



# SAAB

## NEWS FROM SAAB

10 Oct 2010  
CUE 10-047

### The first female Gripen pilot is born

**This week, the South African Air Force created aviation history. One of the four South African Air Force (SAAF) pilots to successfully complete the first Operational Conversion Course (OCC) instructed by local SAAF pilots, is a woman.**

Captain Catherine Labuschagne, made her solo Gripen flight at the South African airbase Makhado in the Limpopo province of South Africa. This will give her a place in the record books as the first female Gripen pilot.

Captain Labuschagne is one of several women serving as pilots in the SAAF and she previously flew the Impala jet before she qualified on the Hawk Lead-In-Fighter trainer to prepare her for the transition to South Africa's front line fighter.

She did fly in the rear seat of Gripen back in 2004, then making history as the first woman pilot to fly Gripen, this time however, she took to the skies in a single seat Gripen and the instructors at 2 squadron-stayed on the ground.

The four newly qualified Gripen fighter pilots will strengthen SAAF and the 2 squadron as they will reach operational status sometime next year when their conversion course is completed.

The South African government ordered 26 Gripen C/D fighter aircraft in 1999 as part of a "strategic defence package"

Recently the SAAF Gripen force, although still in a project phase and not formally an operational system, conducted a large part of the air policing during the FIFA soccer World Cup.

**For further information, please contact:**

Saab Press Centre,  
+46 734 180 018  
presscentre@saabgroup.com

[www.saabgroup.com](http://www.saabgroup.com)

*Saab serves the global market with world-leading products, services and solutions ranging from military defence to civil security. Saab has operations and employees on all continents and constantly develops, adopts and improves new technology to meet customers' changing needs.*

