

ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATIONS IN PORT ELIZABETH: 13 – 21 FEBRUARY 2016

The Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), General S. Shoke, has decided to host the annual Armed Forces Day Parade in Port Elizabeth on 21 February 2016.

This event is the largest celebratory event on the SANDF calendar and will see thousands of soldiers, airmen and sailors, dozens of aircraft and military vehicles and several ships come to Port Elizabeth to showcase our capabilities. The event is held each year to commemorate all of the patriots who have died in service to our country and to honour those who are willing to continue sacrificing their lives so that South Africa can be safe from foreign aggression. The date – 21 February 2016 – also commemorates the largest naval disaster in the history of South Africa. On 16 February 1917 the SS MENDI sank within 20 minutes after being rammed by the SS DARRO in the British Channel. More than 600 South Africans lost their lives on that fateful morning. This year will be the 99th commemoration of the sinking of SS Mendi.

As part of the celebrations leading up to the military parade on 21 February 2016 there are several events planned. These are:

SA Navy ships open to the public (Weekend of 13 – 14 February 2016). Seven SA Navy ships will be open to the public free of charge. The ships that will be coming are SAS DRAKENSBERG (Fleet replenishment vessel and the largest ship ever to be built in South Africa), SAS AMATOLA (a VALOUR CLASS frigate), SAS PROTEA (the SA Navy Hydrographic survey vessel), SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I (a HEROIN CLASS submarine), SAS GALESHEWE and SAS ISAAC DYOBHA (Off-shore Patrol vessels) and finally the SAS UMHLOTI (a RIVER CLASS Minehunter). The ships will be open to the public from 10h00 to 14h00 on each day. SAS QUEEN MODJADJI I will be open only from 10h00 to 12h00 on each day due to the long queues expected. Members of the public are requested to wear comfortable shoes and protection against the sun when visiting the ships. Refreshments will be on sale. This is the largest deployment of SA Navy vessels away from their home port since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. The ships will also be open for arranged tours on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 February. Please contact Commander Cara Pratten on 083 626 3541 to make a booking (minimum of 20 people per group).

Community Concerts by Military Bands (Monday 15 February 2016). Five SANDF bands that are in the city for the Armed Forces Day parade will give free concerts to the public in five different venues spread all over the city. The SA Navy Band will be playing at Namgozo Jebe Hall in New Brighton, the SA Air Force Band will be playing in the Uitenhage Indoor Sports Center, the National Ceremonial Guard Band will be playing in the Raymond Mhlaba Hall in Motherwell, the South African Military Health Service Band will be playing in the Chatty Community Hall and the SA Army Band will be playing in the Colchester Community Hall. All of the concerts start at 18h00 in the evening, however due to its small size there will be an extra concert in Colchester at 15h00. Posters and marketing will be set up around these venues and the entire community is invited to attend the concerts.

Sports Clinics (Tuesday 16 February to Friday 19 February). The SANDF will send five sports teams (rugby, soccer, volley ball, cricket and netball) to Port Elizabeth to conduct clinics for about 1100 children per day. On Tuesday 16 February this sports clinic will be hosted at the Despatch sports ground and from 17 to 19 February it will be hosted at the Galvan Park Sports Complex. The Department of Basic Education have assisted the SANDF in selecting the schools and the learners who will take part in this event. The aim of the sports clinics is to introduce the learners to the joy of sport and to showcase the different sporting codes.

Military Exhibition (Wednesday 17 February to Sunday 21 February 2016). The largest exhibition of military equipment since the dawn of democracy in South African will be open to the public from Wednesday 17 to Sunday 21 February at the Kings Beach Parking area. The Exhibition will consist of various weapon systems, including armoured vehicles, radar systems, artillery cannons, boats, a diving tank, a helicopter, a medical display, sports display and a very large recruitment exhibition. The public can engage the SANDF members at these displays and climb onto and into the various vehicles on display. Furthermore there will also be an arena where the public will be able to see Precision Drill Displays of both the SA Navy and the SA Army, a SA Navy Sword Drill Display, a Military Police hostage release demonstration, a SA Army Dogshow and a SA Army Engineer Bridge building demonstration. The Exhibition will be open from 08h00 to 17h00 each day and entrance is free of charge. The arena show times will be from 11h00 to 12h00 and 15h00 to 16h00 from Wednesday to Saturday only. The public are encouraged to be aware of the road closures around the area on those days when the parade rehearsals will be taking place.

