

Traumatised cops sue

By ILSE DE LANGE

THE police service has been accused of doing nothing to help policemen suffering from post-traumatic stress because of their work.

This was revealed in two Pretoria High Court applications by police officers who have taken the Minister of Safety and Security to court for refusing to pension them off as medically unfit.

Captain Daniel Labuschagne and Inspector Pieter Prinsloo, respectively of the Sunnyside and Pretoria North police stations, applied for court orders to set aside a

decision that they were medically fit to continue their duties and to force their employer to put them on pension.

Mr Justice Hekkie Daniels this week postponed both of their applications indefinitely and ordered the Minister to supply reasons for the decision within 30 days.

Capt Labuschagne and Insp Prinsloo in court papers both set out a long list of traumatic experiences to which they had been exposed since they joined the police force at the age of 19. Both said they had been exposed to life-threatening

and violent situations without having been prepared to deal with them and without having had any form of aftercare or debriefing.

Their situations had accumulated to such an extent that they both felt by the year 2000 they could no longer continue as policemen.

Mr Prinsloo described several incidents, which he said he could simply not get out of his mind. These included picking-up broken and mutilated bodies after accidents, attending murder scenes of elderly people who had been killed senselessly and attending to

numerous suicide scenes.

Capt Labuschagne, who had been a member of the farmer security branch, said he had been involved in numerous dangerous and violent situations that he was not allowed to describe. In later years, he was involved in fighting political unrest, when he often had to pick up bodies. He also described several gruesome scenes that he had to deal with during the course of his work.

Both officers were divorced and both were hospitalised and on medication after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome.



THE Leaping Impala bronze sculpture as it was removed for restoration from Oppenheimer Park in Central Johannesburg after it was vandalised.



THE Leaping Impala bronze sculpture was unveiled yesterday by Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer (inset) at the precinct in Main Street. The sculpture was restored to its former glory by Mike Wald at a cost of R360 000, after it was vandalised in November 1999.

Pictures by ANNALIEN VAN ZYL



Impala herd leap again in Jhb

By HUGO HAGEN

JOHANNESBURG'S CBD has its world famous bronze statue of a herd of leaping impala back.

Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer yesterday unveiled the restored sculpture at a glittering array of festivities during the opening of the totally revamped Main Street Precinct in front of Anglo American's corporate building.

The statue of 18 stampeding impala high above a waterhole was vandalised by metal thieves in November 1999, but the City of Johannesburg has had it restored at a cost of R360 000 by Mike Wald, son of the original artist Herman Wald.

The sculpture was donated to the city by mining magnate

Harry Oppenheimer in 1960 in memory of his late father, Sir Ernest Oppenheimer.

The spokesman for the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), Tshepo Nkosi, said it was wonderful and heartening to have the leaping impala back.

"This is one of the positive spin-offs of public-private partnerships to regenerate the city."

The Precinct, a joint venture between Anglo-American and Anglovaal Mining to beautify the inner city, was changed into a green walkway with ground-cover and decorative paving-replacing the tarred streets.

A clean and safe landscaped route was created for pedestrians with no vehicles allowed except in emergencies.

R35 000
Prizelines

WHERE IS MY CARD?