

Artillery Open Day

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An estimated 10 000 people visited 4 Artillery Regiment to witness the power and might of artillery in action. It was time again for the annual Artillery Open Day on 29 August 2009.

The day started around 07:30 when the gates opened for the public and, oh boy, did the public answer the call. Vehicles were backed up at one stage for kilometres on the Ventersdorp Road and a constant flow of traffic entered the grounds of 4 Artillery Regiment. The stage was set for one of the biggest Artillery Open Days in our history.

The artillery demonstration began with a static demonstration of all the artillery prime mission equipment, including an industry demonstration prototype in the form of the 105 mm gun produced by Denel Land Systems. The static demo also included the new unmanned artillery observation system and various other artillery support systems and equipment on display.

Spectators were transported by bus to the firing positions for the live fire demonstration. The live demonstration started off with two artillery officers parachuting into the deployment area in front of the crowd. Members from the SA Army Intelligence Formation then conducted a series of small calibre attacks. This was followed by the firing of the guns, preceded by a helicopter assault and mortar attack by 41 Battery (the mortar battery). After the mortars came the GV-5's, GV-6's and ultimately the multiple rocket launchers. The live demonstration culminated in the highlight of the day, namely a full-blown regimental engagement involving all the launchers.

The multiple rocket launchers started the engagement and fired a total of 5 ripples (40 rockets per launcher) with support from the mor-



M5 120 mm mortar in action during the annual Artillery Open Day.

tars with 7 bombs per launcher, and simultaneously the GV-5's and GV-6's each with 5 rounds. The true power of the artillery was demonstrated to the public like never before. Needless to say the crowds were ecstatic and thrilled beyond what anyone could have hoped for. Afterwards many spectators just sat in awe at what they had just witnessed - the message was loud and clear: If you are on the wrong side of SA Artillery you will not survive.

SA Artillery showcased its capabilities and proved to each and every spectator that it and ultimately the SA Army was and always will be a national asset to South Africa. The gunners showed that they were capable and reliable soldiers that could answer the call to serve and protect our beloved country.

During his speech the General Officer Commanding of the SA Army Artillery Formation, Brig Gen M.R. Notshweleka, encouraged young men and women who were completing their matric to join the SA Artillery Corps and become part of the most feared and respected corps on the African continent. He also emphasised the role of women in the Corps and ensured the public that the myth of the Army being a man's world was no longer true and that women played an equally important part in the success of the SA Artillery Corps as their male counterparts.

Brig Gen Notshweleka invited the public to diarise next year's Open Day, and we can only say - once a Gunner always a Gunner. 