



the sandf

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



2015 Armed Forces Day Celebrations

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The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) reached yet another milestone when it presented a very successful 2015 Armed Forces Day at Tlokwe Municipality- Potchefstroom on 21 February 2015. The Forces on parade were under the command of Brigadier General Deon Holtzhausen, the General Officer Commanding South African Army Artillery Formation. He was driving on a **QUAD** which is one of the only three serviceable vehicles remaining in the whole world. A vehicle is made out of these elements: the **quad**, the **limber** and **25 pounder**. South Africa had since retained this vehicle after it was used in World War II by the General Officer Commanding 6 South African Armour Brigade; it is only used for prominent ceremonial events as the change of command for the General Officer Commanding's and Officer Commanding's within gunner's environment.

Driving behind the Brigade Commander were four Land Rovers carrying a senior officer from four SANDF Arms of Services on each vehicle with Service flags hanging to symbolize their support and pledges to the Commander in Chief. The Sergeant Major of the SANDF (Master-Chief Warrant Officer Kgaladi) was driving in the last Land Rover to ensure control over the brigade parade.

This third annual prestigious colourful parade was aimed at honouring the men and women in uniform who serve the Nation with pride.

The brigade on parade was preceded by the Services colours and unit colours which represent the significant role played by force elements being represented on parade. Generally, the unit's colours are awarded by the Minister of Defence & Military Veterans or Chief of South African National Defence Force or to an operational organisation or institutions which played a decisive role in a battle. In this regard, 4 Artillery Regiment situated in Potchefstroom displayed colours which were awarded to the unit on 21 March 1973, and second to that was 44 Parachute Regiment carrying Bangui Battle Honor on its colour. Another 26 unit colours were displayed on parade by Regular and Reserve Force units.

This year's parade had a mass South African Air Force fly past, a medal presentation, street parade, mechanised column and static display. The town of Potchefstroom became colourful, when the Flag Company, Guard of Honour and Military Bands marched past through the streets, which was awe-inspiring for the public.

The Commander -in- Chief of the SANDF and President of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable President Jacob Gedley'hlekisa Zuma, was the main functionary during the Armed Force Day parade. In his speech the Commander -in- Chief said that "I convene the Armed Forces Day celebration each year so that we can showcase and celebrate the successes of our Defence Force".

This year, Armed Forces Day coincided with the day (21st) of the fateful sinking of the SS Mendi ship in February 1917, which killed more than 607 black soldiers, 9 white officers and other 33 crew members who had enlisted as a labour corps for the First World War. The day also marks the 21st anniversary of the existence of the SANDF.

The Commander -in- Chief also presented members of the SANDF with a Mandela Gold – Medal. These are the members who rendered distinguished service, while personally engaged in directing, controlling, planning, organizing, performing any duties and bringing to a successful conclusion, the memorial service, lying in state and the state funeral of the Former Commander in Chief of the SANDF, the Honourable Former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

The Chief SA Air Force (Lt Gen Fabian Msimang) ceremonially handed over the SANDF Flag to Chief SA Navy (Vice Admiral Mosiwa Hlongwane) who will keep it as the custodian of the 2016 Armed Forces Day.

Gunners from Transvaal Horse Artillery personnel in Dress No.1 fired the 21 round National Salute and 17 round salute in honour of the SANDF Flag.

Three Reserve Force Units from Potchefstroom, namely SASIC, Regiment De La Rey and 102 Field Workshop participated in the mechanised and marching columns.

To round up the business of the day, the SANDF displayed a wide range of specialized military vehicles and equipment. The convoy of approximately 70 vehicles moved through town along dedicated routes.



The Commander-in-Chief of South African National Defence Force and President of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma presenting the Mandela Gold – Medal to the Chief South African National Defence Force, General Solly Zakharia Shoke.



The Chief South African Air Force, Lieutenant General Fabian Msimang, ceremonially handed over the SANDF Flag to the Chief South African Navy, Vice Admiral Mosiwa Hlongwane for 2016 Armed Forces Day.



Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Deon Holtzhauzen, leading the SANDF mechanised column.



Senior Officers driving behind the Brigade Commander, Colonel Vuka Mahlasela (South African Army), Colonel Piet Thobela (South African Air Force).



Followed by Capt (SAN) Valason Pillay (South African Navy) and Colonel Immaunuel Kamberipa (South African Medical Health Service).



The Sergeant Major of the SANDF (Master-Chief Warrant Officer Mothusi Victor Kgaladi) was driving in the Land Rover to ensure control of the brigade parade.



The Honourable President and Commander in Chief, Jacob Zuma addressing the parade and behind him, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Minister Nosiviwe Noluthando Mapisa-Nqakula.



The Silver Falcons during the fly past.



The 44 Parachute Regiment, Geckos with paratroopers from Light Artillery Regiment in Potchefstroom.



Gunners from Transvaal Horse Artillery in Dress No 1 fired the 21 round salute and 17 round salute in honour of the SANDF Flag.