

Western Cape learners of the Defence Reserves Youth Programme are impressed by Artillery Open Day 2010

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On Saturday, 28 August 2010, a group of learners from the Western Cape witnessed firsthand the formidable firepower of the South African artillery in action, when they visited 4 Artillery Regiment at Potchefstroom for a thrilling **live fire demonstration** as part of the annual Artillery Open Day.



Photo 1: The powerful GV5 Howitzer guns, manned by their highly trained crews, fire one devastating round after another into the distant hillsides.

As the **deafening barrage** of fragmentation grenades, mortars, and live rounds from the powerful GV5 and G6 Howitzer guns ploughed into the hillside beyond, sending billowing clouds of earth and dust into the air, they marvelled at the skill and teamwork of the highly trained troops who expertly adjusted the sights while loading one heavy round after another.

They were awestruck by the howling and whistling of the fearsome **Bateleur multiple rocket launcher**, which sent a barrage of projectiles into the clear blue skies, inexorably carrying death and destruction towards the enemy lines. And as the gusting wind swirled the dust and grass around them, they were enveloped by the acrid smell of cordite, which left a sharp taste on the tongue, its residue lingering on the clothes and skin for the rest of the day.

The evening before, when the learners arrived at their guesthouse, they had been warmly welcomed by **Colonel Dawid Schoonwinkel**, Officer Commanding of the School of Artillery, and his wife, Mrs Martie Schoonwinkel.

Their warmth and friendliness, as they shook hands with each of the youngsters before handing them a gift, immediately made them feel relaxed and at ease.



Photo 2: Colonel Dawid Schoonwinkel, Commanding Officer of the School of Artillery, warmly welcomes the learners to Potchefstroom.

The next morning, they were met at 4 Artillery Regiment on the outskirts of Potchefstroom by **Major General Roy Andersen**, Chief of Defence Reserves, who welcomed them formally to Artillery Open Day.



Photo 3: Major General Roy Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves, welcomes the group from the Western Cape to Artillery Open Day.



Photo 4: Lt Col Johan Conradie briefs Major General Roy Andersen on the visiting group from the Western Cape.

All the logistical arrangements for this trip, including transport, food and accommodation, had been made by the **Defence Reserves Provincial Office Western Cape**, as part of their youth development programme. The objectives of this programme are to create awareness among the youth about the modern military in the new South Africa, and to introduce them to its new capabilities and highly complex technologies. At the same time, they were also exposed to an understanding of the spirit of dedication and voluntarism that characterises the Defence Reserves, thus generating support for citizens in uniform.



Photo 5: Lt Col Johan Conradie explains the recent gun crew training of Cape Field Artillery at Fort iKapa in relation to the deployment of the GV5 Howitzer guns on Artillery Open Day.

Brigadier General M R Notshweleka, General Officer Commanding SA Army Artillery Formation, in his introductory speech, spoke of the importance of motivating the youth to become better citizens so that they would make a positive impact on society. He also encouraged them to learn and study hard, as the military needed engineers and scientists with a high level of education in order to operate, maintain and improve its highly complicated, sensitive and expensive equipment.



Photo 6: Brigadier General Notshweleka, General Officer Commanding SA Army Artillery Formation, motivates the youth to become better citizens and to have a positive impact on society.

Their attendance at Artillery Open Day was the perfect opportunity for the broader public to experience the excitement and adventure of **military life**, as well as to become aware of the physical fitness, commitment and discipline, and the levels of skill and training that are required to operate these massively powerful and yet highly technologically advanced vehicles.



Photo 7: The popular Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery entertain the visitors to the Artillery Open Day with their stirring music.



Photo 8: Kevin Canning, one of the learners from Tafelberg High School, is enjoying the thrilling live fire demonstration.



Photo 9: The students, wearing the caps presented by Colonel Schoonwinkel, pose proudly in front of an Oryx helicopter.

On their return trip to Cape Town, the group visited the **Kimberley Big Hole**, which added an important historical and cultural component to their trip through the Northern Cape.

Their trip was an example of the many ways in which DRPOWC is actively promoting the **Defence Reserve System** among the future generation of leaders and corporate business.

Yes, it was a truly **unforgettable experience** for the six boys and two

girls from Chrysalis Academy, Milnerton High School and Tafelberg High School and the friends of Defence Reserves Western Cape who accompanied them. During this 4-day trip from Cape Town to Potchefstroom and back via Kimberley, shy strangers reached out to each other by sharing their stories and challenges amidst much laughter and good humour, and they forged those bonds of affection and friendship that so often arise from shared experiences. Although the visit allowed everyone to engage in social networking, it also created awareness of the Reserves and of the significance of voluntarism.



Photo 10: The visit to the Kimberley Big Hole adds an important historical and cultural component to the trip through the Northern Cape.



Photos of Artillery Open Day 2010 and the visit to Kimberley can be viewed online here: http://www.grounds.hout.co.za/events/2010_artillery_open/index.html

Photo 11: Learners and the friends of the Defence Reserves Western Cape attend an educational and exciting Artillery Open Day in Potchefstroom.