

## SA Army Band Cape Town prepares the drill squad from the Western Province School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association for the Cape Town Military Tattoo 2010

Article and photos supplied by Mrs Regine Lord.

During the school holiday week of 27 September to 01 October 2010, the drill squad of the Western Province School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association (WP SMDEA) received some intensive training by members of the SA Army Band Cape Town, in preparation for the Cape Town Military Tattoo that was held at the Castle of Good Hope from 03 to 06 November 2010. The drill squad is made up of learners from various primary and high schools around the Western Cape. It was one of the youth groups performing during the Tattoo, to illustrate the involvement of the Defence Reserves with youth development and skills training.

After a long, hard Monday spent drilling on the parade ground and practicing their routines, on Tuesday the youngsters were given a special treat in the form of a visit to Simon's Town and the Naval Dockyard. When the learners arrived at Youngsfield Military Base off Wetton

Road in Wynberg on Tuesday morning, they were greeted by Staff Sergeant Jerome Mecloen and WO2 André van Schalkwyk, and invited to help themselves to tea, coffee and biscuits. Initially quite shy, most of them longingly eyed the bowls of biscuits from a distance, but when WO2 Van Schalkwyk declared that all the biscuits had to disappear before they could get back onto the bus, nimble hands emptied the bowls in record time!



**Photo 1: Tea and biscuits for the youngsters**



**Photo 2: Posing at Seaforth Beach, Simon's Town**

They quickly piled into the small school combi and the large bus provided by the DRPOWC, and drove Simon's Town. The first stop was at the entrance to Seaforth Beach, from where the group power-walked along the boardwalk above the Boulders Beach penguin colony. Invigorated by the walk in the fresh sea air, they returned to the buses, which transported them to the Public Relations Department in the Naval Base Simon's Town.

Two public relations guides had been assigned to give the group a quick tour of the base. The buses parked next to the powerful Synchro Lift. The learners quickly lined up in three rows in the road, as the guides in their neat black and white uniforms introduced themselves and told them about the SA Navy.



**Photo 3: Standing at attention, the learners listen closely to Seaman Makhubela and Seaman Mfengu**

Seaman Makhubela explained the relevance of the colourful badges painted all around the walls of the Selborne dry dock in the East Dockyard, some of which look very old and faded, whilst others looked brand new. These are all the badges of ships that have been repaired or serviced in the dock.

From here, they marched past the SAS Spioenkop (F147), which is another of the new valour class frigates, down to where two tugs, Indlovu and De Mist, were lying at anchor.

A group photo was taken in front of one of the tugs, before continuing on to the final stop, the submarine workshop, where two of the new 209 Class submarines were lying at anchor. The SA Navy has three of these new submarines – the SAS Manthatisi (S101), the SAS Charlotte Maxeke (S102) and the SAS Queen Modjadji I (S103).

After lunch at Youngsfield Military Base, the learners worked off some of the post-meal lethargy by practising their marching routine on the parade ground. They benefitted from the sharp eyes of Ssgt Mecloen and WO2 Van Schalkwyk and their drill instructor who gave plenty of input and instruction on the correct technique of marching and handling the wooden guns, which they were using for their practice routines.



**Photo 4: Drilling on the parade ground**

The whole of Wednesday was spent on the parade ground, with the learners being put through their paces and rehearsing their routines.

On Thursday, as a reward for their hard work, dedication and discipline, they were given an educational tour around Fort iKapa in Goodwood, which is currently the only base in the country where all the Reserve units in the province are located.



**Photo 5: Gunner Bouillon, Ssgt Simboya and WO2 Boshoff, from C Coy 3 Para Bn**

The first stop was the hangar of C Company 3 Parachute Battalion, where the learners were taught about the rigorous and demanding training that is necessary in order to become a paratrooper, as they are required to be very fit and strong physically.

A couple of the youngsters discovered this when, no doubt eager to impress the girls, they accepted the challenge to run across the parking area, weighed down with a heavy cement ‘marble’ and an unwieldy metal cylinder!

At each of the stops, one of the learners was chosen from the group to thank the relevant officers in charge for showing them around their facilities and telling them about the training given to their particular unit. They did this most eloquently.

The second port of call was the Regiment Oranjerivier, “Home of the Armour Reserves”, where the group was greeted by Lt Col Jaco Olivier. He told them a little about the unit and the vehicles they used in battle.

The youngsters were taught the difference between an armoured vehicle and a tank – the former has wheels, whereas the latter has tracks!



**Photo 6: Lt Col Olivier of the Regiment Oranjerivier talking about the Eland and Rooikat armoured vehicles**



Naturally, everyone was very keen to climb aboard the Rooikat to experience its power and manoeuvrability.

