

Cape Town's own Military Tattoo 2010

Article supplied by Mrs Regine Lord. Photos supplied by Mr Brent Best and Mrs Regine Lord.

On Saturday night, 6 November 2010, the departure of the massed Pipes and Drums from the front courtyard of the 330-year-old [Castle of Good Hope](#) in central Cape Town, to the strains of 'Black Bear', signalled the end of the sixth annual [Cape Town Military Tattoo 2010](#). As the spotlights followed them into the stone archway, the tramp of their feet, the rattling of drums and the wailing of bagpipes reverberated one final time, before the lights dimmed and silence fell.



Photo 1: The Sea Cadets perform a silent gun drill

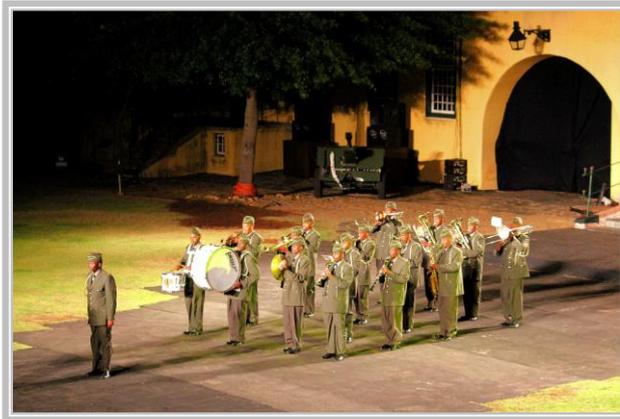


Photo 2: The Rwanda Defence Force Army Band

Months of planning, rehearsals and logistical arrangements, and countless hours of work behind the scenes by a dedicated team of soldiers, reservists and civilians, culminated in four thrilling evening performances in the beautifully illuminated Castle, from 3 to 6 November 2010. After a slightly wet opening night, the skies fortunately remained clear for the remaining shows.

As the capacity crowd filed out through the imposing Van der Stel gate with its elegant bell tower, it was evident from their excited chatter and the hundreds of smiling faces, as well as the many regretful looks cast backward, that this year's Tattoo had succeeded in its objectives: to entertain both local and foreign visitors to the city of Cape Town, and to showcase the discipline, skill and musical talent of the participating marching bands, pipes and drums, military units, and youth groups.



Photo 3: The SA Army Bands of Kroonstad, KwaZulu Natal and Cape Town, the SAPS Band Western Cape and the Rwanda Defence Force Army Band



Photo 4: The Drill Squad from the Western Province School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association

The City of Cape Town, which regards the Tattoo as an exciting addition to their annual calendar of events, gave their support, as did Cape Town Tourism and Western Cape Tourism. The city is a favourite holiday destination for both foreign and local visitors, as was evident from the different languages spoken by spectators. The event was also supported by the Department of Education. Kia sponsored 1500 gift bags, which were handed out to learners by the SA Army Band Cape Town and the Rwanda Defence Force Army Band.

Adverts running in shopping malls, interviews with Producer Major C. de Cruz on local radio stations, such as Cape Talk and KFM, inserts shown on ETV, video clips on YouTube and Zoopy, articles appearing both online and in the newspapers, even as far afield as Oudtshoorn, and colourful posters and banners around the City, ensured that increasing numbers of tickets were sold with



Photo 6: Mounted Unit of the SA Police Services, Western Cape, and the SAPS Band of the WC

The Tattoo had been widely promoted in the preceding months. For instance, at an interschools drill competition, held in Mitchell's Plain on 09 October, the SA Army Band Cape Town and the Drill Squad from the Western Province School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association, in conjunction with the Cape Field Artillery who fired one of their 25-pounder guns, had given the learners and their parents a taste of what they could expect to see at the Cape Town Military Tattoo 2010.

The



Photo 5: The Minister of Defence, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, Lt Gen S.Z. Shoke, Chief SA Army and Maj Gen R.C. Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves

each passing day. Enthusiastic and encouraging feedback was received from spectators who phoned in on the radio, emailed the organisers, or spoke to the people working behind the scenes.

The final night's performance was attended by several VIPs: the Minister of Defence Lindiwe Sisulu, Lieutenant General S.Z. Shoke, Chief SA Army, and Major General R.C. Andersen, Chief Defence Reserves.

As the first spectators arrived from about 19h00 onwards, they were greeted by the soothing strains of the Dukes Band, in their red tunics, navy pants and white helmets, arranged in front of the softly lit Kat balcony. Suddenly, the mood changed dramatically, as the thumping bass drums and rattling snare drums in the archway signalled the arrival of the South African Sea Cadets in their black and white uniforms, who performed an exciting silent drill. Each night, shortly before 20h00, they also formed a guard of honour for the functionaries, who were escorted through the archway and into the front courtyard, to take their seat on the stands.



