gap that has been left in the research on the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among soldiers. The units of study were the Army Headquarters, the Dolphin Battalion, the Logistic Battalion, the Military Hospital, the 26 Brigade Headquarters and the Reconnaissance Regiment.

Three methods were used to collect data, the documents survey, the focus group discussions and the questionnaires. The documents survey through roll call books revealed that 391 AWOL cases were recorded in all six units for the past three years 2009-2011 as indicated in table 4.1. Out of 391 cases, three were committed by females (0.1%), while 387 (99%) were committed by males. Some of these AWOLs are committed by same people in a year, hence giving a false impression,

because one may think that 391 soldiers committed these AWOL, but only 150 offenders committed the 391 AWOL cases (147 males and 3 females). 65 cases were summarily trialed, 11 were court martial, 39 warned and given manual work of cleaning and cutting grass, while 35 no disciplinary action taken.

Of the six units of study two units did not have a problem of AWOL, the military hospital and the AHQ, although the AHQ recorded two AWOL for “late arrivals” in three years. The study discovered that, despite the Namibian Army recording the highest incidences of AWOL than other services, Grootfontein Military Base seems not to have more AWOLers than anticipated. As a military base with more than five units co-located, the researcher thought Grootfontein could be the suitable place for this study, but this was not as expected. Units that are away from the Headquarters are the ones with higher record of AWOL incidences, but the researcher was only able to learn this during the document survey at AHQ Legal Office. The available data at the Defence Headquarters Legal Division that prompted the researcher to investigate AWOL frequencies among male and female soldiers does not show AWOL per unit, but per arms of service.

The low incidences of AWOL at the AHQ and of no AWOL at the military hospital may be an indication of self discipline, high level of responsibilities and maintenance of credibility by members, because of the environment in which they are working as qualified nurses and clerks.

Another factor could be the level of literate, majority of the soldiers at the military hospital and AHQ have reached a certain level of education unlike some infantry units’ members. As pointed out in table 4.22 by 8% of the respondents who blame illiterate as a reason to why they well not

well informed on the existing rules and regulations. Therefore, the Military Hospital and AHQ members' understanding of the existing rules is better.

Low incidences of AWOL in some units studied may also be attributed to command and control. Leaders are not the same when it comes to leadership qualities therefore some commanders design unit programmes to keep their soldiers busy during peace time, this can eradicate boredom among soldiers, hence less AWOL.

Work group size can also play a roll in AWOL. As opined by Huczynski & Fitzpatrick (1989:50) that the larger the organisation the higher its absence rate. They emphasized that increased in work group size results in reduced job challenge, which reduces the ability of group members to satisfy their social needs. The Army therefore may be higher in AWOL as a result of its size. Among the studied unit Logistic battalion which was the most populated with a research population of 610, recorded the highest AWOL incidences of 190 in three years.

Records indicated that females soldiers preferred to make use of authorized absence as spelled out in the General Regulations relating to the NDF such as sick leave, vacation leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave, study leave and special leave.

Respondents pointed out factors that were believed to be the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base. These included leadership factors such as favouritism, poor supervision, preferential treatment, tribalism, lack of communication, lack of confidentiality, refusal of leave and unwillingness to act. They also identified the needs for their commanders to be trained on supervisory skills.

The respondents observed some organizational factors as possible causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL among soldiers in the Grootfontein Military Base. These included difference in population size, poor working conditions, lack of recreational facilities, lack of family quarters and poor salaries. The respondents identified personal factors, such as alcohol and drug abuse, illness, gambling, cash loans, poor financial management as possible causes. Psychological factors were also pointed out as causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies. While some causes of gender-based frequencies regarding AWOL were convincing, some were less convincing. These include peer pressure and strict orders.

Respondents pointed out possible mitigating measures that could minimize gender-based AWOL frequencies. This includes: equal treatment irrespective of gender, fairness in promotion, training of commanders in supervisory skills, sensitizing male soldiers on the danger of alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, cash loans and multiple sexual partners, increase in salaries, building of family quarters, and training of soldiers on existing policies.

