

# Youth impressed by *Artillery Open Day 2010*

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

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 launchers, which sent one projectile after another high 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 were warmly welcomed by Colonel Dawid Schoonwinkel, Officer



*The powerful GV5 Howitzer guns, manned by their highly trained crews, fired one devastating round after another into the distant hillsides*



*Colonel Dawid Schoonwinkel, Commanding Officer of the School of Artillery, welcoming the learners to Potchefstroom*





*Lieutenant Colonel Johan Conradie briefing Major General Roy Andersen on the Western Cape visiting group*



*Major General Roy Andersen, Chief of Defence Reserves, welcoming the group from the Western Cape to the Artillery Open Day*

Commanding of the School of Artillery, and Mrs 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.

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 the Artillery Open Day.

All the logistical arrangements for this trip, including transport, food and accommodation, were 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 regarding the modern military in 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 creating support for citizens in uniform.

Brigadier General (now Major 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 have 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.

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 equipment.

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, as well as 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 one another 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 definitely created awareness of the Reserves and of the significance of voluntarism.



*Brigadier General Notshweleka, General Officer Commanding SA Army Artillery Formation, giving his introductory speech*



*The popular Pipes and Drums of Cape Field Artillery entertained the visitors to the Artillery Open Day with their stirring music*



*The learners, wearing the caps presented by Colonel Schoonwinkel, posed proudly in front of an Oryx helicopter*