Military Band Gala Concert in the Feathermarket Hall (Wednesday 17 February 2016). Elements of all five Military Bands will be giving a Gala concert to invited guests and the general public on Wednesday 17 February at 18h30. Although this concert is free of charge, the public must contact Commander Rachel Dulamo on 078 153 4770 in order to obtain tickets to this prestigious event. All guests attending this event are invited to park their vehicles at the Boardwalk Casino, from where there will be a park-and-ride in operation to the Feathermarket and back. Extra security will also be deployed around the Feathermarket Hall for those members who want to park closer to the venue.

Night Shooting Demonstration (Thursday 18 February 2016). One of the highlights of the week-long celebrations in Port Elizabeth will undoubtedly be the night shooting demonstration that will take place over the Kings Beach area on Thursday 18 February. The action will start at 19h30 when four different types of aircraft will light up the sky over the Kings Beach area with their display of anti-missile flares. The aircraft that will take part include a Gripen Jet Fighter, a C-130 cargo plane, a Oryx helicopter and lastly TWO Rooivalk helicopter gunships. Not only will be Rooivalk deploy their flares, they will also do live firing from their guns towards the ocean. This will be followed by several mortars firing illumination mortars from the military exhibition at the Kings Beach area towards the ocean. These mortars flares will light up in the sky, and then several weapons from the SAS DRAKENSBERG and SAS GALESHEWE will fire tracer rounds at these flares. One of the highlights of this evening will be when the 155mm G5 Artillery gun also fire a few illumination shells. The display will end with a large "wall of fire" display by the Army Engineers. The public will be able to view this shooting demonstration all along the Beach Road area, however most of the action will be focussed at the Kings beach area. The public must take note that the northern part of Kings Beach will be closed for safety reasons. The public must also rest assured that all possible safety measures will be put in place to protect aircraft, ships and people ashore during this demonstration. The public must also please note that during this event there will be extremely loud bangs from the weapons and cannons, as well as the jet aircraft. They must please ensure that they heed this warning for their pets and small children.

Armed Forces Day Parade and Capability Demonstration Rehearsals (18 to 20 February 2016). The Main event for the Armed Forces Day celebrations will be Military parade that will be held along Beach Road (with the podium at the corner of Beach and Brookeshill Road). This parade will consist of three parts: the first part is a ceremonial parade where the National Ceremonial Guard will march to the podium and wait for the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, the Honourable President Jacob Zuma. The ceremonial part of the parade consists of a salute (including a 21 Gun salute and a salute flypast), an inspection, a medal ceremony, a formal address of the parade by the Commander-in-Chief and a flag ceremony. The second part of the parade will be a march past of about 800 soldiers, airmen and sailors. The third part of the parade will be a drive-past of about 80

military vehicles and boats. Once the parade rehearsal is completed there will be a rehearsal for the military capability demonstration. This capability demonstration will be the largest of its kind held in South Africa for the public since the dawn of democracy. It will consist of two parts, namely an anti-piracy display and a joint airborne and sea-landed rescue operation. During this capability demonstration there will be 4 Gripen fighters, 4 Hawk fighters, 2 Rooivalk Helicopter gunships, 5 Oryx helicopters, a Super Lynx Maritime helicopter, a C130 military transport aircraft, several SA Navy boats, dozens of army personnel, Special Forces personnel and more. The public are warned that there will be extensive noise from military jets whilst the rehearsals are taking place (from 12h00 to 16h00) on the rehearsal dates. Furthermore there will also be cannons firing during the rehearsals on 19 and 20 February. Please look after your pets and small children during these times. Several SA Navy ships will be anchored close to the Kings Beach area to be visible during the parade.