Respondents pointed out the impacts suffered due to gender-based AWOL frequencies, such as shortages of manpower that in some instances affect their leave plan. When the unit strength is affected by AWOL, commanders are left with no other option, but to disapprove the leaves of those who want to take leave. This indicated that the unit's effective operation was also affected, because some posts are left in a vacuum, thereby affecting the unit activities and placing a heavier work load on the shoulders of those who are at work. Some AWOLers end up losing their positions due to prolonged AWOL and this does not only affect them as individuals, but it affects their families, their co-workers and the NDF.

This study found that trials, which are one of the existing punitive approaches to AWOL, do not contribute a great deal towards reducing AWOL, though it has contributed in reducing prolonged AWOL. Other types such as frequent AWOL, AWOL on selected days, half day AWOL and late reporting still persist in high frequencies. Soldiers have now opted to go on shorter AWOL to avoid dismissal, because they know that prolonged AWOL of consecutive 30 days and more has a greater chance of dismissal.

There was an indication that soldiers knew that there were policies in place that address the issue of AWOL in the NDF, but some male soldiers were apparently not familiar with these policies. The NDF should ensure that there is consistency and effective monitoring mechanism of policy performance, because, despite the availability of policies that prescribe punishment to AWOL offenders, which includes; reprimand, field punishments, fines, demotion and even discharged from the force which is the last option, some male soldiers seem not to change their behaviour with regard to AWOL. This can either be due to lack of knowledge, as they indicated or ignorance of the law, or due to other causes as indicated by the respondents. Therefore, the NDF should concentrate on the causes of AWOL rather than dealing with AWOLers without addressing the causes.

This study investigated the gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base and found out that the male soldiers' behaviour is totally different from that of female soldiers, because of the issue of masculinity and femininity. Training and awareness campaigns are needed in order to change the behaviour of soldiers. The male soldiers' abuse of alcohol, gambling, having multiple sexual partners, cash loans addiction, mismanagement of their money and higher expectancies as compared to female soldiers, who show obedience, job

commitment, perseverance and respect. Women world-wide have been underrated, therefore women of today are seemingly making extra efforts to diminish the negative effects of the past.

This study revealed that gender-based AWOL in the NDF is a real problem and management should face this reality. If this phenomenon is allowed to continue unchallenged, with both punitive and corrective approaches, it would have a detrimental effect on the force's professional image, efficiency and fighting capability, because males who are the majority in the force are also the most affected by absenteeism.

5.3 Recommendations

After analyzing the research findings, a number of recommendations were formulated directed to the NDF management, to commanders at various levels within the ranks and files of the NDF and to the soldiers themselves, in an attempt to reduce gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the Grootfontein Military Base.

5.3.1 Training of Commanders

Training in this regard is a pre-requisite for a successful implementation of any policy; therefore commanders should be adequately trained for the implementation of policies. As pointed out by Van der Merwe and Miller (1988:26) the circumstances surrounding the effectiveness of reducing and controlling of absenteeism is to have a well defined policy, which should be clearly communicated to all workers. Policies in the Namibian Defence Force can be communicated to all members through commanders at different levels.

It is believed that the quality of supervision has important effects on employees. Therefore commanders should be trained in supervisory skills as this will lead to less abuses of power such as favouritism, tribalism and unwillingness to act.

5.3.2 Open Door Policy/ Improve Effective Communication

Commanders should have an open door policy where they can provide one-on-one discussions with their subordinates to address work related matters as well as to listen to their problems as opposed to the current situation, where their juniors have no access to their battalion commanders except through low level commanders.

5. 3.3 Intensification of In-Service Training in the Units

All the formations and unit commanders should ensure that soldiers are trained on the existing policies such as the Defence Act, Act 1 of 2002, the Military Disciplinary Code, the General Regulations relating to the NDF and the Human Resources Policy. They should also follow the Chief of the Defence Force Training Directive which is an annually Directive to train their soldiers during peace time. It is only through training that soldiers would be able to know the rules and how they can be applied as well as to know the consequences of their actions. Soldiers especially some male AWOLers need basic expenditure management skill training, so that they can learn how to spend their money wise.

5.3.4 Favouritism/ Preferential treatment

In both focus group discussions and questionnaires, favouritism was raised as one of the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL. Therefore commanders should refrain from this act and treat both male and female soldiers equally. On the other hand, female soldiers' feel discriminated; hence they are challenging it with the desire to be empowered to control their lives as well as to be allowed to increase self reliance and self confidence. Preferential treatment is not only causing AWOL, but is also depriving female soldiers of empowerment; hence it should be avoided at all cost.