**Photo 7: A group of excited youngsters on the imposing Rooikat armoured vehicle**

After this adventure, it was time for lunch at the Mess, a large building near the entrance to the base. The tasty meal of meat, chips, bread, fruit and juice, followed by a pudding of strawberry ice cream as a treat, had been prepared by the chefs of the Cape Town Rifles, otherwise known as the Dukes.



**Photo 8: Enjoying a good lunch in the Mess**

After lunch, the youngsters were ready for some more adventures, and so they headed across to the indoor shooting range, which is run by the Cape Town Rifles.

Two Mamba armoured personnel carriers stood guard in front of the hangar, which is divided internally into two sections. The one on the left is used for simulated musketry training (learning how to shoot handguns and rifles), whereas the one on the right is used for live firing exercises.



**Photo 9: Everyone listens with intense concentration as MWO Dias Lobo speaks about the indoor shooting range**

The Regimental Sergeant Major, Master Warrant Officer (MWO) Pedro Dias Lobo explained the role and purpose of the indoor shooting range.

Then both the boys and the girls had a chance to test their skills on the simulated training range. They discovered that the rifles were unexpectedly heavy and that it was surprisingly difficult to hit the target;

given that it required considerable courage to attempt this in front of their peers, they acquitted themselves bravely!

Thereafter, the group went next-door into the live firing range.



**Photo 10: The older learners test their shooting skills**



**Photo 11: Competing on the obstacle course**

by running along a balance beam, before racing back to the start. They completed their stimulating and educational visit to Fort iKapa with some marching and drilling practice on the surrounding roads.

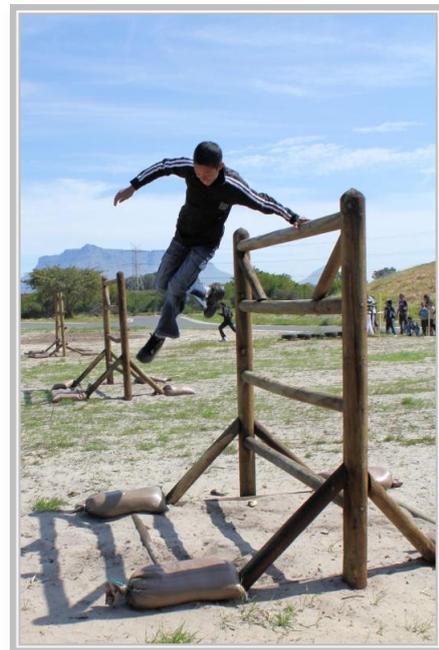
On Friday morning, neatly attired in their black pants, white shirts and yellow waistcoats, complete with white gloves, the drill squad marched confidently out onto the parade ground near The Train Restaurant at Youngsfield Military Base to the rhythmic drumbeats generated by the drummers.

Their dramatic, energetic and highly polished performance was witnessed by representatives from the SANDF, the Defence Reserves, the Western Cape Education Department and the South African Police Service of Mitchells Plain.



**Photo 13: The Drill Squad from the Western Cape School Marching Drill and Exhibition Association display their precision drilling skills**

Finally, under the supervision of Ssgt Mecloen and WO2 Van Schalkwyk, the youngsters divided into two groups for an impromptu competition on the nearby obstacle course. Amidst much shouting of encouragement and whoops of victory, the boys and girls hot-footed it through a series of tyres laid end-to-end, scaled a tall fence with some impressive aerobic manoeuvres, leopard-crawled through the heavy sand underneath a low-strung net, and tested their balance



**Photo 12: A high leap!**

With backs straight, chins up, chests out, and arms straight, they marched in perfect sync with each other and with the beat of the drum, demonstrating a marked improvement from their first rehearsals at the beginning of the week.

After this stirring display, everyone returned to the restaurant for the formalities. Ssgt Mecloen, acting as the MC, introduced Colonel Pieter Kobbie, the Commanding Officer of Army Support Base Youngsfield, as the

first speaker. Col Kobbie praised all the youngsters who had willingly given up their free time to participate in the week long training camp during the school holidays. He said that their discipline and hard work had impressed him greatly and that he hoped many of them would join the Defence Force when they left school.

Mrs Lyrice Trussell from the Western Cape Education Department echoed Col Kobbie's sentiments. Thereafter, it was time to hand out certificates of attendance to all the learners, as well as to the invited representatives from the Defence Reserves, from SAPS Mitchells Plain, and from the school. The SA Army Band Cape Town will continue with the training to ensure that the marching band remains sharp for the Tattoo.



**Photo 14: Col Pieter Kobbie hands a Certificate of Appreciation to Lt Col Johan Conradie**