ROAD CLOSURES DURING PARADE REHEARSALS ON 18 AND 19 FEBRUARY: During the rehearsals there will also be extensive road closures in the Summerstrand and Humewood areas. The following roads will be closed to allow for the parade participants to travel from the Army Support Base in Forrest Hill to the Beach road area (09h00 to 10h00) on the rehearsal days:

Forest Hill drive along its entire length
La Roche Drive, turning right into
Strandfontein Rd, turning left into
2nd Ave, turning left into Beach Road.

Beach road will be closed on the rehearsal days from 1st Ave to Driftsands Drive from 09h00 to 13h00 on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 Feb.

Once the rehearsals are completed, the parade will make its way back to the Army Support Base, hence La Roche Drive will be closed from Beach Road to Forest Hill Rd from 11h00 to 13h00. It is very important to note that the parade will be formed up in Beach Road on the northern carriageway, in other words on the wrong side of the road, traveling against the normal traffic flow. The mechanised column will also drive on the wrong side of the road in La Roche Drive between Beach Rd and the Strandfontein intersection. They will move into the correct side of the road at the La Roche/Strandfontein intersection.

ROAD CLOSURES DURING THE FINAL PARADE REHEARSAL ON 20 FEBRUARY 2016:

The same arrangement for the parade rehearsals will be in place, except that military vehicle convoy will drive a circular route through the Metro after the rehearsal. The times will also be slightly earlier. The times for the road closures will be from 08h00 to 09h00 to allow for the convoys to make their to the Beach Road Area.

Forest Hill drive along its entire length
La Roche Drive, turning right into
Strandfontein Rd, turning left into
2nd Ave, turning left into Beach Road.

Beach road will be closed on the 20th of February from 1st Ave to Driftsands Drive from 08h00 to 13h00. La Roche Drive (between Beach Rd and Strandfontein Rd) will be closed from 11h00 to 13h00. ADDITIONALLY the Southern carriageway of Beach Road will be closed between Lodge Rd and La Roche Drive from 08h00 on Saturday morning to 06h00 on Monday. This will be to allow for the building of a tent for the guests of the parade. These tents will be built in the roadway itself.

The Northern carriage way of Beach Rd between Lodge Rd and La Roche Drive will be converted into a two way road on these days (during those times that the entire road is not closed for the parade itself).

Once the SANDF vehicles pass the podium (at approximately 11h30) and turn into La Roche Road (on the wrong side) they will do the correction at the intersection of Strandfontein and La Roche again. However, on both the 20th and the 21st of February the abnormal size vehicles will return back to the Army Support Base, whilst the rest of the military convoy will proceed on a tour of the Metro. The convoy will be traveling along the following roads:

1. Driftsands, turning left into
2. Humewood Rd, continuing straight to the Settlers Highway (N2),
3. Driving 20km on the N2, turning
4. Left in R335 (St George Str)
5. Left in Ngedle Str
6. Left in Tyinira Str
7. Right in Dibanisa Rd
8. Left in Daku Str
9. Right in Struanway
10. Left in Spondo St
11. Left in R75 (Uitenhage Rd)
12. Left onto N2 (Settlers Highway)
13. Right in Walmer Blvd
14. Left in Forest Hill

Handover of the Armed Forces Day Legacy Project on Saturday 20 February 2016. When the decision was made to bring the Armed Forces Day celebrations to Nelson Mandela Bay, it was decided that a legacy of the event must be left for the people of the area. In consultation with the Municipality and the Business Chamber, a number of Old Age Homes were identified for the project. Whilst the planning was taking shape, an unfortunate fire at the Ekhuphumleni Old Age Home resulted in the death of 3 residents. As a result of this it was decided to channel the bulk of the resources towards this Old Age Home. The Department of Social Development became involved and donated close to R300 000 to purchase material. The SA Navy sent 48 artisans to Port Elizabeth to start the renovations on 18 January 2016. They focused on painting, tiling, electrical work, repairing plumbing, widening the pathways for wheelchairs and putting up rails inside the buildings for the residents to hold onto whilst they walk inside the buildings. Currently the work is proceeding very smoothly and the work is expected to be completed by 12 February. There are also two other Old Age Homes where some work will be done. The first is the Bethelsdorp Old Age home where a boundary wall that collapsed was repaired and where a wheelchair ramp will be built. The second is the Gelvan Park Frail Care home where a veranda shaded area will be repaired so that the residents do not have to sit in the sun. A ceremonial hand-over of a community project will be done in conjunction with NMBMM, the Nelson Mandela Bay Chamber of Business, the Department of Social Development and the Department of Defence and Military Veterans on 20 February 2016 at Ekuphumleni Old Age Home.