5.3.5 Equal Opportunities for Promotion

Lack of promotion was raised as a cause of gender-based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in the Grootfontein Military Base. Efficient and fair system for promotion should prevail within the NDF. The reporting officers in all units/formations in the NDF who are responsible for compiling individual's performance should be fair to avoid stress and frustration of the hard working ones. As opined by Gergersen and Black (1996:209-229), that employees who are motivated will stay longer in the organization than employees with low morale.

5.3.6 Improved Working Conditions

The NDF should upgrade, renovate and build new infrastructure including recreational facilities to keep soldiers entertained within the Military Base. The NDF should also consider building married quarters near the bases, so that married couples can stay with their loved ones to reduce AWOL frequencies.

The improvement of working conditions here involves improvements in working office space, sleeping quarters, messes and canteens as well as recreational facilities. Enough supply of uniforms and beddings should also be prioritized. Good infrastructures in place enhance the smooth operations and boost the morale of the soldiers.

5.3.7 Adjustment of Salaries

The Ministry of Defence should adjust the soldiers' salaries especially the lower ranks to enable them take care of their problems such as visiting their families at far distances as well as enabling them to travel back to work after visiting their families, because some claimed that they are forced to stay home and wait for month end due to lack of transport money to return. The Namibian Defence Force is tasked with the principal responsibilities of defending the territorial integrity of

the Republic of Namibia, its people, their properties and national interest. Therefore, they should be paid decent salaries.

5.3.8 Equality in Training and Posting

This may sound practically impossible, but there are brave women who are willing and determined to serve their country no matter what. But their capabilities and will power have always been undermined due to the issue of gender imbalances in the armed forces. Therefore, the NDF should train and post female soldiers at positions that are challenging as they are doing to their male counterparts, because they seem to show a real sign of proper job commitment and dedication.

5.3.9 Awareness Campaigns on Counselling and Use of Rehabilitation Programmes

The social workers, chaplains together with the trained counsellors in the NDF should carry out an awareness campaigns to all arms of services to inform commanders and soldiers of their functions as well as the important of spiritual and psychosocial counselling and the benefits of rehabilitation centres thereof.

5.3.10 Behavioural Change

Male soldiers need to change their behaviours especially regarding alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, multiple sexual partners and other discipline-related behaviours.

5.3.11 Consideration of Correctional Approaches

The NDF should put more efforts on correctional approaches such as fairness in promotion, provision of married quarters, adjustment of salaries, provision of spiritual and psychosocial counselling, education and training of both supervisors and subordinates to address the problem of AWOL frequencies, rather than relying on punitive approaches only. AWOL frequencies have

become a matter of concern, despite the availability of existing rules and regulations which are aimed at minimizing it. NDF should address the causes rather than dealing with AWOL.

5.3.12 Command and Control

Commanders at different levels in the units/formations should direct and control their soldiers in their daily operations. They should design programmes that are suitable to keep their soldiers busy.

If these recommendations are taken into consideration and are implemented, the NDF will become an attractive employment sector to both male and female Namibians Well disciplined soldiers are the backbone of any Defence Force and, in order to achieve its goals, it is essential to maintain a high moral within the force.

5.4 Recommended Areas for Further Research

Since AWOL is the leading offence in the NDF, this study suggests the following:

- ✓ Another research should be carried out to investigate the causes of AWOL among male and female soldiers in the 26 Motorised Infantry Brigade or 12 Mechanised Infantry Brigade.
- ✓ Investigate the impact caused by lack of family quarters in the NDF and to what extent does it contribute to the prevalent of AWOL frequencies.
- ✓ Investigate if there are discriminatory factors in the management of soldiers between male and female soldiers.

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Re: CDF/600/20/Your ref:.....