Photo 7: Drum Majorettes of Curro Private School

At 20h00 sharp, the Castle bell was rung in the bell tower above the main entrance, and two thunderous blasts from the 2-pounder cannons on either side of the Kat signalled the official start of the Tattoo. After the six youngsters from the Limited Edition Drum Corps, jaunty blue ostrich feathers affixed to their black hats, had symbolically called the soldiers back to their quarters, the Castle Guard Halberdiers under Warrant Officer Class 2

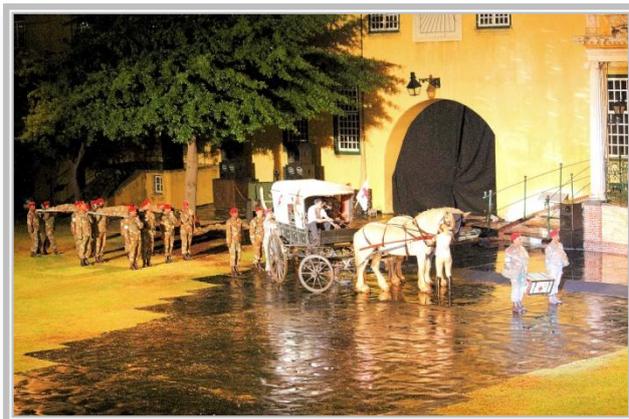


Photo 8: 3 Medical Battalion Group with an ambulance wagon dating back to the Anglo-Boer War

A. Wort closed the main gates to the Castle and returned the ancient key to the Adjutant of the Castle, Captain Francois Morkel. Thereafter, it was time for the men from the South African Muzzle-Loaders Association, dressed in period costume, to fire their muskets from the balcony, and for the Cannon Association to fire the two 2 lb cannons once more.

The SA Army marching bands of Cape Town, Kroonstad and KwaZulu Natal, as well as the SA Police Service Band of the Western Cape, were joined by the visiting Rwanda Defence Force Army Band. The pipe bands included the Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery, based at Fort iKapa, 1 Medical Battalion Group, visiting from Durban, as well as the Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders.



Photo 9: A Simulated Attack by the Cape Town Rifles (Dukes)

An excellent example of the military's involvement with youth development was

the performance of the drill squad from the Western Province School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association. Wearing black pants, white shirts, and shiny blue waistcoats, as well as blue caps and white gloves, they strode confidently into the front arena, accompanied by their energetic drumline. These youngsters had been selected from various schools in the Western Cape and trained by the SA Army Band Cape Town throughout the year, as well as during their recent mid-term holiday. It was clear from their synchronised marching, calculated drill movements, and precise weapon handling that their intensive training had been worthwhile.



Photo 10: The Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery and 1 Medical Battalion Group, and the Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders

knee-high boots, and with their big smiles and bright-eyed enthusiasm, captured the hearts of all the spectators, who rewarded them with rapturous applause.

Continuing the Scottish mood set by the pipes and drums, the Celtic Tapestry dancers, with their nimble feet and glittering swords, leapt and danced elegantly on the stage in front of the ornate Kat balcony. It contrasted dramatically to the majestic horses of the SA Police Services Mounted Unit, Cape Town, who trotted and cantered across the arena, to the music played by the SAPS Band. It was wonderful to see the skill and control of the riders, and the power and energy of their proud horses, as they traversed the entire arena.



Photo 11: The Celtic Tapestry dancers



Photo 12: SA Army Band of KwaZulu Natal

The main theme of this year's Tattoo was 'Come Home to Africa', with the sub-theme being 'A Tribute to the Unsung Heroes of South Africa'. This was an acknowledgement of all the men and women of the military support services, who provide combat support. 3 Medical Battalion Group, under the direction of Major NA Hanekom, re-enacted a historical stretcher exercise, dating back to 1911, whose purpose it was to drill the

medics and stretcher bearers on the correct handling of the wounded and their transport on stretchers. While the ‘wounded’ were lifted onto stretchers, an original Ambulance Wagon, dating back to the Anglo-Boer War and drawn by two huge white Percheron horses, was driven into the arena.

Then a simulated attack illustrated the role of the medical support. A search and rescue mission, made up of soldiers from the Cape Town Rifles, had come ‘under fire’ from an ‘enemy group’, and one of the soldiers had been ‘wounded’. While the operational medical orderlies were treating the wounded soldier, one of them was wounded himself, highlighting the difficult conditions under which medics had to operate and that they often came under attack, being injured or killed in battle.



Photo 13: The ancient Castle, the crowds of spectators, and the modern high-rise buildings of the City beyond

As in previous years, Tchaikovsky’s 1812 Overture was accompanied, as it *should* be, by live gunfire from Cape Field Artillery’s ceremonial 25-pounder guns! The Cape Town Military Tattoo is one of the few places in the world where this piece is accompanied by live gunfire. Once the smoke had cleared after the final salvo, all the participants in the Tattoo returned to the brightly lit-up arena, joined by the regimental flag bearers and the bearers of the South African national flag. The national anthem was followed by the melancholy strains of Auld Lang Syne and the traditional Last Post. A spotlight lit up the Lone Piper on the inner wall of the Kat, his final tune concluding that evening’s performance.

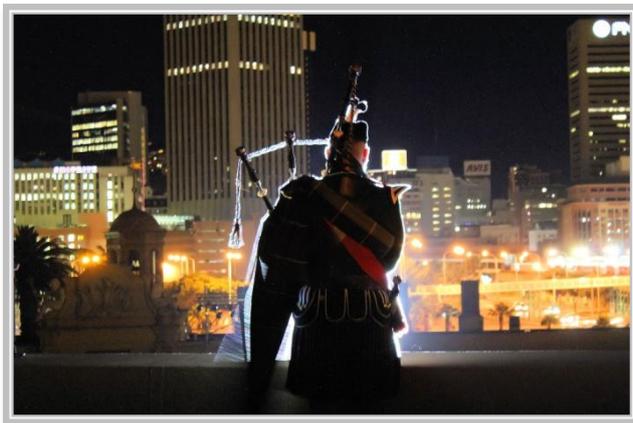


Photo 14: The Lone Piper

The successful presentation of the Cape Town Military Tattoo 2010 contributed to the city’s annual program. Judging from the number of foreign visitors who attended, the Tattoo is clearly generating increased foreign interest. The enthusiastic participation by the local youth groups, standing to perfect attention as they sang the national anthem during the Final Muster, is evidence of their national pride.