The Armed Forces Day Celebrations on Sunday 21 February 2016. In the morning there will be wreath laying ceremony at the SS Mendi memorial (at the corner of Mendi Rd and A Avenue) in New Brighton. This event will only be attended by a small number of invited guests. The roads around this area will be closed from 07h00 to 09h00. This will be followed by the Armed Forces Day parade at the corner of Beach Road and Brookes Hill Road.

ROAD CLOSURES DURING THE ARMED FORCES DAY PARADE ON 21 FEB 2016: The same arrangement for the parade rehearsals will be in place, except that the roads will be closed earlier. The times for the road closures will be from 06h00 to 07h00 to allow for the convoys to make their way to the Beach Road Area.

Forest Hill drive along its entire length
La Roche Drive, turning right into
Strandfontein Rd, turning left into
2nd Ave, turning left into Beach Road.

Beach road will be closed on the 21st of Feb from 1st Ave to Driftsands Drive from 05h00 to 14h00. La Roche Drive (between Beach Rd and Strandfontein Rd) will be closed from 05h00 to 14h00 as well on the 21st of Feb.

Once the SANDF vehicles pass the podium (at approximately 11h30) and turn into La Roche Road (on the wrong side) they will do the correction at the intersection of Strandfontein and La Roche again. However, on the 21st of the Feb the abnormal size vehicles will return back to the Army Support Base, whilst the rest of the military convoy will proceed on a tour of the Metro. The convoy will be traveling along the following roads:

4. Driftsands, turning left into
5. Humewood Rd, continuing straight to the Settlers Highway (N2),
6. Driving 20km on the N2, turning
4. Left in R335 (St George Str)
5. Left in Ngedle Str
6. Left in Tyinira Str
7. Right in Dibanisa Rd
8. Left in Daku Str
9. Right in Struanway
10. Left in Spondo St
11. Left in R75 (Uitenhage Rd)
12. Left onto N2 (Settlers Highway)
13. Right in Walmer Blvd
14. Left in Forest Hill

Whilst this convoy is driving through the Metro, the Military Capability Demonstration will be held at the Kings Beach area. The main difference with the rehearsals and the actual capability demonstration on the 21st is that there will be several pyrotechnics exploding on Kings Beach close to the MacArthur Pools area. This will be to simulate the "battle conditions" during the capability demonstration. For safety reasons the first 500 meters of Kings Beach close to MacArthur Pools will be closed to the public from 05h00 to 17h00 on the 21st in order to prepare the pyrotechnics.

Once the Capability demonstration is completed, the celebrations are completed. The Military exhibition at the Kings Beach area will close at 15h00 in order to allow the SANDF a well-deserved rest. The SA Navy ships will return to the harbor and all participants will return to the Army Support Base for a celebratory function.

It must be repeated that during the entire event there will be extensive noise from aircraft and cannons. Pet owners must please be aware of this.

The public can also rest assured that the SANDF is very environmentally conscious and all possible efforts will be made to reduce any negative impact on the environment. Some of these measures include:

Extensive notices to all pet owners about the event.

Making use of several recycling service providers to recycle the waste generated by the event.

Making use of bio-degradable plates and cutlery for the meals.

Ensuring that the Kings Beach area is cleaned and there are no pyrotechnics left after the events.

The public must also note that a dedicated Armed Forces Day Radio (at 104FM) will be broadcasting from 17 to 21 February. All of the news, events, road closures, best viewing areas, interviews with key roleplayers and more will be broadcast throughout the day. The events that will be broadcast live include the Gala concert on 17 Feb, the Night Shoot on 18 Feb and the Armed Forces Day Parade and Capability Demonstration on 21 Feb.