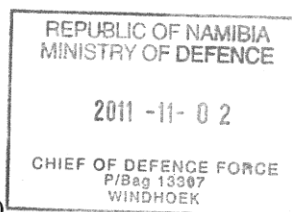
02 November 2011

AC

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT FIELD RESEARCH BY LT COL LT KWEDHI (MA-SSS FINAL YEAR STUDENT AT UNAM)

1. This serves to inform that the officer in subject is currently busy writing her thesis as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA-SSS degree programme. The research will be conducted at Army HQ, Military Hospital, Dolphin Bn, LOG SP Bn, Reconnaissance Regt and 26 Bde HQ. The Army HQ Legal Office and Military Police B Coy may be approached for desk search. The topic to be researched on is "Gender – based frequencies and discrepancies regarding absence without leave at Grootfontein Military Base". The exercise will be carried out over three months starting November 2011.
2. The targeted population are non-commissioned officers and privates (Sgts – Ptes) AWOLers and non- AWOLers male and females.
3. In order for her to carry out the research exercise valuable information from various sources, access to data as well as utilization of MOD/NDF resources including transport will be required.
4. In view of the above, permission is hereby granted to Lt Col Lerry Tegelela Kwedhi to carry out the research and you are herewith requested to render her all necessary assistance she might require.

[Signature]
 ED NDAITWAH (psc, fwc, Dipl, MSc SS)
 CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE: LT GEN



Questionnaire

Introduction

I am Lerry T. Kwedhi, a Master's degree (MASSS) final year student with the University of Namibia, Faculty of Economics and Political Science. I am engaged in a study on the following topic "**Gender-based Frequencies and Discrepancies Regarding Absent Without Leave in the Grootfontein Military Base**".

Instructions

This questionnaire is directed towards non-commissioned officers and privates of Army units that are located in the Grootfontein Military Base with the aim of collecting data on AWOL frequencies and discrepancies between male and female soldiers.

You are kindly requested to provide your views in this regard. Please note that participation in this research is voluntary and that all your information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are not required to put your name on this questionnaire.

Section A – Demographic Data

(Please tick \surd in the appropriate box)

1. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	

2. What is your Marital Status?

Married	
Single	
Widow (er)	

3. Have you got children?

Yes	
No	

4. Which of this is your age group?

18 -25 yrs	
26-30 yrs	
31-40 yrs	
41 and above	

5. Period served with the NDF.

Less than one year	
One – five years	
Six – ten years	
Eleven – fifteen years	
Fifteen – and above	

6. What rank do you hold in your Unit?

Non – Commissioned Officer	
Private	

Section B – AWOL Frequencies

7. Is there a difference between AWOL and desertion?

Yes	
No	

8. If yes, what is the difference?

.....

.....

9. Have you ever been absent from work without permission?

Yes	
No	

10. If yes, for how long?

1 day	
2 to 5 days	
6 to 8 days	
9 days and above	

11. What was the reason for your absence from work without permission?

Family matter	
Had no leave days	
Not fully motivated	
Poor working relations	
Was refused leave	
Unhappy with the job	
Bored	
Others	

.....

.....

.....

12. What action was taken when you returned to work?

I was not caught out	
No action taken	
Warned	
Summarily trialled	
Court Martial	
Others	

.....

.....

.....

13. Male soldiers do go AWOL more frequently than their female soldiers in your unit.

Strongly agree	
Agree	
Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
No option / don't know	

14. If you agree, what in your opinion are the causes of AWOL differences among male and female soldiers in your unit?

Females are more disciplined	
Females are favoured	
Males have more problems to take care of	
Others	

.....

.....

.....

15. What are the effects of AWOL frequencies in your unit?

Mission failure	
Too much work load	
Work left undone	
Others	

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.....

16. What do you think should be done to address the problem of AWOL frequencies in your unit?

Strict control measures	
High penalties	
Others	

.....

.....

.....

Section C - Rating of your understanding of existing Rules & Regulations

17. How well informed are you about the existing Rules and Regulations in place that address AWOL?

Well informed	
Not well informed	

18. If not well informed, why?

Never inducted	
No written disciplinary code available	
Others	

.....

.....

.....

19. Do you think the current regulations on AWOL are effective?

Very effective	
Fairly effective	
Not effective	

20. Do you think there is gender discrimination in the NDF?

True	
False	

21. Substantiate your answer

22. Based on your answer, how do you evaluate gender equality in terms of equal treatment, opportunities in terms of military training and appointments?

