

# In memory of an honorable man

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A part of history was concluded on 18 August 2008 when the SA Special Forces bade farewell to its founder. The first General Officer Commanding of the SA Special Forces, Maj Gen Frederick Wilhelm Loots, passed away on 12 August 2008 at the age of 91. He was revered, as an honourable man who had unswerving determination, was a pillar of strength, an example in word and deed, someone who stood firm by his principles, yet was a humble person.



Maj Gen Loots was born in Britstown on 26 April 1917 and was educated at the Theron High School. He joined the Special Services Battalion in November 1936 and attested in the South African Permanent Force (Infantry Corps) in March 1939. In 1947 he was appointed to the rank of Warrant Officer Class II and in 1951 he received his commission as an officer. Posts held by Maj Gen Loots were the Staff Officer of the Quartermaster General Section from 1951 to 1953, then Officer Instructors at the SA



**Photos 1 - 4 depicting the late Maj Gen Fritz Loots at various stages of his distinguished life.**

Army College from 1953 to 1954. He attended the Staff course from 1954 to 1955, became a Control Staff at the Staff College from 1956 to 1957, served as Staff Officer at the Army Headquarters from 1957 to 1959, was the Officer Commanding of the Army Gymnasium from 1959 to 1963, and the Officer Commanding South West Africa Command from 1963 to 1964. He was appointed as Senior Staff Officer Security and Administration at Military Intelligence in 1965, was the Director Military Intelligence from



1966 to 1970 and retired as Inspector General of the SADF on 30 June 1973.

Maj Gen Loots returned to Service in August 1974 with a view to establishing some form of a Special Forces Organisation. This eventually materialised as a separate operational formation under the direct control of the Chief of the South African Defence Force. Maj Gen Loots finally retired from Service on 25 April 1982.

Maj Gen Fritz Loots, as he was known to those close to him, lived according to two main beliefs. He often told the story that when he was a young boy his mother taught him there was no such thing as "I can't" and



as a young man his father taught him to hold on to his principles and not veer from them. These life lessons were visible throughout Maj Gen Loots' life like a golden thread and all who had the privilege to meet him unknowingly received a piece of this wisdom.

His parting words during his last days were a request to the Chaplain to convey the message to all on the importance of loving others, for love is eternal. 