

The Defence Reserves make a very positive impression at Makro's Safety and Security Carnival 2014

Article and photos by Mrs Regine Lord

Enthusiastic, knowledgeable, professional and friendly – those were the dominant impressions created by the soldiers representing the various regiments and units, which participated in the **Safety and Security Carnival**, held at Makro's branch in Montague Gardens.

The blustery autumn weather of the previous week had given way to a clear blue sky, lifting everyone's spirits on an unseasonably sunny Saturday, 5 April 2014. A full and interesting programme sustained the levels of excitement throughout the morning.

In addition to the various SANDF displays and activities, the South African Police Services and the City of Cape Town's Emergency Services, Traffic Department, Fire and Rescue Services and



Photo 2: Entertainers



Photo 1: Cape Minstrels

Disaster Risk Management were all represented. ER24, the National Sea Rescue Institute, and Tableview Neighbourhood Watch were among the organisations that had set up stalls in the spacious parking area in front of Makro's huge warehouse store in Montague Park, at the corner of Koeberg Road and Platteklouf Road.



Photo 3: Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders

Throughout the day, a troupe of Cape Minstrels in their colourful costumes danced amongst the crowds. Little ones played on a jumping castle, and were entertained by painted clowns and by a man on stilts who created colourful balloon figures. Pedal-powered go-kart racing kept the young folk's adrenaline pumping.

The early morning arrival of the **Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders** in their fine kilts caused quite a stir. A crowd quickly formed around the circle of pipers and drummers, and rewarded each tune with appreciative applause.

Thereafter, the **SA Navy Sea Cadets** of TS Woltemade in their neat black-and-white uniforms performed their silent marching drill.



Photo 4: SA Navy Sea Cadets of TS Woltemade

As soon as the first beats of the bass drum, accompanied by the rhythms of the snare drum, signalled the start of their fast-paced routine, spectators began to gather around them. From their facial expressions and loud cheering, it was clear that they were very impressed by the performance. Lt (SAN) Paul Jacobs, OC of TS Woltemade, could rightly be proud of his young charges.

At midday, the **Hamburger Eating Competition**, arranged by Mr Theo Kleynhans, the owner of Sabino Canyon Spur in Malmesbury, in support of the Reserves (in particular Charlie Company, 3 Parachute Battalion) was hotly contested.



Photo 5: The victorious SANDF team in the Hamburger Eating Competition

The five-member civilian team got off to a very good start, and appeared to be heading for a clear victory; but, in the end, the good discipline, spirited teamwork, and sheer determination of the five SANDF soldiers, with Lt Col Johan Conradie of DRPOWC commanding the team, led them across the finish line first. Well done to the victors!



Photo 6: Cape Town Rifles (Dukes)

The static display of the **Cape Town Rifles (Dukes)**, consisting of the various weapons and items of kit carried by these infantry soldiers, was surrounded by curious crowds throughout the event.

When onlookers spotted the anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launcher, they would exclaim, excitedly, "Aah, look! A bazooka!" "No no," one of the

soldiers would good-naturedly set them right, "this is not a bazooka. It's an RPG." Everyone was also eager to handle the R4 assault rifle, the light machine gun, the multi-grenade launcher, and the mortar. Lt Sithetho, Lt Ndzena and LCpl Pienaar patiently

replied to a barrage of questions and explained how these weapons were used in combat.

The static display of **3 Parachute Battalion, Charlie Company**, proved similarly popular. Mr Shane Fouche from Talisman Plant and Tool Hire Okavango Park had provided the scaffolding free of charge in support of the Reserves.



Photo 7: 3 Parachute Battalion, Charlie Company

Cpl Etienne Oelofse, who was responsible for the display with guidance from the HQ, as well as Maj Marais, the OC, SSgt Pearson and Sgt Ludaka, were all kept busy throughout the morning, interacting with the public, and showing them some of the kit and gear they used on deployment.

The youngsters in particular leapt at the opportunity to be strapped into the harness and parachute and to have a protective helmet placed on their head; they posed proudly for photographs with the obliging soldiers. They looked admiringly at the paratroopers with their maroon berets and wings, when these spoke about the high standards of fitness, special skills and fierce fighting capabilities that were required to serve in this airborne regiment.



Photo 8: 71 Signal Unit

The customised Samil 20 signals truck of **71 Signal Unit** also saw a steady stream of visitors, who enjoyed playing with the short-



Photo 9: 30 Field Workshop in front of their LAD technical support vehicle

range radios and learning about the advanced communications equipment used by the unit.

30 Field Workshop had come with their powerful Samil 50 Recovery Vehicle and their technical support vehicle, the **Samil 20 Light Aided Vehicle (LAD)**, which is equipped with everything needed to make light general repairs.

Visitors – both young and old – thoroughly enjoyed climbing all over and into the Ratel infantry fighting vehicle of the **Cape Town Highlanders**, and the Mamba armoured personnel carrier of the **Dukes**.

As always, the imposing Rooikat armoured reconnaissance fighting vehicle of **Regiment Oranjerivier** was the focus of much interest. MWO Karel Minnie, the RSM, and WO Hellmuth kept a watchful eye on the Rooikat, while Capt Dlakadla and Cpl Busakwe replied to dozens of questions about the power and manoeuvrability of the Rooikat, its weaponry and its use in combat.



Photo 10: The Rooikat of Regiment Oranjerivier

Regiment Westelike Provincie, who were exercising their Freedom of Entry into Goodwood with a parade that morning to celebrate their 80th birthday, had put up a gazebo with a static display.

Sergeant Pieter Human, a Reserve Force member of **3 Medical Battalion Group** volunteered his services for free to provide medical support and to deal with any medical emergencies.



Photo 11: Cape Town Highlanders in front of the Ratel

As part of the SANDF's broad branding plan, the Defence Reserve Provincial Office Western Cape (DRPOWC) was also supported by the **Castle of Good Hope** who used the opportunity to promote the Castle, its association with military, and the role of the Reserves in the Castle.



Photo 12: 4 Maintenance Unit

At various times during the event, interviews were conducted on Bok Radio with Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Wilkinson, who explained the Reserve Service System. Mr Louis Karpas, the Makro announcer, gave much publicity to the various SANDF displays and activities.



Photo 13: Lt Col Johan Conradie (DRPOWC) and soldiers from the SA Air Force, Military Police and Cape Town Highlanders.

Corporal Duitser and Rifleman Rowan from **4 Maintenance Unit** handed out hundreds of copies of the Reserve Force Volunteer and SA Soldier magazine, and answered many questions about the role of the Defence Reserves, Fort iKapa Military Base and the Castle of Good Hope.

During his visit to the Carnival, **Brigadier General M.J. de Goede** from the SA Army Infantry Formation indicated that he was very pleased with the display and the role that the Reserves were playing in the community.

The General Manager and Marketing Manager of Makro were also very pleased with the Reserves' participation and their level of professionalism.

The confidence and discipline of the soldiers at the various military displays inspired both respect and admiration. They took the time to engage with all the visitors, replying to all kinds of questions in an open and friendly manner.

Their positive attitude and breadth of knowledge about the military made a very positive impression on everyone.



Photo 14: Brig Gen M.J. de Goede is flanked by Lt Col Ralph Wilkinson (DRPOWC), Maj Mynhardt Marais (3 Para Bn), Lt Col Bryan Sterne (DRPOWC) and Lt Col Jaco Olivier (ROR).