Equal	
unequal	
Don't know	

Section D– Factors affecting your attendance at work

23. Do you find it easy to approach your senior when you have personal problem?

Yes	
No	

24. If no, give reasons

25. What are the Factors that affect your non-attendance at work?

Family matter	
Masculinity	
Adventure	
Drinking	
Gambling	
Social recreation	
Relaxing	
Others	

.....
.....
.....

26. If you choose any or the entire above, how often do you go AWOL as a result?

Once a week	
Once a month	
Others	

.....
.....
.....

Section E- Other comments

27. Any other comments that you feel can minimize gender – based AWOL frequencies in your units.

.....
.....
.....
.....

TRANSCRIPT**AIDE MEMOIR****TRANSCRIPT: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS: NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
AND PRIVATES WITHOUT AWOL RECORDS**

1. **Male soldiers go AWOL more frequently than their female soldiers in your unit.**

Yes/No

Yes

2. **What do you think are the causes of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in your unit?**
 - a. **Ignorance of the Law** is one of the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies, because some male soldiers are ignorant of the laid down rules and regulations as compared to female soldiers.
 - b. **Alcohol and Drug abuse** is one of the causes of gender-based AWOL frequencies, because some male soldiers abuse drugs and alcohol as compared to their female counterparts.
 - c. **Indiscipline:** Male soldiers especially those who go on AWOL often show insubordination toward their superior officers as compared to female soldiers.
 - d. **Gambling:** Some male soldiers have a tendency of gambling as compared to female soldiers. They spend up their money in gambling and end up frustrated and this may cause them to go on AWOL.

- e. **Lack of Job Commitments:** Some male soldiers show less interest in their job, that is why they leave their work place without permission leading to suspension of salaries and even discharge from work.
- f. **Cash Loan:** Some male soldiers have an attitude of borrowing money from cash loans and have become cash loan addicts in a sense. Some of them do not have their ATM cards any more; the cards are kept at cash loan houses.
- g. **Peer Pressure Group:** Some male soldiers do go on AWOL not because they have problems, but because they are imitating others.
- h. **Sensitivity:** Females are sensitive by nature as compared to their male counterparts, the former hardly involve in risky activities such as gambling, alcohol and drug abuse, hence AWOL discrepancies among female soldiers,
- i. **Poor Financial Management:** Some male soldiers do not manage their money properly, they spend their money on unnecessary stuffs such as alcohol and drugs, gambling, multiple sexual partners, and therefore this makes them absent without leave from work.
- j. **NDF as an employment agency:** Some youths especially males who are currently joining the NDF are only joining for money making purpose and do not have that commitment to national duties.
- k. **Lack of counseling:** This seems to cause gender-based AWOL frequencies, because there are some male soldiers who are addicted to alcohol, gambling and cash loans in a sense who need psychological help, but commanders seem not to know what to do in order to help them. The few available social workers and counselors should put up an awareness campaign about the importance of their functions, so that commanders

at different levels in the force can become aware of their functions, so that addicted soldiers and those who need psychological assistance can be referred to them.

3. Are you free to discuss your problems with your commanders?

Some are free, some are not free.

Why are some not free?

- Because some commanders lack confidentiality, they do not keep secret; they keep on spreading our personal problems.
- They don't give us feedback.

4. What are the effects of gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in your unit?

- a. **Shortage of manpower** which is in most cases affects our leave plans, because when there is shortage of manpower in the units commanders used to disapprove our leaves.
- b. **Few resting days:** For those who work shifts, they used to have few resting days, resulting in too much work and this is frustrating and can force a person to go on AWOL.
- c. **Work loads:** When some sections are experiencing AWOL, this results in work loads that are placed on the shoulders of those who turn up for work; because one will do his/her work plus that of the person who is not around. "For example, if I am a leave clerk and my fellow who is a strength clerk is on AWOL I will be forced to compile the unit strength report on behalf of my absent colleague, before going to do my work".

d. **Wasting of Resources:** the NDF is losing money in terms of paying for the recruitment of new soldiers and training them to replace those who have been discharged as a result of AWOL. The NDF is also spending money on subsistence and travelling allowance and fuel of Military Police who go around arresting AWOLers where ever they may be in the Republic of Namibia. The government also spends money on subsistence and travelling allowance as well as fuel for trial officers who go unit by unit conducting trials due to shortages of trial officers.

