

**NYANDENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY  
INVITES YOU TO THE**



- 1. TOURISM AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**
- 2. S.S.MENDI MEMORIAL LECTURE**
- 3. LAUNCHING OF THE FESTIVE SEASON**



**DATE 09 DECEMBER 2016**

**TIME 09H00**

**VENUE**

**S.S.MENDI MEMORIAL**

**SITE MAFINI VILLAGE**

**LIBODE**

**Contact no: 047 5555000**

**BACKGROUND:** The monument was built in memory of S. S. Mendi ship which on the morning of 21 February 1917, got struck by SS Darro a larger ship travelling at full speed without any warning signals. It smashed into the Mendi with such force that a gash opened from keel to deck to a depth of about 20 feet. It is said that the captain of S.S. Darro took no steps to save the drowning, merely floating his ship nearby while lifeboats from the SS Mendi's escorting destroyer, HMS Brisk, rowed among survivors, trying to rescue them. As the crippled ship tilted and sank beneath its passengers the men stamped the death dance together having on board 616 South Africans along with 9 of their fellow white countrymen and all 33 crew members.

Of note is that, regardless of clan or tribe, these men faced death together as South Africans. One of the many legends of the troops Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha, is said to have calmed the panicked men by crying out this prayer: "Be quiet and calm, my countrymen. What is happening now is what you came to do ... you are going to die, but that is what you came to do ... I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers ... Swazis, Pondos, Basotho ... so let us die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa ..." Among the black Africans lost were some prominent men such as the Pondoland chiefs Henry Bokleni, Dokoda Richard Ndamase, Mxonywa Bangani, Mongameli and the Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobha. Though they left to assist the whites it said that only white and coloured troops were awarded the standard Victory and Service Medals at the conclusion of the war. The Mendi disaster was one of South Africa's worst tragedies of World War 1, second only to the Battle of Delville Wood. Next year, 2017 will be the (100) hundred year commemoration of S.S. Mendi disaster.