5. What do you think should be done to minimize AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in your unit?

- a. Soldiers should be trained on the existing rules and regulations to curb AWOL and to respect their superiors.
- b. Commanders should be trained on leadership skills because some of them have poor leadership skills.
- c. Commanders should listen to their subordinates' problem irrespective of gender.
- d. The Military courts should enforce high penalties, because the current ones seem not to bring changes.
- e. Commanders should know their soldiers and their needs so that those with psychological help can be helped where possible.
- f. Male soldiers should be sensitized on the consequences of Alcohol and drug abuse, cash loans, gambling and financial mismanagement.

TRANSCRIPT: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS: NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND PRIVATES WITH AWOL RECORDS

1. **Male soldiers go AWOL more frequently than their female soldiers in your unit.**

Yes/No?

Yes

2. **What do you think are the causes of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in your unit?**

The causes are many such as:

- a. Male soldiers are many as compared to female soldiers, that is why absenteeism is visible, but this does not mean that females do not go on AWOL.
- b. Illness; some of us are sick some times I am not able to wake up to go and attend the roll call parade, and commanders end up marking us AWOL, while we are in the barracks.
- c. Drinking is one of the causes of AWOL frequencies, some of us have drinking problems that we cannot control anymore, when we drink we end up not being able to wake early to go and attend the roll call parades.
- d. Another point is favoritism, here male soldiers are not treated the same with female soldiers. Females are favored, if a female applies for a “detached duty” to Windhoek, she will be granted the detached immediately, but mine will be disapproved, because I am a man.
- e. Lack of motivation: No matter how hard we work we are not motivated. Commanders are promoting lazy soldiers, leaving out the hard working ones. We

are commanded by new blood that joins the NDF recently. Some of us were commanders during the Liberation Struggle. This is frustrating.

- f. Distance: We are posted too far from our families and when we travel home we spend all the money and are left with no transport money to return.
- g. Tribalism: We are going on AWOL because we are frustrated by our commanders; some of them are too tribalistic. We are not treated equally. If I arrived late at the parade I 'm marked AWOL, but another soldier who will arrive even an hour later may not be marked AWOL, because he or she comes from the same tribe with the commander (roll call holder).
- h. Refusal of Leave: Refusal of leave by our commanders sometimes can cause AWOL. Sometimes there are important events to in the family where one is required to attend, but when one applies for a vacation leave you are told no leave, this can force a person to go on AWOL.

3. Why don't you borrow money from neighbours to pay for transport and return to work?

It is a shame for a person working in the government to borrow from a pensioner, I rather being marked AWOL while waiting for month end to get my salary.

- a. Strict Orders: The Orders are too strict that we are not allowed to be visited by our wives and girlfriends; this makes us go and visit them out of the military base.

4. Are the Orders only strict to male soldiers?

- a. Men are different from females, I can't stay for a month without having sex, but a female can stay, without any problem.

5. Are you free to discuss your personal and work related problems with your commanders?

We are not free because of the following reasons:

- Some commanders wouldn't even listen to our problems.
- Some commanders' listen but they wouldn't act.
- Some commanders lack confidentiality

6. What are the effects of AWOL frequencies and discrepancies among male and female soldiers in your unit?

- a. Some of us are sole bread winners in our family and our little money that we get is again deducted due to AWOL, therefore we end up not able to visit our families.
- b. When they suspend our salaries, they should reinstate it upon arrival at work, because we used to suffer financially.
- c. Our relationship with our fellow soldiers, families and friends is not good any more; they look at us as irresponsible and indisciplined soldiers.

7. What do you think should be done to address the problem of gender- based AWOL frequencies and discrepancies in your unit?

- a. Commanders should treat us equally irrespective of gender.
- b. Promotion should be fair; they should stop promoting lazy and indisciplined soldiers.
- c. Commanders should try to listen to our problems and not just those of the females. Some commanders are the cause of our absence, because when we approach them with our problem they do not take action.
- d. The NDF should increase our salaries, they are too low, hence we experience financial problem when we visit our families.

- e. Government should build married quarters so that we can stay with our families.
- f. The authority should try to help those who are addicted to alcohol, drugs and gambling.
- g. Some of us are not familiar with the rules and regulations. Therefore our commanders should teach us.

APPENDIX D



 NAMIBIA ARMY

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Extension:	1394	Army Headquarters
Enquiries:	Lt Col LT Kwedhi	Private Bag 2011
		GROOTFONTEIN

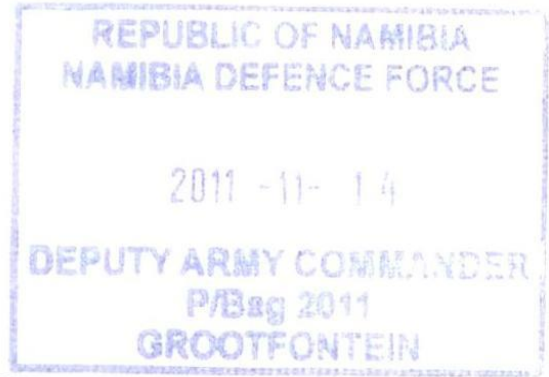
November 2011

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A FIELD RESEARCH AT GROOTFONTEIN MILITARY BASE: 17082116 LT COL LT KWEDHI (MASSS FINAL YEAR STUDENT AT UNAM)

1. Permission is hereby granted to Lt Col LT Kwedhi to undertake a Research, a thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Master's Degree, topic entitled: "**Gender-based frequencies and discrepancies regarding AWOL in the Grootfontein Military Base**".
2. The Units to be studied are Army Headquarters, 26 Brigade Headquarters, Recc Regt, Logistic Battalion, Dolphin Battalion and Military Hospital. Army Headquarters Legal Office and Military Police B-Coy may be approached for desk top research.
3. In order for her to carry out the research, valuable information from various sources, access to data as well as utilization of NDF resources including transport will be required.
4. Formations and Units Commanders through Adjutants, FSMs and RSMs of the above mentioned Units should identified suitable respondents to make her research a success.

5. Attached hereto find the Research Programme and render her the necessary assistance she might requires.

for 



J MUTWA
ARMY COMMANDER: MAJ GEN

DISTRIBUTION

External

For Action

GOC 26 Bde
CO Recce Regt
CO Log Sp Bn
PMO Mil Hosp
CO Dolphin Bn
OC MP B-Coy AHQs

Internal

For Information

DAC
All COS
SMA

APPENDIX E

LT COL L.T. KWEDHI'S FIELD RESEARCH PROGRAMME: GROOTFONTEIN MILITARY BASE

S/NO	DATE	FORMATION/UNIT	TIME	ACTIVITIES
1.	17/11/11 to 22/11/11	Dolphin Battalion	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Commanding Officer ▪ Documents survey ▪ Focus Group Discussions ▪ Completions of Questionnaires
2.	23/11/11 to 25/11/11	Military Hospital	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet the Head of the Hospital ▪ Documents Survey ▪ Focus Group Discussions ▪ Completion of questionnaires
3.	28/11/11 to 02/12/11	Reconnaissance Regiment	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Commanding Officer ▪ Documents Survey ▪ Focus Group Discussions ▪ Completion of Questionnaires
4.	05/12/11 to 08/12/11	Army Headquarters	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Army Commander ▪ Documents Survey ▪ Focus Group Discussions ▪ Completion of Questionnaires
5.	12/12/11 to 16/12/11	Logistic Battalion	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Commanding Officer ▪ Documents Survey ▪ Focus group Discussions ▪ Completion of Questionnaires

6.	19/12/11 to 30/12/11	26 Brigade Headquarters	09h00 – 16h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet the General Officer Commanding ▪ Documents Survey ▪ Focus Group Discussions ▪ Completion of Questionnaires
7.	04/01/12 to 17/01/12	Army Headquarters Legal Office	09h00 – 13h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Senior Staff Officer Legal ▪ Documents Survey
8.	23/01/12 to 27/01/12	Military Police B-Coy	09h00 – 13h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet Officer Commanding Military Police ▪ Documents Survey

NB.DUE TO UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES THE PROGRAMME MAY CHANGE, BUT PARTIES INVOLVED WILL BE NOTIFIED OF ANY CHANGE.